

Guidelines for the use of 'Merchants Marks'

Activity title:	Merchants Marks
Curriculum area:	History
NC objectives:	History: 1a, 1b, 2b, 4a, 5b, 5c, 8a, 10
Main learning objective:	To introduce mercantile use of the River Severn and how commerce operated.

Lesson plan ideas, activities and resource sheets

INTRODUCTION: 10 minutes

- Explain that by late medieval times, England had a widespread trading network and that the River Severn was one of the most important trade routes in Britain. Explain how merchants operated and the principle of profit. Explain that a merchant would purchase a cargo from a supplier and then pay to have it transported to a destination. Then the cargo would be sold and make enough money to cover the cost of transportation and its purchase.

MAIN ACTIVITY: 40 minutes

- Provide class with 5.4a 'Examples of Gloucestershire Merchants' Marks'. Explain that to identify their property in order to protect it from theft, merchants devised unique identifying marks and stamped these onto metal discs that were attached to the goods. These were identical in principle to modern graffiti artist 'tags'.
- Provide the class with 5.4b 'Design a Merchants' Mark'. Set the class the task of designing their own individual merchant's mark. This should be based on their initials using middle names if required.
- Early finishers could devise marks for the class number and/or the school.

PLENARY: 10 minutes

- Move around the class and allow pupils to show their designs. Ask them to explain their designs and why they chose to do it the way they did.

Suggested extension activities or cross curricular links:

- Mathematics - old money.
- Art & DT - Make clay discs with students' merchants' marks on; Try making seals with the designs; Create a graffiti wall and cover it with student's marks.
- Geography - 4.4 Severn Trade Links