

Tudor Shields



A Sense of Identity

During the Tudor ages, knights fought battles dressed in heavy, metal armour. Even their faces were completely covered. This meant no one could tell who they were fighting!

Knights began painting the colours and symbols of their side on their shields.

Rather like wearing a football strip, the knights could now tell which 'team' they fought for!



A Badge of Honour

The use of symbols became representative of the family or country you represented. Family crests began being worn like a badge of honour.

When knights jousted, they had a coat of arms on their shield with the family crest displayed for all to see.

This is the coat of arms of King Henry VIII.



A Coat of Arms

This is the coat of arms of King Richard III.



A coat of arms needed to be unique to the house or family it represented. Every design had to be different and it became difficult to keep track of all the new designs.

Eventually, heralds were employed. Their job was to make sure all coats of arms were unique, to keep a list of what they were and which family they belonged to. This was known as 'heraldry'.

The Coat of Arms

Crest: the family 'badge'.

Mantling: thought to represent the Crusaders who fought in the Middle East and needed to keep the sun off them.

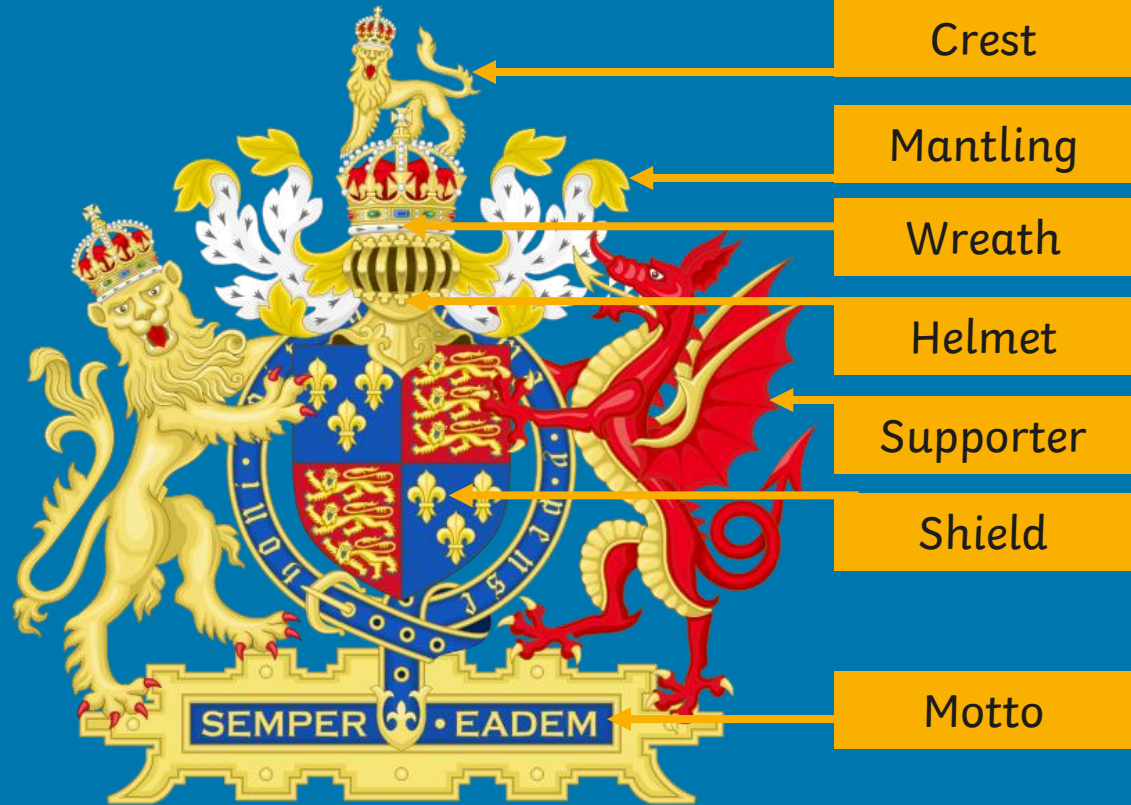
Wreath: covered the join of the helmet.

Helmet: the type of helmet depended on the rank of the owner.

Supporter: an animal or person of strength and honour, seeming to hold the shield.

Shield: symbolic of the importance of the family coat of arms.

Motto: in Latin, it stated how the family wanted to be viewed by others.



Choose Your Colours Wisely

The colours used in a coat of arms was very important. They were symbolic of what the family wanted others to associate with them.

Black was the colour of piety and knowledge.

Blue was used as a sign of truth and sincerity.

Red was the colour of a warrior and wealth. It also told others that the bearer of the red shield was of noble birth.

Gold represented understanding, respect and majesty.

Green was symbolic of hope and joy.

Choose Your Colours Wisely

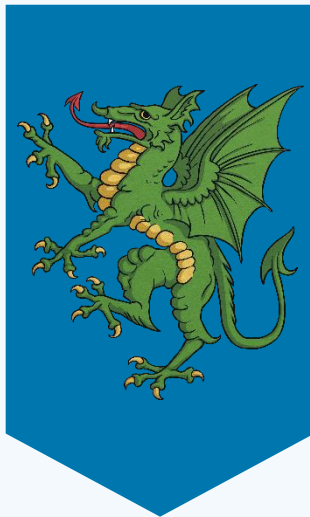
The supporters were usually animals, and depending on how they were drawn, could have a variety of meanings.

Supporters

Antelope



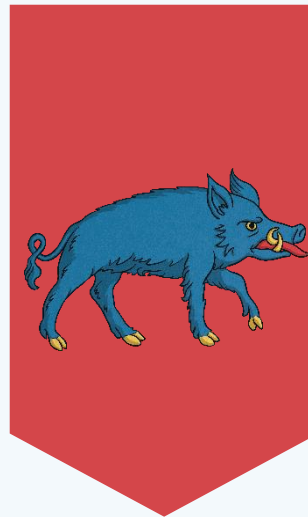
Dragon



Bear



Boar



Lion



Antelope



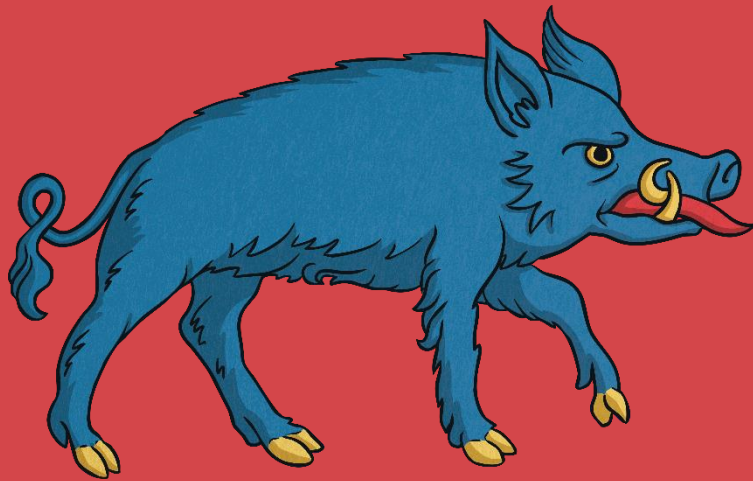
The antelope symbolises peace and wisdom. Sometimes, it was used as a symbol of speed.

Bear



The bear represented strength and cunning, but also a fierce protector of the family group. A symbol of bravery and healing.

Boar



The boar represented
courage and fierce
fighting! Defender
to the end!

Dragon



In legends, the dragon was a guardian of treasure: the bravest creature of them all.

Lion

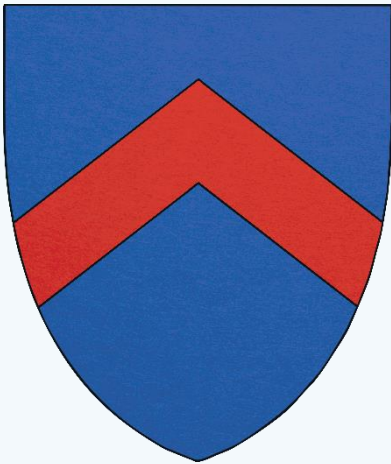


The lion is perhaps the most common animal used on coats of arms. It was a sign associated with royalty and represented courage and a valiant warrior.

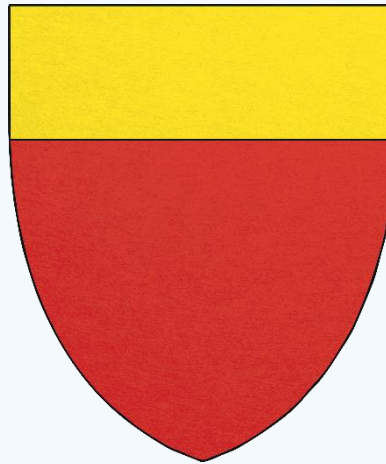
Patterns Have Meanings

The patterns used in the designs of the coat of arms also have meanings.

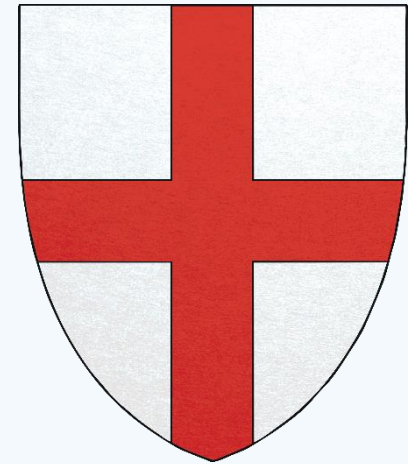
The red stripe in a zigzag across the middle represents protection.



The yellow and red design symbolises rule and authority.



The red cross on a white background is an emblem of faith and protection.



Your Task

You are going to design your own coat of arms. It can represent your family or just yourself.

Remember to include all the elements of a coat of arms and consider the following:

- the colours;
- patterns;
- animals.

You may need to do more research into the meaning of different emblems and figures.

