**L**ike the Monks in the Middle Ages, you are going to create an Illuminated Manuscript. This is decorative piece of writing done by hand.

Before the invention of the printing press, when words and books could be printed mechanically, all text was written and copied by hand. As you can imagine, it was a laborious and time-consuming process. Those most educated and with the most time available for this work were monks living in the abbeys. They dedicated their lives to writing down, and thus saving, all the knowledge of mankind. Over the months and years of this work, they prided themselves in making their handwriting beautiful and even decorative. Many of these works were embellished by fancy capital letters, even using gold and silver leaf to enhance a phrase and illuminate the script since these works were written and read in the dark, candlelit rooms of the abbey.

On very important works, paintings were carefully created to enhance the text. Today, these illuminated manuscripts are highly prized for their beauty and the knowledge therein.

From these precious artworks came today’s interest in calligraphy – the beautiful, decorative handwriting created for special occasions and certificates. When these are illustrated, they become highly desirable works of art.

Instructions

Today, you were create your own illuminated manuscript. You will copy TWO of the Essential Understandings from Unit 8, just like monks copied down texts in their own beautiful script. Your illuminated manuscript will follow the directions below:

* Use a ruler or other straight object to create one-inch margins all around the paper. From the top and left border, measure a box that is 2 inches by 2 inches, starting at the inside of the margins. This is where you will write and decorate the first letter of the first word of your text.
* Write everything carefully in pencil first, checking for spacing and spelling. Then go over everything will a colored pencil, a marker, or sharpie.
* After using the colored pencil, marker, or sharpie, carefully erase any leftover pencil lines
* Now illustrate the page and inside the initial box
* You may want to illuminate the box or borders with the orange sharpie to act as a gold-like effect