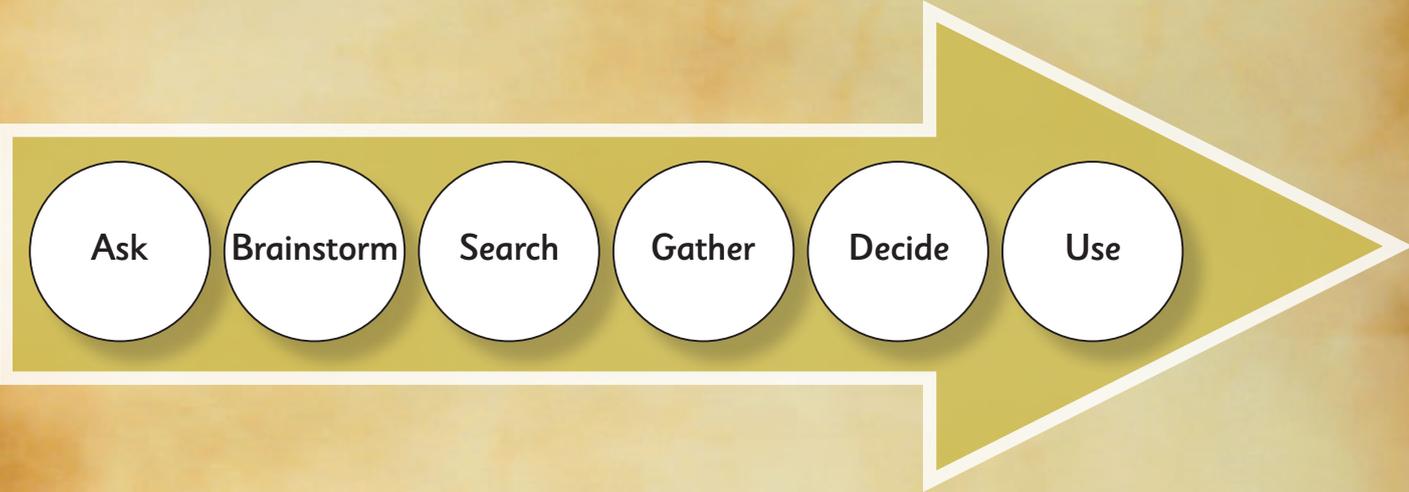


## What is Creative Research?

Sometimes when you have completed a topic in class your teacher may ask you to find out more about what you have learned and use it to create something, for example a poster or a piece of art. This might sound easy, but when you try to discover more information you might not know where to begin. The following steps are an aid to help you to find out more about your chosen topic.



Ask

Brainstorm

Search

Gather

Decide

Use

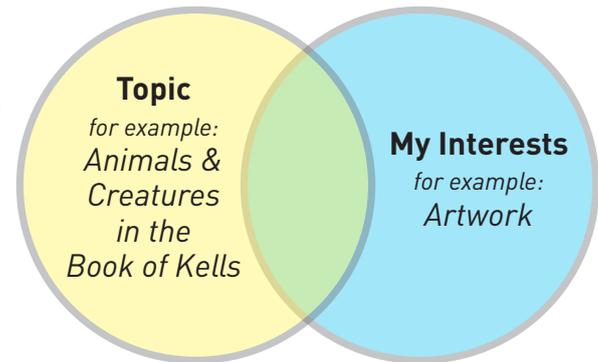
# Step 1: ASK

Your teacher might set you a homework task using the words: *'Find out more about...'* How do you do this? The first step is to **ask** yourself a question. Think of your task as a process which begins with **your question**, and ends with **your answer**.

## How do you come up with a good question?

- Look at what you already know about the topic. What have you learned about it in school? You need to search further than this.
- What would you like to find out more about? Choose something that interests you, not simply what you think would be easy.

The area of overlap is what you are interested in within the topic. This should be the focus of your question. For example, you may have looked at **'Animals & Creatures' in the designing of the Book of Kells**. You need to think of a question which will allow you to look outside the Book of Kells for more information.



## Step 2: BRAINSTORM

At this point it might be useful to **brainstorm** with others in your class, perhaps in a small group or individually. Use a large sheet of paper and in the centre write down the most important word or phrase that links to the idea you want to research. Draw a circle around this idea. Now outside the circle start to write down any words linked to this idea, drawing squares around these words. Use lines to connect words or ideas. This should help you to focus more on the sort of question you want to ask.

Be careful you don't make your question too broad. The question you ask should not be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. For example, the following question is too broad: ***Have animals and creatures influenced other designs?***

Clearly the answer to this question is a simple 'yes' and the information available on this is too vast. Try to narrow your question down, for example: ***Which animals and creatures in the natural world inspire design?***

This type of question will allow you to focus more and help you to research.

## Step 3: SEARCH

Page 1 of 3

Now that you know what your research question is, you are ready to search for material to help you to answer it. You will need to know where to look and what you are likely to find there.

### **Where to look:**

1. Visit the classroom library
2. Search through encyclopaedias, dictionaries and reference books
3. Bring in newspapers and magazines from home
4. Don't forget to look at classroom posters
5. Search the internet

### **How to explore the internet**

Searching the internet can be a very useful way to find out more information on your topic. For example you can use:

- Google – general search
- Wikipedia – the place to start to get search terms and keywords

**Step 3: SEARCH (continued)**

Page 2 of 3

However, it is very important when you are using the Internet that you only use sites that you can trust. Anyone can create a website, so you might find yourself searching through lots of information that is not relevant or even accurate. Depending on a website's domain (look at the web address) you can try to work out if a site is trustworthy. Also, always ask your teacher or an adult if you are not sure.

For example, check the last part of the web address to see if it contains the following letters:

- .edu = educational site
- .gov = government site

These addresses can only be used by governments or educational institutes.

However, the following addresses can be used by anyone:

- .org = non-profit site
- .com and .co.uk = commercial site

**Step 3: SEARCH (continued)****Page 3 of 3**

When you are ready to begin your search, pick out key words to help narrow down your results. If you don't get the sort of information you were looking for remember to:

- check your spelling
- try using different keywords
- talk to your teacher and ask for help

Don't get frustrated. It often takes several tries to find useful information.

On the other hand, you might end up with thousands of results. Don't panic. Try to narrow down your search, for example:

- set a time period such as the 20th century
- narrow your search to a particular theme. If you are looking at animals and creatures you might want to narrow your search to birds or insects.

## Step 4: GATHER

After you have searched what's available, the next step is to gather what you have. You might want to print out the information or store it in a separate file on your computer.

## Step 5: DECIDE

Page 1 of 2

Now that you've gathered up articles and books for your research, it's time to decide which to use to answer your question.

### **How do you know if your information is relevant?**

- Does the information answer your research question? If the answer is yes, use this.
- Is the information too hard for you to understand? Don't simply copy and paste information if you don't understand it.
- Does the information add something new to what you already know about the topic? If the answer is yes, use this.

At this point it might be useful to draw a table where you can store the new information, so that you can look at it at a glance.

## Step 5: DECIDE (continued)

Page 2 of 2

For example, using the sample question, you might draw a table like this:

**Which animals and creatures in the natural world inspire design?**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Shape</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Inspiration for Design</b>
Animal/Creature				

Remember that gathering up information is not the end of the research. You now need to use the information to answer your research question and think of a way to present it to others. Take your time to go through the information and see where you can fit it into your table. Don't rely on one source (for example just the internet) but try to find two or three different sources to give a wide range of evidence.

## Step 6: USE

Now you are ready to use your new information. You have:

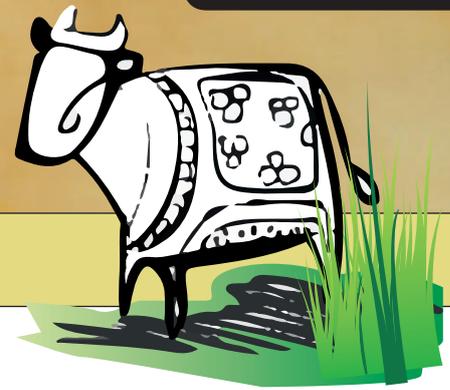
- asked a research question;
- brainstormed;
- searched for information to help answer your question;
- gathered information; and
- decided what to use and presented it in a table.

### **How can you use your information?**

- Present your findings to the class using a PowerPoint Presentation
- Use your findings to make a poster
- Create a design
- Write a short report on your findings, including your question; how you gathered your information; how you decided which information to keep and which information to dismiss; and how the information helped to answer your question.

# 2.1 THE BIG QUIZ

View the Prezi: *Animals & Creatures in the Book of Kells* and answer the questions.



1 What were calf skins used to make?

Vellum

2 Can you give one reason why pictures of animals were used in the Book of Kells?

- they were decorative (or used to hide mistakes)

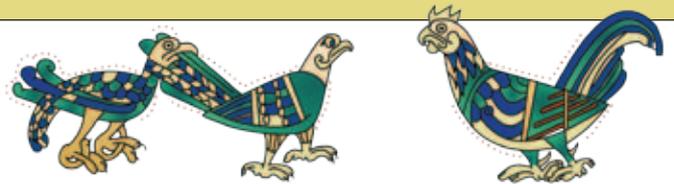
- they were used to represent ideas

- they were used to illustrate the stories



3 Why did the drawings of chickens look more natural than some other animals in the book?

- They were photographs
- The monks could draw them from real life
- They were the artist's favourite animal



4 Pick two animals – one EXOTIC and one DOMESTIC – that are found in the Book of Kells and draw them in the boxes below.

EXOTIC

DOMESTIC

**5** The Book of Kells is made up of the four Gospels. Can you match the names of the authors to the symbols? Can you also write down what each one stands for?

Name:

**Matthew**

Stands for:

**Jesus' birth**



Name:

**Mark**

Stands for:

**Jesus' resurrection**



Name:

**Luke**

Stands for:

**Jesus' sacrifice**



Name:

**John**

Stands for:

**Jesus' ascension**



**6** Fill in the blanks.

When the Book of Kells was written snakes were seen as

**wise**

The shedding of a snake's skin stood for

**rebirth**



**7** Why was this bird used in the Book of Kells?



**Animals were also used instead of hyphens when a word could not be fitted in at the end of a line.**