



Hello! I am Rodolfo, a 12-year-old Medieval Italian boy. Let's make an initial decorated letter!

I know how to write script font letters using a quill pen and ink made from oak galls, but my favorite thing is to create big decorative letters called illuminated initials. These decorative letters appear at the beginning of a page and are full of details: curlicues, animals, plants, fruits, or fantastic beasts. I like to use a caterpillar, because it is the symbol of my favorite section of town in Siena.

MATERIALS:

1. Tracing paper
2. Nice paper for your final initial letter art (choose watercolor paper if you plan on painting it)
3. Thin permanent marker
4. Scissors
5. Coloring materials: colored pencils, markers, watercolors, etc.
6. Pencil and eraser

Access to a printer or copy machine may be useful.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Gather your materials. Print the next page with a sample decorative alphabet. Remember you can use these as inspiration to make your own design or add on to these whatever decorations you may like.
2. Cut out your letter. If you choose, you can enlarge it at the copy machine or printer (a grownup can help). If it is bigger you can add more details.
3. If you want to practice adding details, use a tracing paper sheet to experiment over the original cut out letter.
4. Trace the final letter onto the nice paper. You can do it 2 ways:
 - Tape the original letter to a bright window. Tape the nice paper over it. Trace it with pencil.
 - or
 - Cover the reverse side of the paper with the letter with graphite pencil (HB or softer). Now place the letter over the nice paper and tape it in a couple spots to secure its position. Trace over the letter firmly. Remove it and you will see that the graphite acted as carbon paper to transfer the image to the nice paper.
6. On the nice paper, use the thin permanent marker to trace the letter or add details. Once it dries, erase all the pencil leftovers.
7. Color it using colored pencils or markers or watercolors. Any of these art materials will allow for the black outline to stay visible and your artwork will look really crisp.
8. Now, make another one for a friend or family member.

Visit the Medieval gallery!



Let's make an initial decorated letter!

