

Use the Fact-File and questions to help you find interesting objects and record ideas in your sketchbook to use back at school/college.

Fact File: Calligraphy

- Calligraphy, or beautiful writing, has a very high status in Islamic culture.
- Arabic script is used to write the Arabic dialects, Persian, Turkish and other languages.
- Using calligraphy is a beautiful way to write an important message.
- The letter forms of Arabic script can be manipulated to suit different designs and contexts.
- Calligraphy can be combined with other decorative elements: plant-based designs, figures and geometry.
- Calligraphy can appear on many different materials.
How many different objects with calligraphy can you find?



Storage jar, Egypt or Syria, 1300-1400. Museum no. 483-1864



Detail, Tile, Iran 14th Century Museum No. C.1976-1910



Window with the Shahadah, the Muslim profession of faith, carved stucco and coloured glass, Egypt, 1800-80. Museum no. 1202-1883

Exploring contrasting calligraphy

1. Find examples of calligraphy on objects made from different materials and draw them in your sketchbook.
2. Find out more about the objects you have drawn. Where did they come from? What were they for? Think about these questions:



- ▶ How is the calligraphy applied to the object?
- ▶ How important is the calligraphy to the object's decoration?
- ▶ Has colour been used at all? If so, how?
- ▶ What do you notice about the scale of the writing? Is it large or small?
- ▶ From how far away do you think you were meant to view the calligraphy?
- ▶ Look closely at the script and see if you can identify the letter shin. This letter may look different depending on where it appears in the text.

Name	Final	Medial	Initial	Isolated
shin	ش	شه	ش	ش

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