



WILLIAM MORRIS KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER



Biography

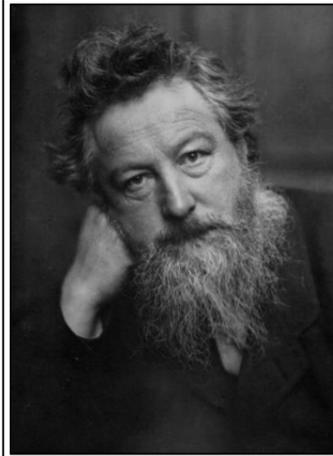
-William Morris was a British textile designer. He was also an architect, writer, a poet, a translator and a social activist!

-He had a great impact on the design of churches, houses and furniture in the late 19th and early 20th Century.

-He is most famous for designs such as *Strawberry Thief*, *Woodpecker Tapestry* and his beautiful handprinted versions of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer.

-Morris closely observed nature to influence his patterns.

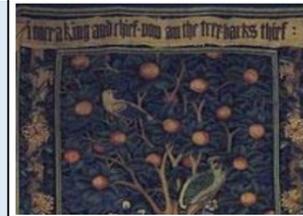
-He founded the Kelmscott Press in 1891.



-Morris lived between 1834 and 1896. He spent much of his life in London, but also lived in other areas, e.g. Oxford and Birmingham.

Significant Works

Woodpecker Tapestry (1885)



-The *Woodpecker Tapestry* shows a woodpecker in a fruit tree. It is unusual in that it was one of the very few tapestries designed only by Morris (many were a team effort at Morris & Co).
-It was inspired by a Roman tale. A sorceress turns King Picus into a woodpecker when he refuses to become her lover. The text at the top and bottom of the tapestry outlines this transformation.

Strawberry Thief (1883)



-The *Strawberry Thief* textile design is perhaps William Morris' most famous of all.
-Morris was influenced by the thrushes that he saw stealing the fruit in the garden of his countryside home at Kelmscott Manor.
-To print the repeating pattern, Morris used the painstakingly slow indigo-discharge method, which he admired above all other techniques. The tapestry became hugely successful.

The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1896)



-Morris founded the Kelmscott Press towards the end of his life. He wanted to revive the skills of hand printing, which the mechanics of the Industrial Revolution had destroyed. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* was his greatest triumph in this field. It contains 87 wood-cut illustrations. He used many 15th Century printing techniques.

Styles and Techniques

Embroidery

-Embroidery involves decorating fabric or other materials using a needle to add thread or yarn.
-Embroidery was the first technique that Morris adapted for products that he sold.
-His embroideries were often commissioned to decorate the inside of new churches.
-Morris felt restricted by embroidery, so he developed his craft to other forms, including tapestries.



Tapestries

-Tapestries are a form of textile art, which are traditionally hand woven on a loom.
-In Morris' time, tapestries were highly-prized wall coverings, used as decorations in homes and churches.
-They were practical as well as luxurious: they provided insulation, and wealthy owners moving from one residence to another could take their tapestries with them.
-Throughout his life, Morris was fascinated by tapestries, which he saw as the 'noblest of all weaving arts.'



Hand-printing

-In the later part of Morris' life, he became more and more enthusiastic about the beauty in calligraphy and page decoration. He set up the Kelmscott Press in 1891.
-He designed his own fonts, made his own paper and printed by hand. The illustrations were wood-cut – carved into wood before being printed on the page.



How do I create art like Morris?

Step 2: Trace it! Hold your drawing in place over the polystyrene & trace it. Press down firmly.

Step 3: Spread your ink/paint, into the paint box. Then use your roller to spread it over your polystyrene.

Step 4: Position your Styrofoam in one corner of your card. Press your polystyrene on top of the card to print your design. Make sure that you press firmly, so that it prints properly.

Step 1: Create your design! Using your pencil, draw your picture onto the thin paper.

Things you'll need: Thin paper, card, pencil, polystyrene, printing ink/paint, paint box, paint roller.

A child's polystyrene-printed pattern.

Step 5: Repeat this process over your page to create your pattern. If you need to, use a paintbrush to brighten up any faded prints.

Key Vocabulary

Morris

UK

London

Oxford

Pattern

Printing

Textiles

Embroidery

Woodpecker Tapestry

Strawberry Thief

Works of Geoffrey Chaucer

Wood-block

Hand-print

William Morris Timeline

21st March 1834 Born at Elm House, Walthamstow, Essex, to wealthy parents.	1847 Morris' father dies. Morris is aged only 13.	1853 Begins studying theology at Exeter College, in Oxford.	1855 Takes a tour of France with friend Edward Burne-Jones.	1856 Gives up his architecture apprenticeship to focus on painting.	1859 Married Jane Burden.	1871-73 Goes on trips to Iceland and Italy.	1875 Sets up Morris and Co. textile company.	1880 Works on the Throne Room at St. James's Palace.	1884 Morris founds the Socialist League.	1891 Morris founds the Kelmscott Press.	3rd October 1896 William Morris dies at Kelmscott House.
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