

# STUDY GUIDE

**DISCIPLINE:**  
**LITERARY ARTS**

**ARTIST:**  
**AMANDA WEST LEWIS**

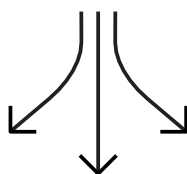


**The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.**

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

## THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:



**Curriculum  
Connections**



**Suggested Classroom Extensions**



**Assessment  
Strategies**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS..... 4**

    Program Overview ..... 4

    Curriculum Connections ..... 6

    Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts) ..... 7

**LITERARY ARTS OVERVIEW ..... 9**

**APPENDIX ..... 10**

    Vocabulary bank/glossary: ..... 10

    Student Health and Well-Being ..... 11

    Additional Resources ..... 11

# STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS

## ILLUMINATED LETTERS: COMBINING WRITING AND VISUAL ARTS

### Program Overview

**Artist Name:** Amanda West Lewis

**Artist Bio:** Amanda West Lewis is a writer, theatre artist, and calligrapher. Author of ten books, including “A Planet is a Poem” and “These Are Not the Words”, her work explores activism, history, and the arts. She founded the Ottawa Children’s Theatre, holds an MFA in Writing for Children, and teaches writing, drama, and calligraphy to youth and adults.

**Program Description:** The workshop starts by writing simple poems based on participants’ names. Students are then shown how to draw Versal letters in the style of 15th-century Books of Hours. These illuminated letters will be used to create a uniquely decorated poem. The workshop helps to develop a love and passion for letters, combining writing skills with artwork.

**Workshop Equipment:** Students require paper and pencil. Amanda will bring markers, coloured pencils, additional paper and handouts.

**Artistic Discipline:** Literary Arts, Visual Arts

**Recommended Grade Levels:** 5 – 12

**Session Logistics:** In person or online

**Vocab bank/glossary:** [Click here](#)





# ILLUMINATED LETTERS: COMBINING WRITING AND VISUAL ARTS

## Curriculum Connections

### Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
  - Apply the creative process to produce a variety of art works, using elements, principles, and techniques of visual arts to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings. (Grades 5-8)
  - Apply elements and principles of design to create art works for the purpose of self-expression and to communicate ideas, information, and/or messages. (Grades 9-12)
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analysing
  - Apply the critical analysis process to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of art works and art experiences. (Grades 5-8)
- Cross-Curricular Connections
  - Language Arts
    - Experiment with poetic forms, structure, and language
    - Use the writing process (drafting, revising, presenting)

# ILLUMINATED LETTERS: COMBINING WRITING AND VISUAL ARTS

## Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

**GRADES**  
**5-6**

### **Pre**

- What kinds of letters or writing styles do you notice in fancy books?
- How can you show something about you in a letter or a poem?

### **During**

- What words or lines in your poem best describe who you are?
- How are you decorating your letter to reflect your personality?

### **Post**

- How did combining writing and art change your poem?
- What did you learn about your own style or identity through this activity?

**GRADES**  
**7-8**

**Pre**

- Why might artists in the 15th century decorate the first letter of a name or text?
- How does form (both in writing and visual art) impact meaning?

**During**

- How does the visual form of your letter support the tone or theme of your poem?
- What poetic devices are you using to reflect who you are?

**Post**

- In what ways did the art deepen the emotional or personal meaning of your poem?
- How might you continue blending art and writing in future creative work?

**GRADES**  
**9-12**

**Pre**

- What does the visual design of text (typography, illumination) contribute to meaning?
- What can we learn from medieval practices like illuminated manuscripts about creativity and identity?

**During**

- How are you using poetic form and visual structure to build your identity on the page?
- In what ways are you experimenting with historical inspiration in a modern context?

**Post**

- Could this piece evolve into a personal manifesto, zine, or portfolio item?
- How does the physical act of designing your letter connect you to your words?
- How can art-making processes like this build deeper understanding of voice, form, and heritage?



# LITERARY ARTS OVERVIEW

Literary Arts education consists of storytelling, poetry, and creative writing and is foundational to developing literate, reflective, and critically engaged members of society. By engaging with diverse stories, students gain insight into complex perspectives and histories, fostering inclusion and emotional resilience. Writing and sharing stories also supports mental health and builds a sense of community and belonging.

**The creative and critical analysis process** guide students in imagining, crafting, and reflecting on literary work. These frameworks align with MASC's core values and, when paired with artist-led sessions, empower students to become thoughtful creators and engaged learners.

Literary arts naturally support cross-curricular learning. In social studies, students explore historical context through narrative; in science they use writing to explain concepts. These interdisciplinary links help students see knowledge as interconnected and relevant to real-world applications.



# APPENDIX

## Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Calligraphy:** Artistic, stylized, and elegant handwriting or lettering.
- **Poem:** A form of writing that expresses ideas or emotions through carefully chosen words.
- **Versal letter:** A large, decorative capital letter used at the beginning of a section of text.
- **Personal symbolism:** Using images or shapes that represent something meaningful to the artist/writer.
- **Letterform:** The visual structure and style of a letter (shape, spacing, ornament).
- **Motif:** A decorative design or repeated element in visual art.
- **Manuscript:** A handwritten text, often from a time before printing presses.

# Student Health and Well-Being

## How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a colour to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

## Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
  - Share it with a partner or small group
  - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
  - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

## Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning