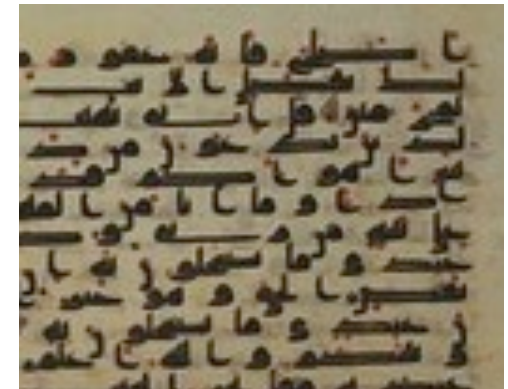
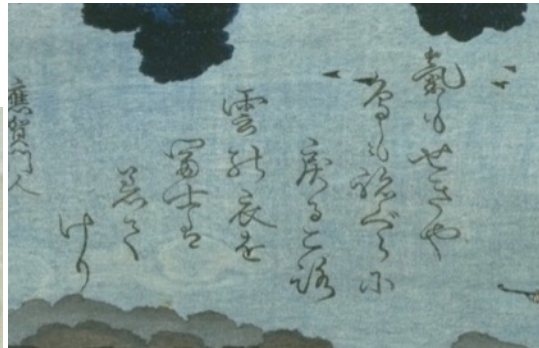
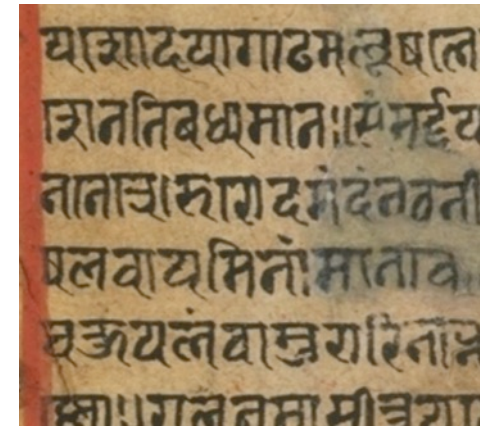


# Exploring Calligraphy

Through the Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art  
at the Victoria and Albert Museum



# What is calligraphy?



What are the similarities and differences between the examples you can see here?

# Trying different styles of writing for yourself

*Calligraphy*

Calligraphy

*Calligraphy*

**Calligraphy**

Calligraphy

Calligraphy

Calligraphy

calligraphy

---

Do these typefaces look different?

Do they suggest a different mood or tone of voice?

Which style would you use to write the word Calligraphy? Or the word Hello?

# Styles of Arabic Calligraphy



Here are 8 examples of different styles of Arabic script, all writing out the same phrase. How do they differ?

Can you find the same letters, by comparing different lines?  
(remember to read from right to left!)

# More than just calligraphy

## Geometry



Wooden panel, Egypt, 1296. Museum no. 891-1884

## Figures



Detail from manuscript with illustration of Khusraw killing a lion, Iran, 1631. Museum no. L. 1613-1964

## Plant-based design



Detail from the Ardabil Carpet, Iran, completed 1539-40. Museum no. 272-1893

## Calligraphy



Mosque lamp, Egypt or Syria, about 1430. Museum no. 1056-1869

Four of the design elements found in Islamic art.

# Different ways of reading



Do you read this text from left to right or right to left?

What clues might tell you this?

What can you see here?



Describe what you are looking at.

# Here's what you were looking at

Carved  
ivory  
casket,  
Spain,  
about  
1962.  
Museum  
no. a.  
580-1910



Qur'an  
manuscript,  
ink, gold and  
colour on paper,  
Iran, about 1370.  
Museum no.  
365-1885

Silk with  
Arabic  
inscription  
, Spain,  
1300-140  
0.  
Museum  
no.  
830-1894



Tile with  
Arabic  
inscription,  
Iran, about  
1215.  
Museum  
no.  
1481-1876

Match the close up images on the previous page with the correct object here.

# The Letter Shin

Name	Final	Medial	Initial	Isolated
------	-------	--------	---------	----------

shīn	ش	ش	ش	ش
------	---	---	---	---

The letter shin looks different depending on where it is in the text.

It has a distinctive trio of dots over it.

Can you spot it in the example below?



Where is shin?



# Your Design Challenge

Create a piece of 2D or 3D art around a word, letter, phrase or poem of the student's choice (and in the language of their choice), taking as inspiration the concept of writing as an art form and Islamic calligraphy in particular.

You may decide to form a shape made out of words. This is known as a calligram.

Standard or Alam  
Perforated Gilt Copper,  
Deccan, 17th century  
Museum No. IM 163-1913



# Things to remember in the Museum

The Jameel Gallery at the V&A

Is there anything in particular that you will be looking out for when you visit the museum?

What ideas do you have about using calligraphy for your own design project?



On which type of objects will you find Arabic calligraphy?

What sort of texts are used for the calligraphy on these objects?