

## Imagining: Mystery objects

### Aim of the exercise: Testing your powers of invention

Here are three objects from the V&A collections that will, we hope, keep you guessing.



Select an object. Write down, as quickly as you can, a list of about thirty descriptive words that the object brings to mind. Choose ten of the most interesting words from this list. These words are to be repeated as key words throughout your piece of writing.

This done, there are many ways in which you can approach the mystery object. Choose one of the three listed below:

- Decide what you think this object is. Write a museum label or catalogue entry for what you imagine it to be, giving a plausible account of its history. Then use this notice as the basis for a poem or a short story.
- Don't worry about what the object is. Instead, use it as the basis of a piece of imaginative writing that looks at it in an abstract way. Think of the object as similar to a piece of abstract art. Try to write an abstract poem, or prose poem, to match.
- The object has magical properties - what are they? How do they work? Who knows about them? Use this idea as a basis for a poem or short story.

To discipline your writing and make you think about the contribution of every word, we suggest that you choose to write a story of no more than eight hundred words or a poem of no more than thirty lines.

If you really want to give yourself a poetic challenge, choose the second option and write a sonnet. If you write a Shakespearean sonnet, you can reveal the object in the closing couplet. If you tackle a Petrarchan sonnet, you can reveal it after the break or 'turn' that traditionally occurs at the end of the first eight lines.