

Interlace and the 'Secret' Method



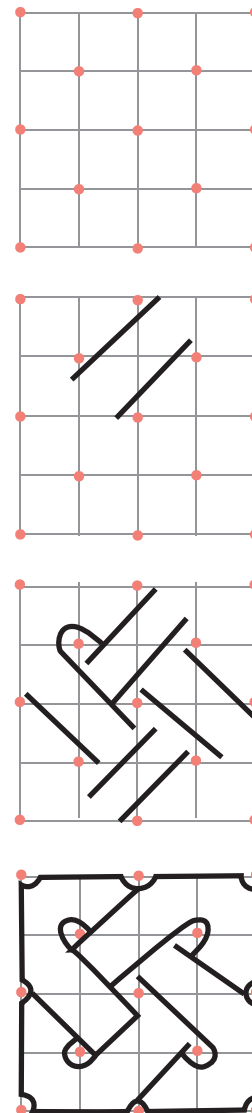
One of the most notable types of decoration that is seen on early medieval manuscripts is **interlace**. This is also seen on a lot of metalwork objects from the same time period such as the Ardagh Chalice and the 'Tara' Brooch. Interlace is created by intertwining ribbons to create a pattern of knotwork.

Although interlace looks very complicated, there is actually a very special and easy way to create it. It is called the 'secret' method because the artists covered up their work by colouring in the space. However, in some cases, they didn't fully finish the design, so we have been able to figure out how they created it.

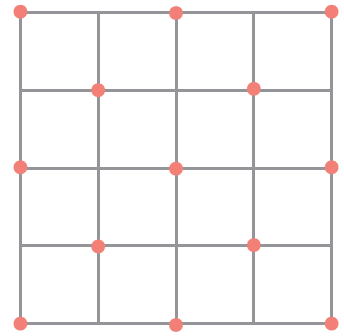
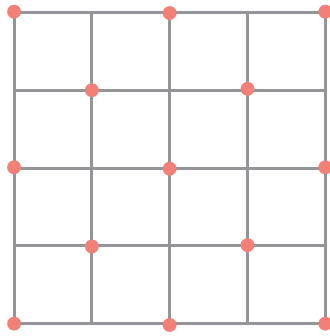
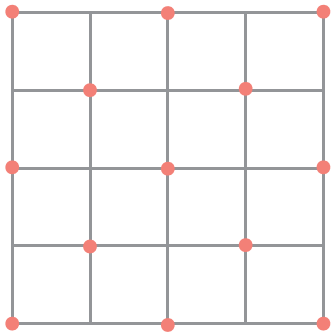
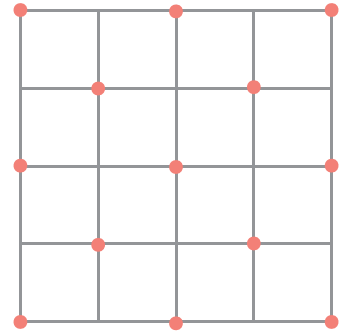
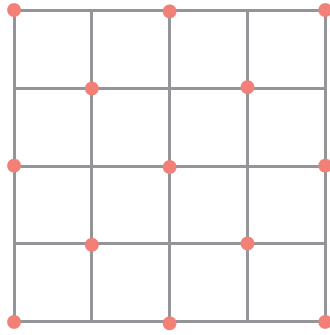
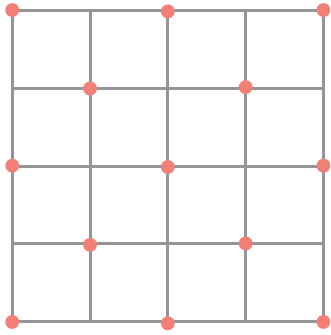
The 'Secret' Method

The trick when using this method is to *never touch or join the dots!*

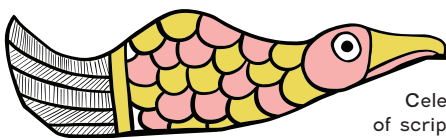
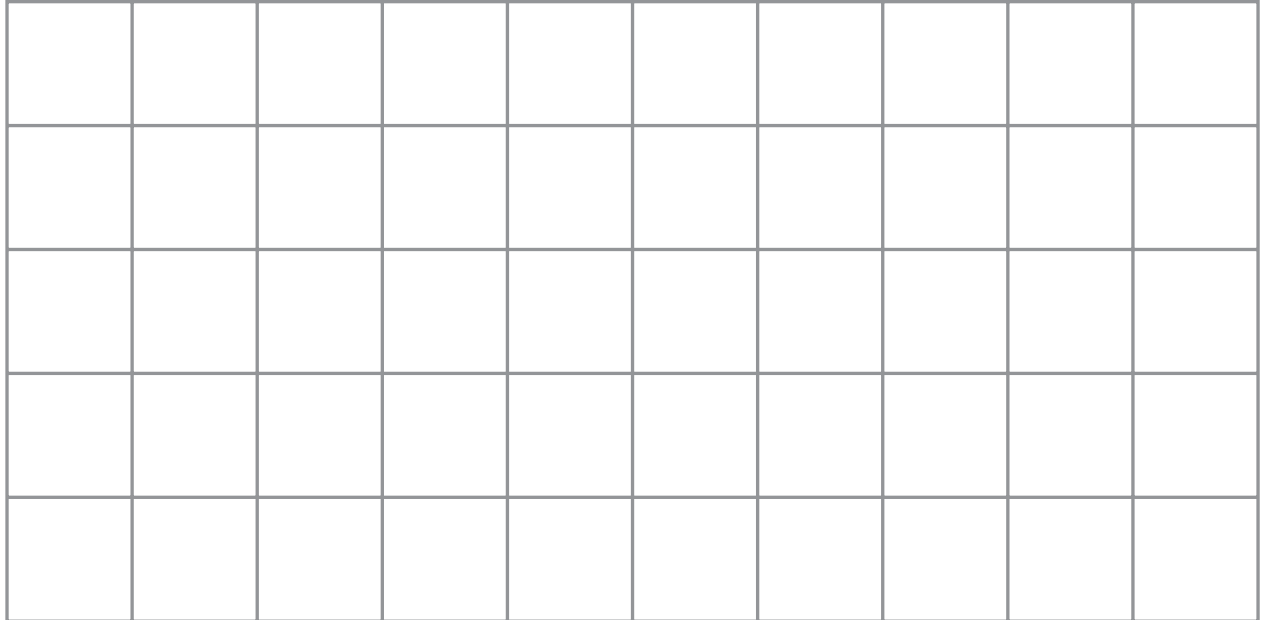
- ◆ Using a grid, or square paper, as a guide, arrange a series of dots in a 'diaper' pattern. Similar to how you see the number 5 on a die.
- ◆ Always work with two sets of two parallel lines. Imagine that you are creating the pattern using two flat ribbons.
- ◆ When your 'ribbon' meets another 'ribbon', then it follows an 'over and under' sequence. If your 'ribbon' is going over the other 'ribbon', the next time it meets it, it will go under, and so forth.
- ◆ Create all of the pattern in the centre and then tidy up the ends and edges at the end.
- ◆ When you use this method, you can fill almost any shape with interlace.



Use this space to create your own interlace:



Use this space to create a larger piece of knotwork:



Celebrate the magic of manuscripts by learning the ancient skills of script and decoration that once brought sacred texts to life. These worksheets are adapted from *The Irish art of calligraphy* by Timothy O'Neill published by the Royal Irish Academy. Produced for the exhibition by the National Museum of Ireland: 'Words on the Wave: Ireland and St Gallen in Early Medieval Europe'. This is a project of:

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