

A Royal Coat of Arms

A royal coat of arms consists of the parts shown on the next page. The complete combination of the shield, helmet, crest and motto is known as the achievement. See if you can match the names and descriptions of the parts of a coat of arms to the letters on page 41.

1. _____ Helmets come in a wide variety of shapes depending on the country and time of the origin of the coat of arms. In heraldry the helmet always faces left (to the right of the shield itself). Only the helmets of kings and nobility are depicted full face.
2. _____ Supporters are real or mythological animals supporting the shield with their feet resting on the scroll. They were introduced into heraldry in the fourteenth century. They are usually reserved for kings and other nobility.
3. _____ Crests also made their appearance in the fourteenth century. They were usually made of a lightweight material such as light wood or leather and were worn on the top of knights' helmets.
4. _____ The mantle gets its name from the French word *manteau*. A silk mantle was used by a knight to shade the back of his helmet from the sun.
5. _____ Scrolls had mottos written on them. The motto might be one word or a sentence. It is generally believed that the motto began as a battle or war cry.
6. _____ The wreath consisted of two pieces of colored silk twisted together. It always shows six twists in the same colors as the shield. It may be curved or straight.
7. _____ The shield may vary in shape. Usually it is a rectangle with a pointed or curved base which comes to a point. Emblems or charges of heraldry are shown on the shield. Crosses were often used during the time of the Crusades.

Many family names have a coat of arms. Most libraries have books which will help you determine whether or not a coat of arms for your family name exists. You may wish to research your family coat of arms or design one in the medieval tradition.

