

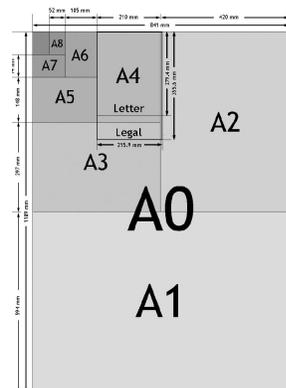
Layout and Design

One of the big questions that often gets asked is about layout and design of a scroll. There are no hard and fast rules for this but the look and over all feel to the work should be medieval.

SCA scrolls have a tendency to be based loosely on the art often found in books of hours. That is to say they are lavishly decorated, or perhaps have a painted miniature. Celtic style scrolls often take elements from such works are the Book of Kells. Period writs and grants were not quite as lavishly decorated as the awards we tend to give out, but there are also exceptions to this as well. The best thing as a beginner scribe is to go and look at other people's works, look through books on Medieval art and become familiar with the styles that are available.

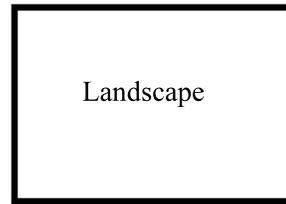
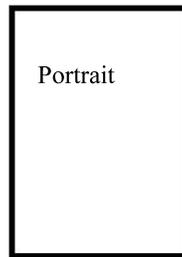
As with all things SCA there are no hard and fast rule about size but it is generally assumed that the larger the award, or more important it is, the bigger or more fancy the scroll might be. This is also not always the case as often scrolls are tailored to the individual receiving it.

When starting out it is always best to use standard sizes. In Europe the paper size is based on metric and a principle of halves. The paper starting at A0 going to the smallest size of A8. For most scrolls A4-A2 make good sizes to work for.

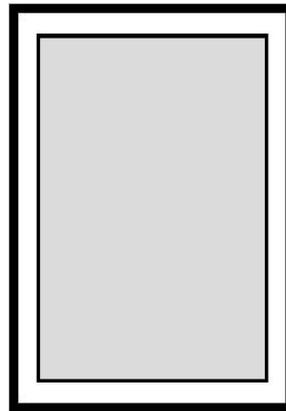


In the US and Canada sizes are given in inches. Standard 8" X 10" up to 16"x12" and so on. The reasons for using standard sizing is that it makes it easier for people to matt and frame the work in a less expensive manner. Not everyone can afford custom framing but standard sized frames and matts can be bought at reasonable prices in most photo shops or IKEA.

Paper layout is generally described in two ways, portrait or landscape. Portrait is when the height is longer than the width, landscape is the opposite.

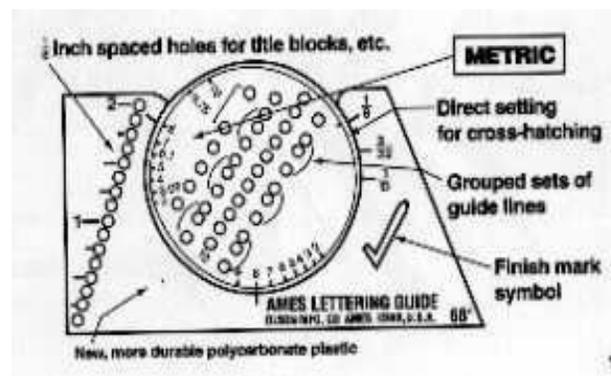


The first thing to do when thinking about lay out is to remember to leave a decent margin of white space, usually an inch or 2.5cm. This will allow for matting and framing that will not take away from the actual art work.



Once you have marked off the margins you can start designing the layout of your scroll.

Depending on what designs and styles you are using how you will wish to line your paper will change greatly but it is always a good idea unless your calligraphy is almost perfect to line out where you will be writing. One of the best tools for this is a small drafting tool called an Ames Lettering guide and a T-square. This way you can be sure your lines are straight and even.



Here is an example of a simple portrait layout. It is fairly typical of this mid-late gothic style to have a very large capitol letter to begin the text. This letter is usually highly decorated or gilded with gold leaf. The same layout can be used when the paper is turned to landscape format.



Style is an individual thing and to best determine the style that is best for you a certain amount of study is required. Depending on what time period you choose to emulate, the style and lay out will also change. A scroll done in a Celtic style will differ greatly from one done in a high Renaissance style. There are many examples of medieval art on line as well as in countless books.

Once you have settled on a style and drawn out the basic lines you can start drawing out your artwork, be it simple ivy and vine or a more complex image. The eternal rule of thumb is measure and pencil twice before laying ink to paper.

Some things to consider when starting a scroll.

Focus: What do you want the eye of the viewer to be drawn to? How should the viewer's eye move around the piece? The eye needs a logical path to follow. If there are multiple aspects to the scroll, for example a Large capitol as well as a miniature image and text, there needs to be a pattern to it. The eye might want to follow the Capitol letter, then the text down to the small miniature.

Balance: The human eye loves balance and symmetry. This doesn't mean that both sides of your work have to be equal but there needs to be balance on the page. If you have a very large capitol letter then there needs to be text enough to balance that out.

It is a common mistake to put all the text on the top half of the scroll especially as some awards do not have much text. Try to space out the text with white space, which can always be filled in with simple bar and ivy decorations or knot-work depending on style. Remember it doesn't have to be a busy scroll to be a beautiful scroll. Often beginner scribes make the mistake of trying to jam as much decoration in to a scroll as possible. This is not necessary. The rule of Less is More is very applicable here. A scroll that is too busy will be just as jarring to the eyes as one that is too sparse.

Frame Space: Always leave at least 1-1.5 inches (2.5- 4 cm) of white space around the area where you plant your scroll. This leaves ample room should the person receiving the scroll wish to have it matted and framed.

Signature space: The King and Queen need space to sign the scroll, bear this in mind when doing your layout, not just in height but also in width, while, as a general rule Kings and Queens use only their first names some do have very long first names.

Scale: It is important not to try an mix the scale within the scroll too much if at all. Your calligraphy, with the exception of capitol letters should all be done in the same scale.

Illumination should also maintain a scale that matches the calligraphy. The best advice is to look at historical examples for ratio of writing to ornament and practice until it looks right. If in doubt ask a more experienced scribe.