

# Design Your Own Coat of Arms



Coats of arms are symbols used to identify and represent royalty, countries, cities, hospitals, universities, individuals, private companies, and other corporate bodies. Coats of arms help to “tell the story” of the people they represent.

**Create your own personal coat of arms.** When you are finished, share your coat of arms with a friend. Now that you have made a coat of arms for yourself, you might like to design one for your class or school. Put it up for others to see.

In pretending to be a herald creating an emblem, try to use the basic rules of heraldry. The most important rule concerns colour. **There are five colours: red, blue, green, purple and black, and two metals: silver (shown as white) and gold (shown as yellow).** In order to achieve the greater contrast, you would have the shield in a colour and the symbols on it in a metal, or vice versa. You may also divide the shield horizontally or vertically in half colouring one side in a colour and the other in a metal with the symbols in each half in a metal or colour (as the rule would require). Other divisions are possible as well and you may want to get a book on heraldry from your local library to see other examples.

**The symbols that you chose can be from nature or as invented by people, everything from maple leaves to ships to flowers to tools to musical instruments.**

In Canada, real coats of arms are granted by the Canadian Crown to cities, towns, schools, universities, churches, private companies, cultural organizations, and others. They are symbols of authority, ownership and identity and are part of the national honours system. Designed by heralds in the Governor General’s office, they are simple yet colourful and filled with symbols that have great meaning for their owners.

**Include a motto as part of your design.** Much like your choice of symbols, the phrase that you choose should be meaningful and representative. Some more famous mottos and coat of arms are shown below as examples.

- *E Pluribus Unum* meaning "One from many parts" – United States
- *Per Ardua Ad Astra* meaning "Through Adversity to the Stars" – Royal Air Force
- *Labor Omni Vincit* meaning “Work Conquers All” – Markham District High School



