

Activity Sheet 6: Ogham Stones



BBC

















NORTHERN IRELAND

The Ogham alphabet was made up of simple strokes for consonants - and strokes or dots for the vowels. These shapes were easy for the Celts to make, carving the strokes along a central line which was usually the edge of a slab. Some strokes would go to the left of the line, some to the right, to help tell them apart.

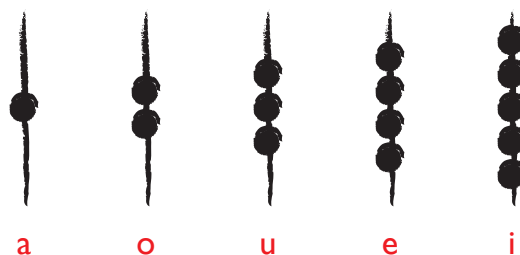
The Celts started off by carving Ogham onto pieces of wood but then they began to carve onto rocks which became known as 'Ogham Stones'. If you were reading an Ogham stone, you would read it from the bottom to the top.

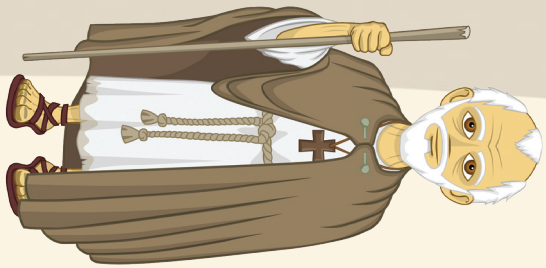
There are only twenty letters in the early Irish Ogham alphabet instead of the twenty-six we have in our alphabet. Some people believe that the names of the letters might be the names of ancient trees or shrubs, and they call it the 'Celtic Tree alphabet'.

Ogham letters along with their old Irish names and meanings

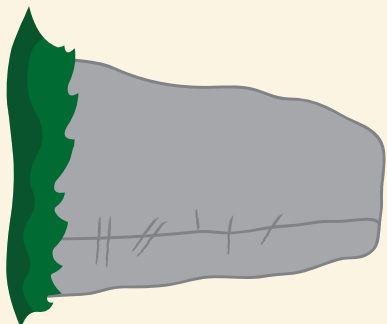
	n <i>nin</i> "ash"		q <i>ceirt</i> "apple tree"		r <i>ruis</i> "elder"		i <i>idad</i> "yew"
	s <i>sail</i> "willow"		c <i>coll</i> "hazel"		z <i>straif</i> "blackthorn"		e <i>edad</i> "aspen"
	f <i>fer</i> "fern"		t <i>tinne</i> "holly, elder"		ng <i>getal</i> "broom"		u <i>ur</i> "heath"
	l <i>luis</i> "rowan"		d <i>duir</i> "oak"		g <i>gort</i> "ivy"		o <i>onn</i> "furze"
	b <i>beithe</i> "birch"		h <i>huath</i> "whitethorn"		m <i>muinn</i> "vine"		a <i>ailm</i> "pine tree"

Sometimes the vowels use dots rather than lines. The dots must be made on the middle of the central line.

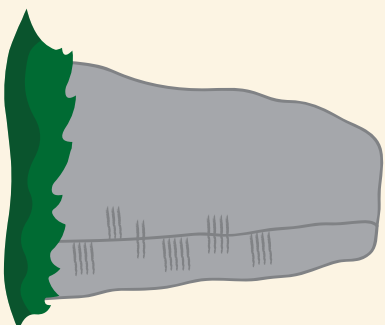
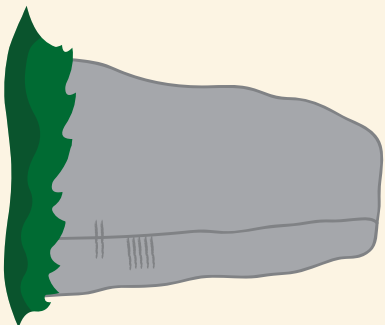
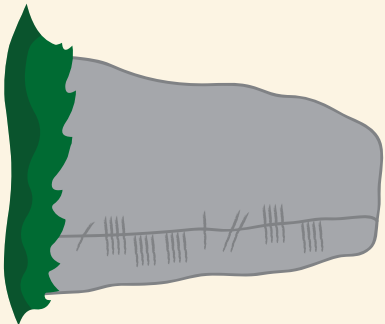
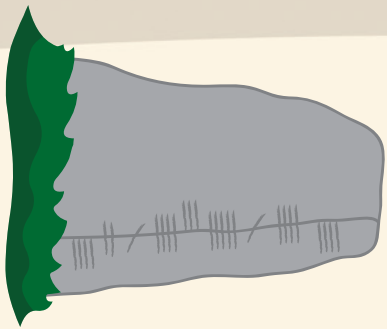




Try and decipher the messages on the scrolls by finding the hidden words on the Ogham stones. Remember to read the Ogham Stones from the bottom to the top. Here's an example to get you started.

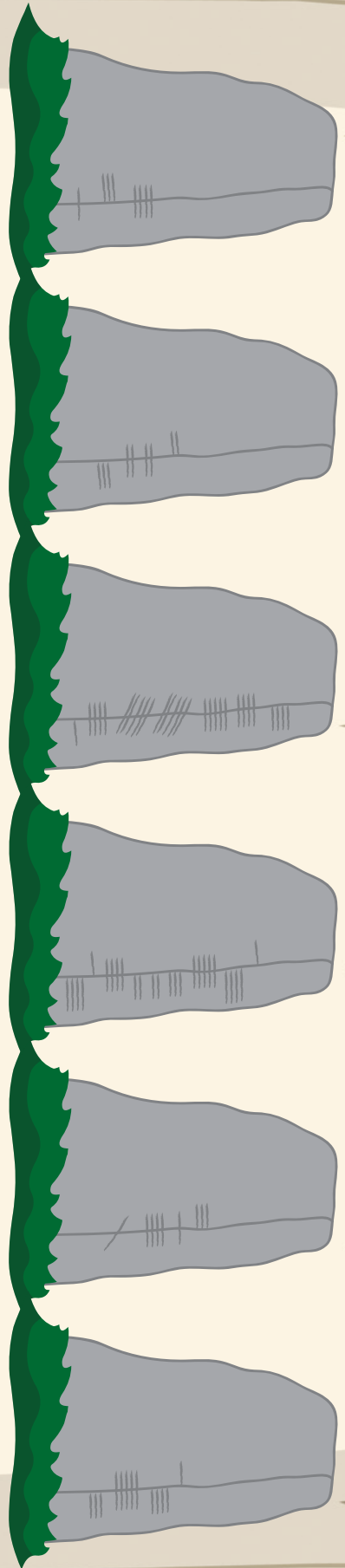


O G H A M

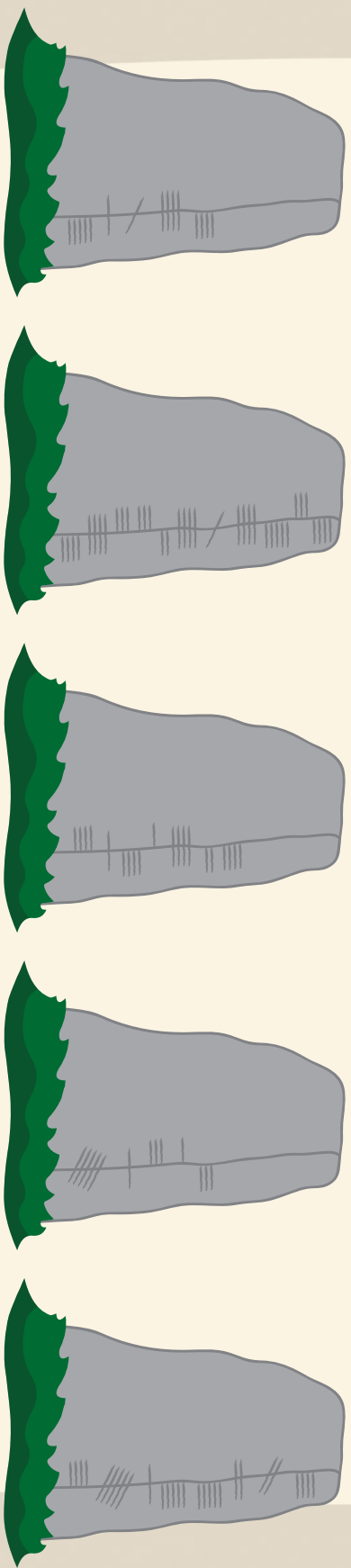


Celts

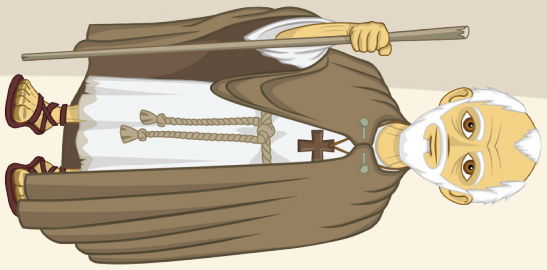
left



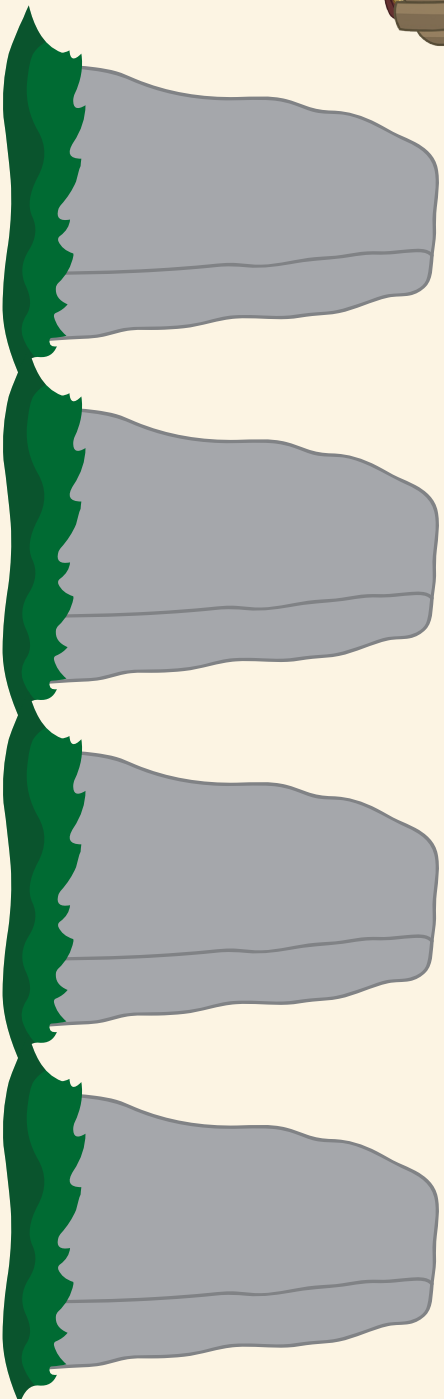
They _____ a variety of _____ such as _____, _____ and, _____.



Find the _____ of three Celtic _____ :
_____, _____ and _____.



Now you have a go – here's a list of animals that you might find in a Celtic settlement – see if you can make markings on the stones using only letters from the Celtic Tree alphabet.



Animals to find: cattle, hens, goats, hounds

EXTENSION RESEARCH:

Now visit our Links Page (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/saintpatrick/en/additional/grownups/weblinks.shtml>) and see if you can find out more about the settlement names you've uncovered earlier. Then draw a picture of how you think each settlement might have looked and write a brief description of each one.

Settlement one: Cashels

Settlement two: Raths

Settlement three: Crannogs

