

## The Secret of Kells Study Notes



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**Directed by:** Tom Moore  
**Certificate:** PG (contains some scary scenes)  
**Running time:** 78 mins  
**Release date:** 1 October 2010

### Synopsis:

In remote, medieval Ireland, young Brendan embarks on an adventure when a celebrated illuminator called Aiden arrives carrying a book brimming with secret wisdom and powers. To help complete the magical book, Brendan must overcome his deepest fears on a dangerous quest into the enchanted forest where he meets Aisling, a mysterious young girl.

**These Study Notes are suitable for KS2 History, Literacy and Art.**

## Before watching the film

1. At the beginning of the film Brendan's uncle, Abbot Cellach, is afraid that Vikings are going to attack and destroy the Abbey of Kells. Use books and the internet to find answers to the following questions:
  - Where did the Vikings come from?
  - During which period of history did they live?
  - What did Viking raiders do?
  - Where did they attack and settle?
  - What armour and weapons did they use?
2. Like other Christian monasteries in Britain and Ireland under threat from Vikings during the early seventh century, the Abbey of Kells contained religious books, art and treasures. What books, art and 'treasures' are precious to you? Which would you want to keep safe?
3. Brother Aidan asks Brendan to enter into the enchanted forest to look for gall nuts so he can make ink and finish writing the Book of Iona. Brendan is scared, as his uncle had always forbidden him to enter the forest. What do you think Brendan will find in the forest? What will it be like there? Draw a picture or write a description of sights and sounds you imagine Brendan will experience.

## After watching the film

1. The animation in *The Secret of Kells* is probably unlike anything you have seen before. Look at the image gallery at the film's official website [www.thesecretofkells.com](http://www.thesecretofkells.com). Think back to the story's beginning, middle and end. Can you remember which part of the film each image came from? Choose five images that you think represent the key events of the story. Draw them using a similar style to the animators if you can.
2. There are two very different trailers for the film at the official website [www.thesecretofkells.com](http://www.thesecretofkells.com). Analyse them both and think about the following questions:
  - What mood and feelings does each trailer create?
  - How do the music, sound and chosen scenes in each differ?
  - What kind of story does the film appear to be in each trailer?
  - What persuasive techniques do both trailers use?
  - Which trailer do you think is most persuasive and which does the best job of representing the whole film?

3. Although it features elements of fantasy, *The Secret of Kells* is set during a particular time and place in history, seventh century medieval Ireland. Write your own short story with the same historical setting. Your story could even feature some of the same characters. Use the evidence of setting in the film as inspiration. This could include:

- Monks in their robes
- Monasteries
- Holy books
- Vikings
- Wolves that live in the forests

*Written by Matthew Poyton*