

5th December

Memory Verse

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

2 Peter 3:10

Young children can learn the words in bold and understand that Christians look forward to that great day when Jesus will come again, although we do not know when it will be.

Something to listen to



Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart (1756- 1791) died on **5th December**. If you look at his dates you will see that his life was very short. Despite this he was the composer of some 600 substantial pieces of music including some of the most beautiful music ever written.

In the water colour picture on the left you can see Mozart sitting at the harpsichord accompanying his father and his big sister Nannerl. Both children were talented performers from an early age and their father took them round Europe to play to royal families, the nobility and important people. The brilliant children were a great success: everyone wanted to hear them play.

However, when Mozart grew up it was a different story. He was very talented but he was no longer a little wonder-boy. Now it was very hard to earn a living and Mozart was often poor.

Mozart was the first great composer to write music for the piano. This instrument was still quite a new invention in his day. Unlike the harpsichord (which you can see in the picture) the piano can produce loud and soft sounds just by means of the player's touch. As well as piano **sonatas**, Mozart wrote **symphonies**, **operas**, **concertos**, **divertimentos**, **serenades** and elaborate music to be performed in Catholic church services.

Do you know the meaning of the **highlighted** words? Use your dictionary to check or to look up any with which you are unfamiliar.

Mozart had an amazing musical memory. If you did the lessons for April 29th you will remember one example of it. A similar thing happened with his piano concerto no 26, the "Coronation" concerto. Mozart was short of time again. He was to be the soloist in the concerto. All we have of the score today shows the orchestral parts in full but an awful lot of blank space in the piano part. Mozart put in just enough to remind him of what was going on and improvised the rest on the spot. In fact most of Mozart's piano concertos suffer from this problem to some extent. Music scholars and pianists have to try to work out whether the music written in the solo piano part is the everything Mozart intended or whether it is just a sketch of what Mozart himself played at the first performance.

Mozart's Eine Kleine Nacht Musik is possibly one of the most famous pieces of classical music of all time. Try to listen to a recording today.¹

There are four movements in this serenade for string instruments. The whole piece is less than 20 minutes long. Sit down and listen carefully throughout. If you need help to concentrate, get a piece of paper and a pencil and doodle as you listen. Draw whatever lines and patterns come into your head as you listen. Which one of the highlighted words describes Eine Kleine Nacht Musik?

Map work²

Gerhard Mercator (1512-1594) died on **5th December**. His ideas and discoveries have had immense influence down to the present day in the area of navigation. Mercator received his education at a school run by the Brethren of the Common Life in 's-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands. The brethren were good teachers who provided a sound education based on the Scriptures. "The root of study and the mirror of life must be in the first instance the gospel of Christ," said Gerhard Groot their founder.³ The children learned Latin and Greek and they learned to sing hymns. The Brethren also copied the Scriptures. Mercator learned to write beautiful neat handwriting and this helped him later in his work of map making.



From this excellent beginning Mercator went on to study at the University of Louvain. Here he found teaching based on a totally different foundation to that laid by the Brethren. At Louvain the students were taught the theories of the pagan philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle believed that the universe was composed of four elements: earth, air, fire and water. He thought that the universe was eternal; that is, it had never had a beginning and would never have an end. This put Mercator into a quandary. What should he believe? Should he cling to the Bible as he had been taught by the Brethren or should he adopt these pagan ideas? He wrote later about this time in his life:

When I saw that Moses' version of the Genesis of the world did not fit sufficiently in many ways with Aristotle and the rest of the philosophers, I began to have doubts about the truth of all philosophers and started to investigate the secrets of nature.

Mercator is telling us that when he saw the conflict he doubted not the Bible but the pagan philosophers. This doubt led him to investigate the world around him. If he had rejected the Bible and believed the philosophers he would, like many of his contemporaries, have made no discoveries at all, content with the incorrect ideas of Aristotle and the others. His investigation of the secrets of nature did not contradict what he read in the Bible: they did contradict the ideas of the pagan philosophers.

Mercator developed a deep interest in maps and travel. He gained skill in map making, surveying, calligraphy, engraving and also learned how to make scientific instruments. Mercator was a friend of Philip Melancthon, Martin Luther's friend and helper, with whom he exchanged letters. While at Louvain, Mercator was arrested and imprisoned for a time on suspicion of being a follower of

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93AR3tzzel1s> for instance.

2 Information from <https://creation.com/mercators-projection> and other sources.

3 E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* (1931) p.132.

Martin Luther.⁴ The evidence for this was supposed to be in some letters he had written but as the letters could not be found he was eventually released.

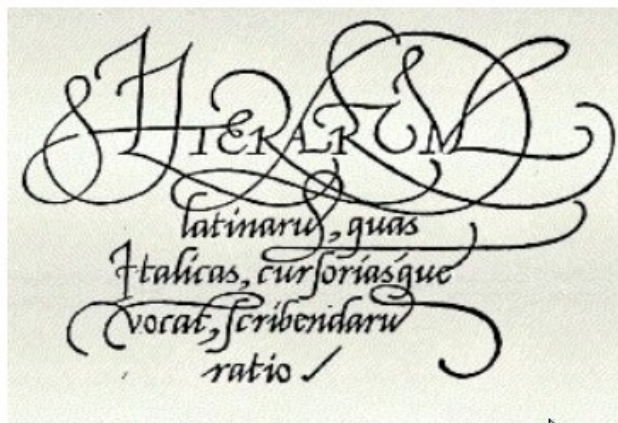
It was in 1569 that Mercator published the map that made him famous. You can see it reproduced on the next page. Other map makers had used a circle to depict the surface of the ball-shaped earth on a flat piece of paper. Mercator used a rectangle, stretching out the north and south to fill the full width of the map at top and bottom. This creates a distortion (as any method of representing the surface of a sphere on a flat piece of paper will do) but it had a huge advantage for sailors. On Mercator's projection, the lines of longitude are all vertical and parallel. (These are the imaginary lines which run round the earth passing through the poles. Across them and parallel to the equator which goes round the centre of the earth are the lines of latitude.) Sailors using Mercator's projection could chart their course on this map as a straight line. Then they simply sailed one constant compass bearing along this line to eventually arrive at their destination. Mercator's projection is still used for nautical charts today.

Mercator went on to create a three volume Atlas, the final volume of which was brought out after his death by his son. The atlas not only included over 70 maps but also a long essay about the first chapter of Genesis in which he combats the ideas of those who followed the pagan philosopher Plato in saying that "Intellect or Mind is the maker of the world" and contending rather that the Triune God "the Father, the logos⁵ or Son, and the Holy Spirit" was the creator. His essay included these wise words:

Therefore let us give thanks to the one sole God, who is the beginning and creator and life-giver and preserver and the end of the work of the world, that he deigned to reveal to us the true fabric of the world, its beginning and the source of all philosophy and all truth, through Moses and the other prophets.

On the next two pages of today's lesson are two versions of Mercator's projection: his own from 1569 and a modern outline. Compare the modern outline with a globe, if you have one, and you will soon see the distorted effect that the projection gives, making little Greenland look bigger than the whole of Africa! If you look at Mercator's 1569 map you will be able to compare it with modern maps produced now that we know more about the shape of the land masses on the earth. It will give you an idea of what was and was not known about the world in Mercator's day.

Something to do

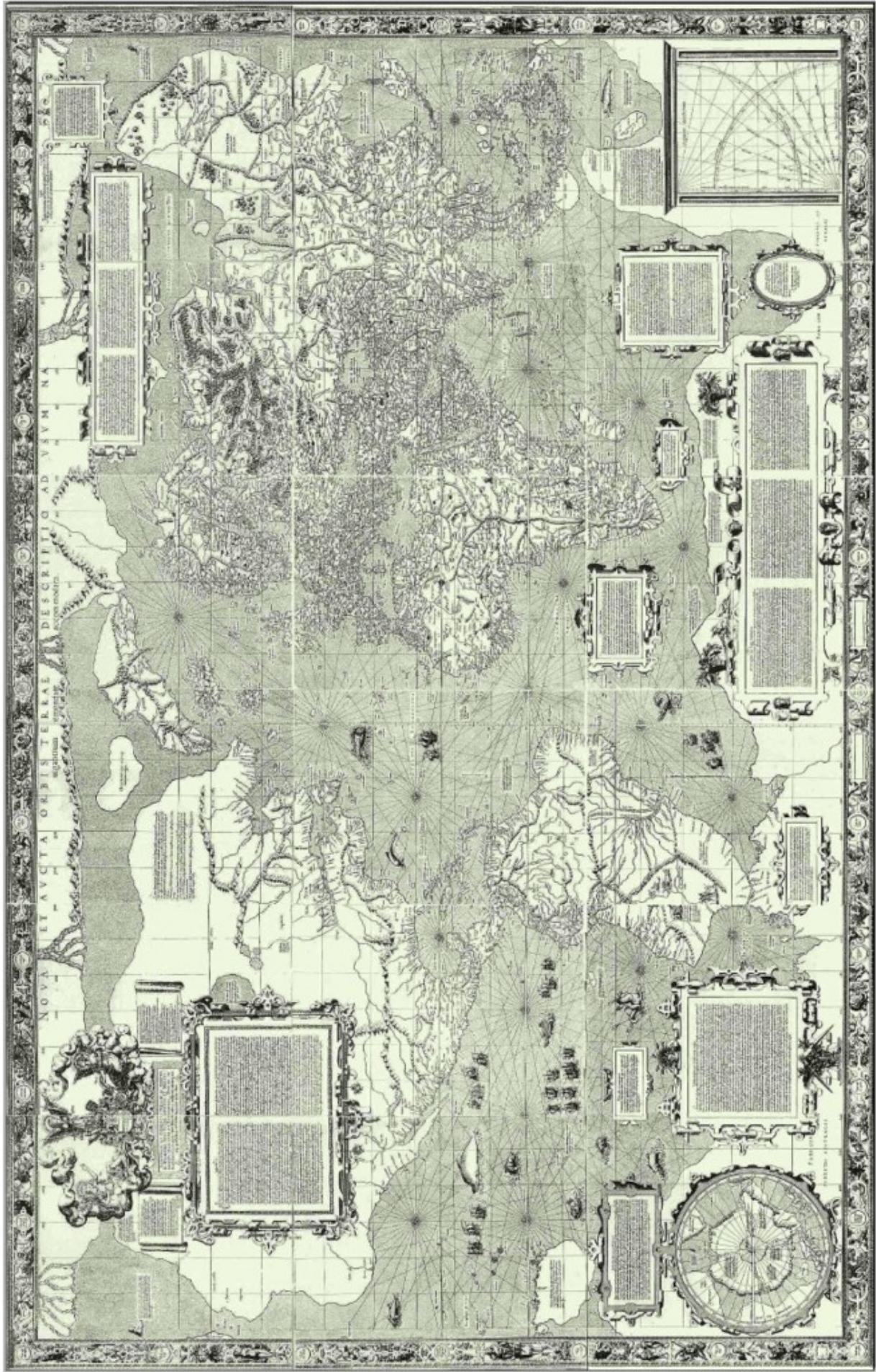


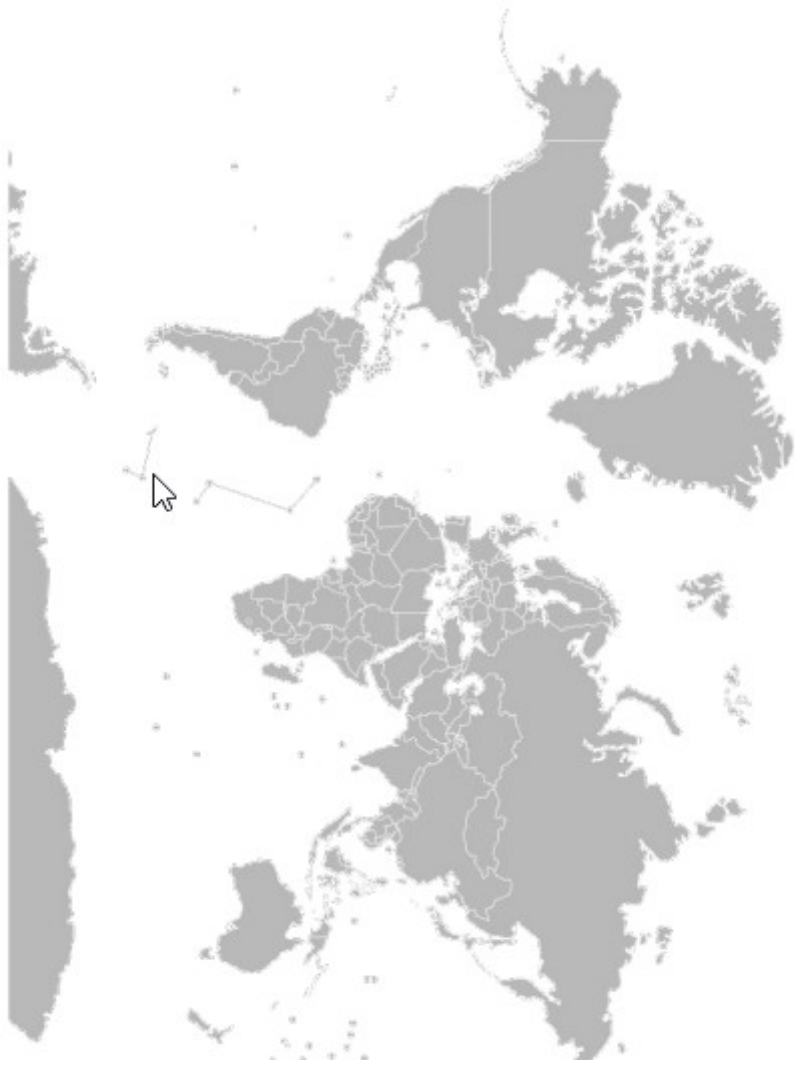
Mercator learned to do beautiful writing in a style called Italic. You can see what it looked like in the picture on the left. You can still learn to do this kind of writing today. There are some tutorials for beginners on line. In today's optional resources file is a sheet of instructions for the way to form the individual letters for Italic writing. You do not need a special Italic pen to start with, although if you find you enjoy making these beautiful letters you will want one. To start with use a carpenter's pencil. This is a thick pencil with a rectangular

shaped lead. This gives the thicks and thins that an Italic pen gives. Try it out and perhaps do your memory verse on a card for a friend.

⁴ See the lesson for July 16th.

⁵ Word. See 1 John 5:7.





Something to think about

Cartoon animator and film producer Walt Disney (1901-1966) was born on 5th December. Although his brash Americanisation of traditional fairy stories may be more to some people's taste than it is to mine, I think it would be fair to say that Walt Disney's versions bear as much relationship to the originals as Mickey does to a real mouse. The Walt Disney message is in many ways deeply anti-Christian. "Follow your heart" sings Walt Disney's version of Cinderella. Is this good advice? Definitely not! What does the Bible say about the human heart? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Whom should we follow then? "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children..." (Ephesians 5:1).



A poem to read – and learn

The poet Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) was born on 5th December. Some of you may have sung her carol "In the Bleak Midwinter". Today's memory verse is about the coming again of the Lord Jesus and the end of the world. Sometimes it seems to Christians as though it is a long time to wait for that happy time. We are too focused on "today" to have the patience we need and not focused enough on that "bright tomorrow" when Jesus comes again. In the poem that follows Christina Rossetti contrasts those who "love today" with those who love that tomorrow and wait for it with patience. Patience is a pale thing to those that "love today" but those who are enduring "some bitterness of sorrow" see the "lustrous face" of patience.

This is quite a difficult poem but I hope you will enjoy the beautiful language in which Christina Rossetti expresses these thoughts. If you began a poetry memorisation programme on 5th January (if not look at that lesson and begin one now) you could include it.

Tips for understanding the poem:

Read it aloud.

Pause at the punctuation NOT the ends of the lines.

Think what word is the subject of each phrase and give it a slight emphasis.

O, ye who love to-day,
Turn away
From Patience with her silver ray:
For Patience shows a twilight face
Like a half-lighted moon
When daylight dies apace.

But ye who love to-morrow,
Beg or borrow
To-day some bitterness of sorrow:
For Patience shows a lustrous face
In depth of night her noon;
Then to her sun gives place.