Decorative initials like these were often used by printers to mark new sections of text. Initials sometimes featured flowers, animals, or Biblical scenes.

These initials all come from early printed books in our collections.
Many early printed books did not include illustrations related to the text, but printers sometimes used decorative flourishes like these to mark the end of chapters or sections of text.

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This book has a detailed engraved title-page. Engraved title-pages emerged during the 16th century as engraving became more widely used in book production.

Richard Allestree, The gentleman’s calling (London, 1662) [F 10.2/5]
Leo VI, Emperor of the East, *Vaticinium Severi et Leonis Imperatorum* (Brescia, 1596) [K 44/10]

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‘Divers habits of the women at Ausburg’, from François Maximilien Mission, *A new voyage to Italy* Volume II. (London, 1714) [W 36/1]
Book owners often use a bookplate like these to mark a book as theirs. Why not have a go at designing your own bookplate in the blank box – what images would you use to represent yourself?