

# The Secret Language of Gemstones



During the early Victorian era, c. 1837-1860, jewelers were strongly influenced by Queen Victoria's romantic life & loves so their designs are often filled with sentimentalism, romanticism & symbolism. This period of time is often referred to as the "Romantic Period". The sentimental Victorians were very preoccupied with symbolism and engaged in various rituals and practices that are now long forgotten.

Throughout the history of jewelry making, design fads came and went in phases similarly like the fashions of today. Although symbolism in jewelry had been used long before the 1800's, the Victorians were especially fond of incorporating it into their daily lives.

Many writers and poets of the era placed secret meanings into their published works, which attributed to the great proliferation of expressing sentiments via symbolism during that time. For example, the publication of Charlotte de Latour's *Le Langage des Fleurs*, in December 1819, helped launch the Victorian fad of expression through the language of flowers. Pictorial symbolism was also popular and used in charms, amulets and talismans. Color too had its own set of meanings that was incorporated into some jeweler's designs.

One of my favorite practices was the use of arranging gemstones into an acrostic pattern, which was used to spell out a love one's name; commemorate a birthday or an anniversary; or to express amorous tidings, phrases and sentiments; and surprisingly could be used in intricately detailed pieces to express poetic & lyrical verses.

## Edgar Allan Poe's acrostic poem entitled "Elizabeth" (c. 1829)

Elizabeth it is in vain you say  
Love not – thou sayest in so sweet a way:  
In vain those words from thee or L. E. L.  
Zantippe's talents had enforced so well:  
Ah! If that language from your heart arise,  
Breathe it less gently forth – and veil thine eyes.  
Endymion, recollect, when Luna tried  
To cure his love – was cured of all beside –  
His folly – pride – and passion – for he died.

Likewise, Lewis Carroll incorporated acrostic verses in his writing; e.g. *Through the Looking-Glass* c.1871 concludes with a poem spelling "Alice Pleasance Liddell."

The practice of incorporating sentimental acrostic verse into jewelry was popular even amongst some notable names in history. The French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 - 1821) commissioned his jeweler, François-Regnault Nitot (1779-1853), to make several items commemorating his various occasions and loved ones.

People in today's fast-paced world are nostalgic about antique jewelry. We admire the Victorians because they took the time to be romantic and artistic. They had great pride in craftsmanship and created their accoutrements packed with as much esthetic and subtly inspirational beauty as they possibly could.

Now let us slow down the pace a little. Let's turn back the clock and take a peek into the romantic world of the Victorians. Below are some examples of some early acrostic arrangements as well as a handy gemstone reference chart. Imagine now how you could design your jewelry into sentimental patterns of your own. It is easy to do and there is no need to be a professional jeweler. All you need are genuine gemstone beads and a big romantic heart! You may choose to incorporate charms or other pictorial symbolism into your design to tell a story or commemorate an occasion so I have included charts on the Language of Flowers and pictorial symbolism for you to draw inspiration from.

Have fun, be artistic, feel the romance and create a soulful gift for someone special using the little known romantic secrets amidst the Language of Gemstones.

# Sentimental Acrostic Arrangements

- “Regard” ruby, emerald, garnet, amethyst, ruby & diamond.
- “Dearest” diamond, emerald, amethyst, ruby, emerald, sapphire & topaz.
- “Peace” pearl, emerald, amethyst, chrysoberyl & emerald.
- “Adore” amethyst, diamond, ruby & emerald
- “Love” lapis, opal, ruby & emerald
- “Darling” diamond, amethyst, ruby, lapis, iolite, nephrite & garnet

- Names
- Foreign & religious names & sentiments; e.g. *Je t’aime* (I love you)
- Political statements
- Poetry & Lyrical verses



*Antique brooch executed in simulated stones arranged in an acrostic pattern symbolizing “regard” & appropriately framed in ivy symbolizing “friendship”.*

	B benitoite blue topaz	C citrine coral carnelian chrysoprase	D diamond demantoid garnet diopside
E emerald elbaite	F fire agate fire opal fluorite	G garnet golden beryl	H hawk's-eye heliodor hematite
I iolite iris agate	J jasper jade	K- L kunzite, Larimar lapis lazuli labradorite	M-N malachite milky quartz nephrite
O opal onyx	P pearl peridot	Q quartz	R ruby rubellite
S sapphire spinel	T topaz, tourmaline tsavorite	U-V-W uvarovite garnet vesuvianite watermelon Tourm	Y-Z yellow sapphire zircon zoisite