

The Tudors

Structure of the tour

- Welcome
- Introduction to the Gallery and paintings
 - what is a gallery?
 - what is a portrait?
- Background to the National Portrait Gallery
- The tour is divided into two parts. Part 1 will focus on a selection of the Gallery's portraits in detail. The second part of the tour will encourage students to work in pairs to look at one of these portraits in detail

Introduction

- Explain that the tour looks at the portraits of the kings and queens of England who lived 500 years ago
- The tour is going to compare portraits from the past and today
- Create a context. Who is the Queen of England today? How long ago did Elizabeth become queen? Was she a young woman when she became queen? Show the students pictures of her coronation. What is she wearing and holding during the coronation ceremony?
- Where can we see images of Queen Elizabeth II today?
Discuss the different sources – coins, banknotes, stamps, in the newspaper

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- King Henry VII was the first Tudor monarch. He became King of England after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485
- This ended the civil war in England
- King Henry VIII was King of England from 1509 to 1547
- His son King Edward VI was King of England from 1547 to 1553
- Edward's mother was called Jane Seymour. She died just after his birth
- Henry VIII also had two daughters, Mary I (queen 1553–1558) and Elizabeth I (queen 1558–1603)
- Queen Elizabeth I did not marry and did not have children. She was the last Tudor monarch

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Background to portraiture in Tudor England

- During the reign of the Tudors there were important changes in literature, learning and the arts
- The Tudors, and in particular Queen Elizabeth I, used art for political means
- Portraits were often copied and placed in the houses of rich people
- This tour looks at ways the Tudors used paintings to demonstrate their power

Symbolism in Tudor portraits

- Gestures – what can we tell by the way people stand?
- Clothing – what can we tell about clothing?
- Objects and symbols – what can we tell by objects and symbols?

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NPG 4027

About the portraits

King Henry VIII (1491–1547), King of England 1509–1547

by Hans Holbein the Younger

Ink and watercolour, 1536–37

NPG 4027

Henry VIII commissioned Holbein in 1537 to make a large wall painting to celebrate the Tudor dynasty and the birth of his son Edward in 1537. This portrait is a large-scale preparatory drawing on paper, called a cartoon. It is the left-hand section of the wall painting for Whitehall Palace (now destroyed) which shows Henry VII behind him. From a surviving copy of the original painting we know that the right-hand side of the painting depicted Jane Seymour and Elizabeth of York.

Additional notes for consideration:

- Ask the students who can they see in the front of the portrait?
- Do you think he really looked like this?
- In this portrait, how is Henry VIII showing that he is a rich and powerful man?
- Who is the man at the back of the portrait? Can you see him in any other portraits in the Gallery?
- If you look at the cartoon carefully, you can see the joins. The cartoon is made from sections of paper joined together
- Explain to the students that this is a small part of a larger image. Encourage them to think about what kind of building it would have been displayed in

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NPG 5511

King Edward VI (1537–1553), King of England 1547–1553

Unknown artist

Oil on panel, 1547

NP 5511

The son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour, Edward succeeded his father in 1547 aged nine and died of tuberculosis shortly before his sixteenth birthday. In this portrait, which is thought to have been painted after his accession, Edward copies the forceful pose of his father seen in Holbein's Whitehall Cartoon.

Edward ruled England with the help of a council, dominated at first by the Duke of Somerset as Lord Protector, and later by the Duke of Northumberland.

Additional notes and questions for consideration:

- Is he wearing a crown? How do we know he is king?
- What is the big object behind Edward? Why do you think it has been included in the picture?
- What is Edward standing on? Ask the students what shapes and patterns they can see in the picture
- This picture is full of things made of expensive materials to show us how rich Edward and his family were. Discuss with the students what materials they can see

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NPG 5175

Elizabeth I (1533–1603), Queen of England 1558–1603

‘The Coronation Portrait’

Unknown Artist

Oil on panel, 1600

NPG 5175

This portrait shows the 26-year-old Elizabeth in her coronation robes. This image was used as the basis for coins and seals and is unusual because she is shown full-face. The portrait is based on an original, now lost, which dated from Elizabeth’s coronation in 1559. Her long flowing hair was traditional for a coronation. Elizabeth’s dress was made of woven gold and silk thread and it was used by Mary I, five years earlier. It is decorated with Tudor roses and *fleurs-de-lis*.

Additional questions for consideration:

- Who is the woman? What is she holding? What is her job?
- Ask the students to discuss what clues we have in the painting
- Is the woman young or old? How can you tell?
- Describe her clothes. What colours and patterns can you see? What are they made of?
- Is she wearing her everyday clothes or are they clothes for a special occasion?
- How might it feel to wear these clothes?
- Look at her face. Is she showing her feelings? Discuss with the students what they think she is feeling
- What occasion does this picture recall or commemorate? Ask the students what type of occasion they think a coronation is. You may want to show the students pictures of Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation

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NPG 2561

Elizabeth I (1533–1603), Queen of England 1558–1603

‘The Ditchley Portrait’

by Marcus Gheerarts the Younger

Oil on canvas, 1592

NPG 2251

Elizabeth is 59 years old in this portrait. She is standing on a globe with her feet placed on England. Her white dress is a symbol of virginity and the rose pinned to her ruff represents the house of Tudor. The left of the portrait shows sunshine, the right a cloudy, stormy sky. Elizabeth has turned her back on her stormy past and is looking towards a brighter future. Sir Henry Lee commissioned this portrait, which commemorates Elizabeth’s forgiveness of him for taking a mistress. It is called the ‘Ditchley’ portrait because she is standing on Sir Henry Lee’s house in Ditchley, Oxfordshire.

Additional notes for consideration:

- What has been included in the picture to show that she is Queen of England?
- Compare the map in the picture to the modern map of Great Britain. How are they different?