STEP INTO THE FRAME

A Resource for Teachers of History and other subjects at Key Stage 3 using Tudor and Jacobean portraits from the National Portrait Gallery, London, on loan to Montacute House, Somerset

A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Queen Elizabeth I
by or after George Gower, oil on panel, c.1588 (NPG 541) © National Portrait Gallery, London
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A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Introduction

This resource for Secondary School Teachers focuses principally on a selection of the Tudor portraits usually on display at Montacute House in Somerset. Since the 1970s, Tudor and Jacobean portraits from the National Portrait Gallery’s collection have been on view in this beautiful Jacobean country house, as part of the Gallery’s partnership with the National Trust.

The Learning Managers at both the National Portrait Gallery in London and at Montacute House have combined their expertise to produce this detailed and practical guide for using these portraits in the classroom.

Each of the sections of this teachers’ resource looks at one or more portraits in depth. Click on any image in the resource for more information about that portrait on the Gallery’s website.

Each section consists of:
- A reproduction of the portrait
- Contextual information
- Guided discussion for students to examine portraits in detail
- Historical enquiry based on a key concept or process in the KS3 curriculum
- Cross-curricular activities
- Further suggestions

The contextual information provides background material for teachers that can be fed into the students’ work as required. The guided discussion gives questions for the teacher to ask a group or class and then, in brackets, suggested possible answers that the students should be giving – it may be necessary to pose additional supplementary questions to achieve the full depth of meaning. Students should pose their own questions, too. It is recommended that the guided discussion is carried out first when tackling a new portrait.

The historical enquiries in this resource relate to the range and content specified for the study of History at KS3, in particular, section d – the development of political power, and to section g – the way in which the lives, beliefs and attitudes of people in Britain have changed over time. Students should be encouraged to generate their own enquiry topics using the portraits in this resource, as well as attempting the ones suggested here. The cross-curricular activities in this resource provide opportunities to make links between History and other subjects and areas of the curriculum. In particular these links are with Art and with English (speaking and listening, as well as reading and writing). In both subjects the focus is on the key concepts of creativity and cultural understanding. Other cross-curricular activities link History with Citizenship (in particular with diversity and conflict resolution) and PSHE (thinking critically about identities). Additionally, students may choose to use ICT in their responses to historical enquiries, cross-curricular activities and further suggested activities.
Henry VIII (1491-1547, reigned 1509-47) is probably the most visually distinctive monarch in the whole of British history. The very well-known and widely-disseminated image of the king is that created by the greatest artist who worked for him, Hans Holbein. It therefore comes as a surprise to many people that there is only one surviving painting of Henry definitely by Holbein himself, and that it is small – only about the size of A4 paper. All the other paintings are copies. The only life-sized image of the king indisputably by Holbein is a drawing of Henry with his father, commonly called the Whitehall Cartoon, which was used to make a mural that no longer exists. The Whitehall Cartoon is now in the National Portrait Gallery (see the Historical Enquiry below).

The painting in this resource is a good example of a copy of the final image that Holbein created for King Henry VIII, in about 1542. Holbein’s original painting of Henry in his later years does not survive and probably was not made from a live sitting with the king. Instead, Holbein appears to have adapted and aged his 1536 portrait of Henry, as shown in the cartoon and the small painting, to reflect the older monarch, more infirm in body but just as determined and intractable in character. Unfortunately, the few written descriptions of Henry’s appearance all date from much earlier in his life, though his armour of about 1540 testifies to his vastly increased girth. Creating this image was among the final commissions that Holbein carried out for Henry. Holbein died in London in the following year, 1543, probably of plague.
King Henry VIII

Guided Discussion

• What age do you think Henry is here? (Early fifties)

• In what ways does this portrait show his age? (His weight, lined and puffy face, using stick for support, balding)

• When younger he was described as handsome – is he still?

• How does he want you to feel about him? (Impressed, in awe, rather frightened, obedient)

• How does the portrait show his wealth? (Rich clothes, jewellery and elaborate staff, also his bulk)

• How many different layers of his clothing can you see? (At least four - there is an open sleeveless black surcoat worn over the fur-lined embroidered surcoat)

• How are his clothes designed to show different layers? (Cloth of gold sleeves slashed and linen shirt pulled through them, four different sleeve lengths)

• Why might this be a useful way to show wealth? (By revealing different layers of expensive fabrics, not just the final rich top garment)

• How does he show his authority and power? (Pose, stern expression, eye contact and body language, particularly the strong grip on staff)

• How does the portrait maximise this sense of authority? (Very little background – Henry fills the whole picture, almost bursting out of it)

• Do the proportions of his face in this portrait conform to usual human facial measurements? Look in particular at the positioning of the eyes in the head, the distance between the eyes, the distances between the nose, mouth and chin. (Not really – the eyes are very high and wide, and his mouth is far nearer to his nose than it is to his chin.)

• Other portraits by Holbein show similar placing of the features. Does this reflect the sitter’s appearance or the artist’s style, do you think? (These almost certainly reflect the artist’s style, despite Holbein’s reputation for capturing a likeness, rather than sitter’s actual appearance)
King Henry VIII

Historical Enquiry

Key Process: 2.2 - Using Evidence
Can we ever discover what Henry VIII really looked like?

Portraits
Include those not by Holbein as well as those that are, for example:

- King Henry VIII
  by an unknown artist
  oil on panel,
  c.1520
  (NPG 4690)
  © National Portrait Gallery, London

- King Henry VIII
  by an unknown artist
  oil on panel,
  c.1535-1540
  (NPG 1376)
  © National Portrait Gallery, London

King Henry VIII
by Hans Holbein the Younger
ink and watercolour,
c.1536-1537
(NPG 4027)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

King Henry VIII
by Hans Holbein the Younger
ink and watercolour,
c.1536-1537
(NPG 4027)
© National Portrait Gallery, London
King Henry VIII

Historical Enquiry

King Henry VIII by an unknown artist
oil on panel, c.1535-1540 (NPG 3638)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

King Henry VIII by Cornelis Metsys (Massys),
line engraving, 1548 (NPG D24929)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Written Descriptions
Those by foreign observers are usually the most revealing, for example these descriptions, sent by the Venetian embassy in London to the Senate in Venice:

September 1519 Sebastian Giustinian, Venetian Ambassador in England
‘He was very fair and his whole frame admirably proportioned. Hearing that King Francis [of France] wore a beard, he allowed his to grow, and as it was reddish, he then had got a beard that looked like gold.’

August 1531 Mario Savorgnano, Venetian Ambassador in England
‘He is tall of stature, very well formed, and of very handsome presence.’

November 1531 Lodovico Falier, Venetian Ambassador in England
‘His face is angelic rather than handsome; his head imperial and bald [meaning his hair is cropped], and he wears a beard, contrary to the English custom.’

Armour
Explore those in the Royal Armouries: www.royalarmouries.org
Go to Collections, then Arms and Armour and search on King Henry VIII.
Look at the armours of 1515, 1520, 1540 and 1544 (less helpful, portions only survive)
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King Henry VIII

Activity

Cross-curricular activity

Citizenship/History
Compare the images of Henry VIII with those of a modern or recent politician, noting similarities and differences. How far do these images reflect the political structures within which these images were created? Possible politicians might include:

Margaret Thatcher, Baroness Thatcher
www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?sText=Margaret+Thatcher&submitSearchTerm%5Fx=7&submitSearchTerm%5Fy=10&search=ss&OConly=true&firstRun=true&LinkID=mp05827

Sir Edward Heath
www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?sText=Edward+Heath&submitSearchTerm_x=9&submitSearchTerm_y=7&search=ss&OConly=true&firstRun=true&LinkID=mp05396&wPage=0

Tony Benn
www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?sText=Tony+Benn&submitSearchTerm%5Fx=10&submitSearchTerm%5Fy=9&search=ss&OConly=true&firstRun=true&LinkID=mp05074

Michael Foot
www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?search=ss&firstRun=true&sText=Michael+Foot&LinkID=mp01621

Further Suggestion

The need for images of Henry VIII did not cease with his death, particularly in group portraits. Students could investigate his posthumous role in Tudor propaganda portraits, for example:

The Allegory of the Tudor Succession
www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/art/online/?action=show_item&item=737

King Edward VI and the Pope
by an unknown artist
oil on panel, c.1570 (NPG 4165)
© National Portrait Gallery, London
These two men both worked for Henry VIII and both lost their lives in the course of their loyal service to the king. Differences in their religious beliefs brought them into conflict with each other, too. Holbein had a very different relationship with each of them. Thomas Cromwell (c.1485-1540) was rather more than just another sitter to him; he was a powerful man who might perhaps help Holbein achieve royal patronage, but not someone he was close to. With Thomas More (1478-1535) on the other hand, Holbein had a close personal connection, having lived in More’s household during his first visit to England in the late 1520s. Holbein was sent to Thomas More by his friend Erasmus to seek work in England, away from the religious turmoil of the reformation that was engulfing Europe, reducing demand for paintings, particularly religious commissions. More wrote: ‘Your painter, dearest Erasmus, is a wonderful man; but I fear he won’t find England as fruitful as he had hoped. Yet I will do my best to see he does not find it absolutely barren.’

When Holbein returned to England in the 1530s the political scene was very different. More was in disgrace for his refusal to accept Henry making himself Head of the Church to bring about his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. More, in his execution speech, described himself as ‘the king’s faithful servant, but God’s first’. Cromwell was painted in 1534 at a time when most of Holbein’s sitters were foreigners working in London. This was well before he became Henry VIII’s great painter.
The portraits of More and Cromwell in the National Portrait Gallery collection are both very good copies made after Hans Holbein’s death. His originals hang in the Frick Collection in New York: www.frick.org/collection/index.htm

Holbein’s working methods made this copying possible and can still be used today (see Cross-curricular Activity below). When he was with his sitters, he made a drawing of their head and shoulders, sometimes adding words (in German, his native language) to remind himself of colours for costume, hair and jewellery. A sitting could last as little as three to five hours and might be Holbein’s only face to face contact with the sitter.

Holbein would then transfer the outline by one of two different methods onto his prepared wooden panel ready for painting. One method was like using old-fashioned carbon paper, made by rubbing charcoal over a sheet of paper. This was then laid face down on the panel and the drawing placed on top of it. The lines were transferred by drawing over them with a sharp stylus. The other method, pouncing, involved placing another sheet of paper under the drawing and pricking along all the lines, leaving a few millimetres between each small hole. This lower sheet was then placed on the panel and charcoal pushed through the holes to create a dot-to-dot picture. The dots were then joined and painting could begin. As well as being a useful way for artists to create multiple images of a sitter it also acted as a form of political control whereby a sitter could be sure that an image they had approved was disseminated and not one that they had not authorised.

Activity

Guided Discussion

- Both men worked for King Henry VIII – what clues are there about what they did? (More wears a gold chain of office and holds a piece of paper – he was a lawyer and was made Lord Chancellor by Henry in 1529, but resigned in 1532 over the king’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Cromwell has a book, quill pen, scissors and papers, including one saying ‘To our trusty and right well-beloved Councillor Thomas Cromwell, Master of our Jewel House’. Cromwell suggested that Henry make himself Head of the Church to divorce Catherine of Aragon. As he was not made an earl until 1540, the original portrait would not have had the scroll saying Earl of Essex.)

- Both men were painted by Hans Holbein – from their expressions, which man did Holbein find more sympathetic? (Most people would say Thomas More. When Holbein first came to England he went to live in Thomas More’s household and got to know him and his family very well. Holbein did not have a similar personal connection with Thomas Cromwell.)

- From their portraits, which of these two men would you prefer to meet and why?

- What is in the background of each portrait? (More has a green curtain with a red cord, picking up on the red of his velvet sleeves. Cromwell sits on a long wooden bench with a high back; behind it is a flat panel of blue damask cloth.)

- These portraits show the two men when things were going well for them. How is this reflected in their portraits? (The clothes, fabrics, gold and jewels, furniture, books and papers.)

- How did Henry treat them in the end? (Both men were executed by Henry VIII, More because he would not accept Henry as Head of the Church and Cromwell after arranging Henry’s unhappy marriage to Anne of Cleves. More was a devout Roman Catholic; Cromwell was a Protestant.)
More and Cromwell still arouse strong feelings today. The debate among historians and non-historians alike over interpretations of both men has been rekindled by Hilary Mantel’s Man Booker Award-winning novel *Wolf Hall* (2009), often making comparisons with Robert Bolt’s 1960 play, *A Man for all Seasons*. As one critic succinctly put it: ‘In many ways, *Wolf Hall* is a riposte to Robert Bolt’s acclaimed 1960s play *A Man for all Seasons*, which casts More as saint and Cromwell as sinner’. The debate generated on both sides provides examples of diametrically opposed interpretations for students to consider. They should ask who is making the interpretations, for whom, and for what purpose, and why their views might differ so strongly. Students should also debate whether novels and plays should be judged by the same exacting historical standards as a biography or works of history, and where historic houses and museum displays fit into this.

Suggestions for tackling the enquiry might include dividing students into three groups, each analysing one of the three examples below (referring to the full interview or review, if necessary) before presenting back to the class. The examples start with *Wolf Hall*’s author talking about its hero, Thomas Cromwell, in an interview.

**The author Hilary Mantel:**
‘I started out more or less accepting the estimate of him as a villain, but I thought he must be an interesting one. His astonishing rise in the world fascinated me. As I read his letters and better understood his mind, I saw that he had a radical vision of English society and yet he was also somebody who hammered every detail into place. In his adroitness of mind and the completeness of imagination he stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries.’


**The writer Vanora Bennett enjoyed the book more than she had expected:**
‘Readers may also be shocked by Mantel’s hostility to the Catholic Thomas More. Cromwell eventually replaces More as chancellor, once Catholicism goes out of fashion and More refuses to drop his faith. Cromwell’s men then bring about More’s downfall. Having written my own fictional (and negative) Thomas More, I was interested in how she characterised him… Love him or hate him — he’s a saint to Catholics, while Protestants tend to regard him as a torturer…

It’s only a generation since More’s obstinacy made him a literary hero. Robert Bolt’s play had him as a good man who would rather die than be dishonoured. But how things have changed. We don’t want martyrs any more. We want something more flexible and pragmatic: a person of subtlety; a survivor. In Mantel’s rethinking of the Tudor drama, intriguingly, it’s Thomas Cromwell who is put forward, and plausibly too, as a new generation’s choice of Man for All Seasons.’

[http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/fiction/article6160192.ece](http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/fiction/article6160192.ece)
The critic Melanie McDonagh was worried by *Wolf Hall*:

‘Because it’s so readable, so convincing, it risks being taken as a true version of events. And that’s scary. Because one of the things it does is to reverse the standing of two Thomases: Cromwell and More. The novel does a grave disservice to More who was, whatever else you say about him, one of the great men of the Renaissance…

Trouble is, there is a reason why Cromwell has had a longstanding reputation as a complete bastard. The tally of the executions over which he presided - including those for heresy - far surpassed More’s. And unlike More, he was unlikely to have been swayed by the notion that what he was doing was for the good of souls…. More presided over the execution of six heretics and was personally involved in proceedings against a number of others…. As for Cromwell, his period as chief minister coincided with hundreds of executions… More, Fisher… Anne Boleyn… 10 Carthusians; the rebels in the Pilgrimage of Grace;… John Lambert [a Protestant], upon whom Cromwell personally pronounced the death sentence; John Forest burned for Catholicism, with Cromwell watching; 14 unfortunate Anabaptists.

None of this needs matter to the Man Booker judges. But it would be genuinely sad if our view of Thomas More, one of the really great men of English history, were to be distorted by the caricature in *Wolf Hall*. It’s a novel, remember?’

www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23745264-a-man-for-all-seasons-sir-thomas-more-brought-low-by-fiction.do
Activity

Historical Enquiry

It may also be helpful for students to consider the two men in relation to some of their contemporaries, for instance:

King Henry VIII  
after Hans Holbein the Younger  
oil on copper, c.1536 (NPG 157)  
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Sir Richard Southwell  
after Hans Holbein the Younger  
oil on panel, late 16th century, 1536 (NPG 4912)  
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Thomas Wolsey  
by Unknown artist  
oil on panel, late 16th century, c.1520 (NPG 32)  
© National Portrait Gallery, London

John Fisher  
after Hans Holbein the Younger  
oil on paper, 16th century, c.1527 (NPG 2821)  
© National Portrait Gallery, London
Activity

Cross-curricular Activity

Art/History – Pouncing: a Tudor method of copying portraits

Any line drawing can be pricked and pounced by the method used by Holbein; students can try this technique themselves (tracing paper works well for pricking and chalk pastels could be used to finish the portrait instead of paint, if preferred). Alternatively, the teacher could prepare the pouncings beforehand. Six to eight sheets of tracing paper can be pricked at a time; be very careful when separating them again as they can easily tear.

Many of Holbein’s surviving original drawings can be seen in the e-gallery on the Royal Collection website by searching on Holbein: www.royalcollection.org.uk/egallery

The Thomas More drawing of 1528 was pricked for pouncing; using the zoom feature shows the holes very clearly. The John Fisher image in the Historical Enquiry above is a face pattern created to make further images of him.

Citizenship/History – Conflict resolution
The conflicts between those of majority and minority religious beliefs in Tudor England were largely settled by the strong intimidating the weak. Those caught spreading minority beliefs were executed for heresy, often by burning them alive. Queen Elizabeth I initially tried to avoid such conflict by not making ‘windows into men’s souls’ (quoted by Francis Bacon, 1561-1626). However, after Elizabeth’s excommunication by the Pope in 1570 incited Catholics to attempt to assassinate her, she was forced to take more punitive measures.

Ask students in groups to apply what they have learned in Citizenship lessons about conflict resolution to the situation facing More and Cromwell in the 1530s, and more widely between Catholics and Protestants throughout the century and beyond. Students present their conflict resolution strategies for this situation in turn to the class, who vote on which group’s solution they think is the best.
Further Suggestions

For a more straightforward Historical Enquiry, split the students into two groups and ask each to describe the Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon and marriage to Anne Boleyn through either Cromwell’s or More’s eyes, and then compare their accounts as a whole class, explaining the similarities and differences.

Alternatively, pose a wider Historical Enquiry - When More and Cromwell were born, Roman Catholics were the majority in England and Protestants were a very small minority. By Elizabeth I’s reign, Protestants were the majority and Roman Catholics were the minority. How did this come about?

English/History – Compare extracts from Robert Bolt’s stage play A Man for all Seasons (first performed in 1960) and Hilary Mantel’s award-winning novel Wolf Hall (2009). Each work presents a very different view of More and Cromwell. Choose an episode from each in which both men appear and ask students, perhaps working in two groups, one on each text, to assess how accurately, in their opinion, they are depicted. How does the writer reveal their view of the character of each man?
This important portrait of Queen Elizabeth I (1536-1603, reigned 1558-1603) commemorates the high point of her reign - the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Multiple copies of this painting were made, of which three survive, two in an imperfect state (this being one of them) and one, at Woburn Abbey, showing the full portrait without later over-painting. All three come from the workshop of George Gower, the queen’s Sergeant-Painter (the monarch’s sergeant-painter was responsible for gilding and creating decorative work in the royal palaces, as well as portrait painting).

The defeat of the Armada is happening in the two scenes at the top, showing different moments in the battle, on either side of Elizabeth’s head, separated by a green curtain. To Elizabeth’s right the English ships create a square formation while the fire ships are set loose to cause confusion among the Spanish fleet, unable to manoeuvre their large galleons out of the path of the lethal flames. To Elizabeth’s left the storm is shown raging while final traces of the Spanish masts sink beneath the churning, slate grey waves.

In the full version Elizabeth has her hand on the globe, symbolic of her desire for an empire (this is the age of Raleigh’s exploration and initial colonisation in the New World). Her other hand holds a fan of exotic feathers and her crown is placed beside her on a table. The chair in the portrait looks most odd, being shown from two different perspectives at the same time. The chair back is shown face on, but the arm of the chair is shown from the side. The chair is carved with a mermaid or siren, creatures who lure sailors to their doom. Is Elizabeth herself the mermaid, having lured Philip of Spain’s fleet to watery graves?
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Queen Elizabeth I – the ‘Armada’ portrait

Activity

Guided Discussion

- What can you see in the background of the picture? Look carefully. (Sea, ships)
- How is the left side of the background different from the right side? (Ships sailing on left; sunk on right – this is very hard to see)
- What important event in Elizabeth’s reign does this refer to? (Spanish Armada)
- Why did Elizabeth have this portrait painted, do you think? (To celebrate England’s victory)
- Was she really standing by the Channel while the battle took place? (No, definitely not: it is an imaginary picture of the battle)
- Look carefully around the edges of the painting – was the portrait actually this size when it was first made? Give your reasons. (No – no artist would have cut through Elizabeth’s arms and hands like this.)
- Why do you think it might have been cut down? (Given the inelegant composition which resulted, it probably was to save the picture from an attack of woodworm or rot, cutting away the infected parts to preserve the middle.)
- This painting has lost a lot on both sides – what would you have put into these missing parts if you had been the artist? (Anything suitable to the theme of the Armada – Sir Francis Drake etc. The picture actually showed her with the crown beside her and her hand on the globe)
- What are Elizabeth’s favourite colours? (Black and white, also red and gold)
- What is her favourite type of jewel? (Pearls)
- Explain how her favourite colours and jewel tell us that she was sometimes called the ‘Moon Goddess’. (Black for night, white for the moon; a pearl is like a miniature full moon)
- Are there any other references to astronomy in this picture? (Yes, gold suns on her dress)
- Are there any other references to the weather in the picture? (Yes, the Spanish ships have been struck by a storm. The picture hints at the idea that Elizabeth controls the weather, a theme also found in other paintings of her.)
- Where is her largest pearl? (At the bottom of the painting, over her genitals)
- What is the message of this? (Her greatest pearl is her chastity; this links with the idea of the moon goddess who was renowned for her chastity)
Queen Elizabeth I – the ‘Armada’ portrait

Activity

Historical Enquiry

Key Process 2.2 - Using evidence
A woman in a man’s world – how do Elizabeth’s portraits help her overcome this problem? (Focus on the period around the Armada - roughly 1585-1595)

Other portraits of Elizabeth I

Queen Elizabeth I
(‘The Ditchley portrait’)
by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger
oil on canvas, c.1592 (NPG 2561)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Other possible portraits of her
www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?text=Queen+Elizabeth+I&submitSearchTerm%5Fx=12&submitSearchTerm%5Fy=5&search=ss&OConly=true&firstRun=true&LinkID=mp01452

Elizabeth I’s Armada Speech
www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/uk/armada/source3/elizspeech.html

Jewel and medals commemorating the Armada
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O33883/locket-the-heneage-jewel-the-armada/


www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=952825&partid=1&searchText=Armada+medal&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&numpages=10&images=on&orig=%2fresearch%2fsearch_the_collection_database.aspx&currentPage=1
Queen Elizabeth I – the ‘Armada’ portrait

Activity

Cross-curricular Activity

Art/History
This project is to design a fabric for Elizabeth I that conveys key messages about her. The fabric on the queen’s sleeves in the Armada portrait, patterned with gold suns, and the pearls on Elizabeth’s clothes give messages about her power by linking her with the sun and the moon. As she neared seventy years of age, Elizabeth I was depicted in a portrait at Hatfield House called the Rainbow Portrait, in which she is shown holding a small rainbow. She is dressed in an orange cloak embroidered or woven with a pattern of eyes and ears. The message is both that she is seen and heard everywhere and that she sees and hears everything that happens in her kingdom. In the same portrait she wears a bodice patterned with spring flowers, in an attempt to persuade viewers that she really is still youthful (her face has been painted to represent her at a much younger age). Her sleeve is decorated with a jewelled snake, symbolising wisdom, with a little red heart dangling from its mouth, the message being that her head rules her heart.

The fabric designs for Elizabeth’s clothes were an ideal way for her to promote key messages about herself, both when she appeared in public and through wearing them in her portraits. There were many messages Elizabeth wanted to convey – beauty, wealth, power, control, fame, wisdom, love for her people, her chastity and so on. There were various sources of imagery that could be used to create visual symbols for her, including colours, flowers, jewels, animals, the Bible and classical mythology. Individually or in small groups students should research and design a fabric for her and then present it to the class, explaining the reasons for their choice of symbols. This could lead to a printing or embroidery project.

Further Suggestions

Google (in Google Images) Elizabeth I Armada portrait; Elizabeth I Rainbow portrait; George Gower self-portrait
Webquest – Elizabeth I’s New Portrait
www.npg.org.uk/webquests/launch.php?webquest_id=20&partner_id=portrait
Sir Christopher Hatton (1540-91) and Sir Walter Ralegh (1552-1618) were two of Queen Elizabeth’s principal courtiers. Both in their portraits and, in very different ways, through their actions, they assisted Elizabeth in promulgating her personal iconography which helped her to maintain control of her court. Elizabeth’s courtiers were a particularly difficult group of men to control, endlessly divided by factions and clamouring to outdo each other in seeking the queen’s attention and favour. To deal with this masculine onslaught, Elizabeth adopted the role of the lady of courtly love, adored by many men but ultimately bestowing her undivided love upon none of them. In the role of a supplicant lover, Sir Christopher Hatton, just a few years younger than the queen, was the ideal courtier for Elizabeth. He first came to her attention through his skill at dancing and he never married, devoting himself entirely to his sovereign and holding the office of Lord Chancellor. Elizabeth, who gave her most favoured courtiers pet names, called Hatton her ‘Sheep’ and her ‘Lids’ [as in ‘eyelids’].

Ralegh, on the other hand, was seventeen years younger than the queen. He committed some heinous personal offences in Elizabeth’s eyes, in particular getting one of her ladies-in-waiting, Elizabeth Throckmorton, pregnant and then marrying her in secret without the queen’s permission. This landed the couple in the Tower of London for some time, although she did relent and release her ‘Pug’ as she called him. However, in his poetry, Ralegh declared his undivided love for the queen and developed poetic imagery promoting her as the moon goddess and celebrating her chastity and her power over her subjects. In a long poem, now mainly lost, he took on the character of the ocean (a pun on Walter/water) while she was the moon, controlling the movements of the adoring ocean. A tiny crescent moon with the Latin motto ‘love and virtue’ appears in Ralegh’s portrait in the top left hand corner. Both men’s choice of colours and of pearls on their clothing reflects the queen’s personal imagery; in addition Hatton wears a cameo of Elizabeth on a long chain around his neck.
Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Walter Ralegh

Activity

Guided Discussion

- What colours is Ralegh wearing? *(Black and white, with brown fur lining his cloak)*
- What jewels does he wear? *(Pearls, both as earrings and on his clothes and his sword hilt.)*
- Who else's favourite colours and jewels are these? *(Queen Elizabeth I)*
- What do they say about Elizabeth? *(They emphasise her virginity)*
- What does Ralegh mean by wearing them? *(To show his devotion to the queen)*
- What can you see in the top left hand of the picture? *(A moon)*
- How is this to do with the pearls and favourite colours? *(Pearls symbolise the moon; Cynthia the moon goddess was a virgin goddess. Ralegh wrote poems for Elizabeth I addressing her as Cynthia the moon goddess.)*
- How does Hatton show his devotion to the queen in his portrait? *(He wears a miniature portrait of her on a chain round his neck.)*
- Is it a painting of her? *(It looks like a cameo cut from a stone with a black and a white layer, like this: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O69607/cameo-queen-elizabeth-i)*
- Elizabeth liked her male courtiers to say they were in love with her. Christopher Hatton won the queen's favour by being an expert dancer and by never marrying. What do you think Elizabeth said when she found that Ralegh had got one of her ladies in waiting pregnant? *(She sent him to the Tower of London and banished him from court when he got married.)*

Historical Enquiry

Key Process 2.3: Communicating about the Past
Outshine all others at court - what different ways can students suggest of displaying allegiance to Queen Elizabeth I, choosing colours and symbols that will win her favour?
Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Walter Ralegh

Activity

Cross-curricular Activity

Art/History
Create a self-portrait miniature in Tudor dress suitable to present to the queen. Work in watercolour on a circle or oval of cartridge paper. Elizabethan miniatures were painted on very fine leather called vellum, stuck on to card, which was sometimes cut from a playing card. Examples of miniatures include:

Sir Walter Ralegh
by Nicholas Hilliard
watercolour on vellum,
c.1585 (NPG 4106)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke
by Nicholas Hilliard
watercolour on vellum,
c.1590 (NPG 5994)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Further Suggestions

English/History – Prepare a speech welcoming Queen Elizabeth I, using imagery, symbols and language that will appeal to her.
Sir Edward Hoby

Sir Edward Hoby
by an unknown artist, oil on panel, 1583 (NPG 1974)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

This rather strange portrait, with its mysterious allegorical picture in the top right hand corner, has never been definitively explained. There are a small number of other Elizabethan portraits with equally puzzling allegorical scenes; the unsolved mystery is part of their charm. Sir Edward Hoby (1560-1617) was a good linguist and the son of a diplomat. He was knighted in 1582 just before this portrait was painted, when he was in his early twenties. He served as an MP, but really came into his own during the reign of James I when he was one of the king’s favourites. In this portrait he wears a Greenwich armour and his golden lance rest, for tilting during tournaments, is very prominent, as is his coat of arms. (The armoury at Greenwich, staffed mainly by German armourers such as Jacob Halder, was founded by Henry VIII and throughout the Tudor period produced highly distinctive, decorative plate armour – see Armour for tournaments in Historical Enquiry below.) By this time the use of full armour, particularly if it was decorative like this, was confined to the tournament – the spread of firearms during the sixteenth century rendered armour obsolete on the battlefield, and with it, shields displaying the heraldry of the protagonists. However, chivalry was still a major feature of Elizabeth I’s court with the Accession Day Tilts, organised by Sir Henry Lee, a highpoint in her and her courtiers’ year. Performing feats of arms in front of their sovereign was one element in upholding the ritual of courtly love that was so important in Elizabeth’s control over her sometimes wayward courtiers. It also gave them a natural outlet for their masculine exuberance and desire for self-display. So an allegory linking a woman, a castle by a dark forest, a knight and a cache of arms combines many features of the imagery of Elizabethan chivalry, even if their precise meaning still eludes us.

Teachers’ Resource  Step into the Frame  National Portrait Gallery / National Trust
Sir Edward Hoby

Guided Discussion

- Is this man young or middle-aged? *(He is twenty three, written in the top left hand corner.)*
- What is he wearing? *(Armour – his helmet is under his right hand and his left hand is on the hilt of his sword.)*
- Does this look suitable for warfare or for tournaments (jousting)? *(Tournaments – it is decorated and has a lance rest just below his right shoulder.)*
- He has a commander’s baton (like a stout stick) beside his helmet which has a motto carved on it meaning ‘anger without strength is in vain’ – what language is this written in do you think? *(Latin – ‘vana sine viribus ira’ – ‘ira’ means anger, like the English word ‘irate’.)*
- What is above his right shoulder? *(His coat of arms)*
- What can you see above his left shoulder? *(A window or picture showing a woman standing in front of a castle; there is also a wood and a town or village.)*
- In front of the woman is a pit – what can you see in it? *(Drum, flags, various weapons)*
- The woman is holding a scroll which says in Latin ‘laid aside but not blunted’. No one knows quite what this means. Is it that he has temporarily stopped fighting, perhaps to get married? Or is the woman Queen Elizabeth I who has brought peace, but could go to war instantly if she had to? Do you think either of these are good explanations or do you have a different idea about what it might mean?

Historical Enquiry

**Key Process 2.2 - Using evidence**
What can a portrait like this say about Elizabethan chivalry and the ideas and values which underpinned it?
A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Sir Edward Hoby

Activity

Historical Enquiry

Further portraits

Sir Henry Lee
by Anthonis Mor (Antonio Moro)
oil on panel, 1568 (NPG 2095)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester
by an unknown artist
oil on panel, c.1575 (NPG 447)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Armour for tournaments

http://collections.royalarmouries.org/index.php?&a=quicksearch&i=1
put ‘Greenwich tilt’ into the search

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1069325/design-the-earl-of-leicester/

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1069315/design-sir-christopher-hatton/

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78115/design/

Heraldry

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O11008/seal/
A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Sir Edward Hoby

Activity

Cross-curricular Activity

History/English
What is the story being told in this portrait? Students should create their own narrative interpretation, perhaps drawing on some of the magical, fantasy imagery in plays by William Shakespeare like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Tempest* or Mercutio’s ‘Queen Mab’ speech in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Further Suggestions

Art/English/History
Exploring some other Tudor and Stuart portraits with allegorical meanings, for example:

- **Lord Edward Russell**
  by George Perfect Harding,
  by an unknown artist
  watercolour, 1573 (NPG 2410)
  © National Portrait Gallery,
  London

- **Sir Thomas Coningsby**
  attributed to George Gower
  oil on panel, 1572 (NPG 4348)
  © National Portrait Gallery,
  London

- **Venetia, Lady Digby**
  by Sir Anthony Van Dyck
  oil on canvas, c.1633-1634
  (NPG 5727)
  © National Portrait Gallery,
  London

Art History/History
Explore more about the art history of portraiture in *Portraits: An A/S Level Art History Resource* (designed in conjunction with AQA History of Art specifications, using portraits from the National Portrait Gallery) for Year 12 students and their teachers or as relevant groundwork for the A2 syllabus in Year 13. See [www.npg.org.uk/learning/digital.php](http://www.npg.org.uk/learning/digital.php) and follow the links.
At first glance this portrait shows a delightfully happy family group. George Villiers (1592-1628) was born into the minor nobility as a younger son. Having met King James I in 1614, with his good looks and skill at dancing, he quickly became the king’s most adored favourite. Benefitting from James’s infatuation, Villiers advanced rapidly through a series of honours, culminating in receiving a dukedom, the highest rank anyone could be awarded in the kingdom, in 1623. None of this made Buckingham popular with his fellow peers who resented him as an upstart and despised of his hold over the king.

Buckingham accompanied Charles, James’s son and heir and eight years his junior, during a visit to Spain to look for a possible wife. While abroad they shared a growing interest in art and in collecting paintings which continued throughout their lives. The failure to secure a bride in Spain resulted in Charles later marrying a Catholic French princess, Henrietta Maria, to be his queen. Unlike Queen Elizabeth I, James encouraged his favourites to marry. In 1620 Villiers married Catherine Manners, daughter of the Earl of Rutland, against her father’s wishes but not against hers.

When James died and Charles I ascended the throne the virtues of marriage and family life became more prominent at court. As king, Charles was no more willing to hear any criticism of Buckingham than his father had been, despite evidence of the duke’s misdeeds. The queen, however, seems to have been far less impressed by him; apparently her marriage was greatly improved by Buckingham’s death.

This portrait is a copy of an original which belonged to Charles I and is still in the Royal Collection. George and Catherine are shown with their two children, Mary and George; Catherine is pregnant with another son. Three months later Buckingham was stabbed to death by John Felton, angry at not being paid after the disastrous expedition the duke had led against the French at La Rochelle. This left Catherine widowed, shortly to bear him a posthumous son.
Activity

Guided Discussion

- Who is shown in the family? (Parents and two children)
- Who is the most important person? (The father – notice the badge of the Garter embroidered on his shoulder)
- Run your eye across the picture from left to right, just above the bottom of the frame – how much space does the father take up? (Over half way)
- Which people in the painting are nearest to the viewer? (The father and the baby)
- What can you therefore say about the gender of the baby? (Boy)
- What will the baby do with the red object hanging from the ribbon? (Put it in his mouth, as it is a teething stick)
- What would it have been made of? (Gold and coral)
- What seems strange about the background of the painting? (Two very different parts – plain behind the man and countryside behind the woman and children)
- Where is everyone looking? Who are they leaning towards? (The girl looks at her brother who is leaning towards the flowers. The duchess looks straight out but leans slightly towards her children. The duke leans backwards and regards the viewer three quarter face.)
- What colour links all four figures? (Blue ribbons, bows and sash)
- How far do the four members of this family seem connected with each other? (The duke seems somewhat disconnected from his family and, being closer, seems perhaps to be showing them off to the viewer.)
- What do you think might be written on the paper that the duke is holding? There is no known answer, so just guess.
The Duke of Buckingham and his Family

Activity

Historical Enquiry

Key Process 2.2 - Using evidence
By and large his contemporaries and later historians have found it difficult to find positive things to say about George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham. Do his portraits, and those of his closest friends and relatives, together with some of the things they said about him, suggest anything good about him at all?

Duke of Buckingham

George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham
attributed to William Larkin
oil on canvas, c.1616
(NPG 3840)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham
after Michiel Jansz. van Miereveldt
line engraving, c.1625
(NPG D33056)
© National Portrait Gallery, London
A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

The Duke of Buckingham and his Family

### Activity

#### Historical Enquiry

**Duchess of Buckingham**

‘Never woman was so happy as I am, for never was there so kind a husband as you are’


**John Felton**

*Image of John Felton by Richard Sawyer*

- Engraving, published 15 May 1830, after a rare seventeenth-century print
- © National Portrait Gallery, London

**King James I**

In 1617, when creating George Villiers Earl of Buckingham, James I said to the House of Lords: ‘You may be sure that I love the Earl of Buckingham more than anyone else, and more than you who are here assembled… Christ had his John, and I have my George.’ [This refers to John the Baptist, who baptised Jesus.] James also nicknamed him ‘Stenie’ after St Stephen, who reputedly looked like an angel, and called him his spouse: ‘I desire only to live in this world for your sake... God bless you, my sweet child and wife, and grant that ye may ever be a comfort to your dear dad and husband.’

*Image of King James I of England and VI of Scotland by Daniel Mytens*

- Oil on canvas, 1621 (NPG 109)
- © National Portrait Gallery, London
When in 1626 the House of Commons said to Charles ‘We protest before your Majesty and the whole world that until this great person be removed from intermeddling with the great affairs of state, we are out of hope of any good success; and we do fear that any money we shall or can give will, through his misemployment, be turned rather to the hurt and prejudice of your kingdom’, Charles refused to remove the Duke of Buckingham and dismissed Parliament instead.

King Charles I
by Gerrit van Honthorst
oil on canvas, 1628
(NPG 4444)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

King Charles I; Henrietta Maria
by Robert Van Voerst, after Sir Anthony Van Dyck
line engraving, 1634
(NPG D32047)
© National Portrait Gallery, London
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The Duke of Buckingham and his Family

Activity

Historical Enquiry

King Charles I, Henrietta Maria, King Charles II; Mary, Princess of Orange
by Bernard Baron,
after Sir Anthony Van Dyck
etching and line engraving,
1741 (NPG D26449)
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Cross-curricular Activity

History/English
Create a soap opera storyline featuring the Duke of Buckingham, centring on the paper he is holding. Alternatively write a Hello! magazine-style interview with the Buckingham Family.

Further Suggestion

PSHE/History
Recognising and thinking critically about idealism versus pragmatism. This resource includes sitters at the two ends of the idealism/pragmatism scale - from Sir Thomas More who was willing to die rather than betray his beliefs, to arch-pragmatists such as Thomas Cromwell or the Duke of Buckingham. Students should discuss where they feel is best to fall on the idealism/pragmatism scale, with their reasons.
A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Additional Portraits for further investigation: Set of Kings and Queens

Kings and Queens (part of set)
by an unknown artist
oil on panel, late 16th century?
(NPG 4980 (12, 13, 14))
© National Portrait Gallery, London

King Richard III

King Henry VII

King Henry VIII
A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Additional Portraits for further investigation: Set of Kings and Queens

Kings and Queens (part of set)
by an unknown artist
oil on panel, late 16th century?
(NPG 4980 (15, 16))
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Sets of portraits of kings and queens like these may have been a fairly common feature of houses such as Montacute in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. They were painted as sets by artists who did not specialise only in portraiture and are generally of a lower quality than most portrait painters would produce. The historical accuracy of many of the likenesses is also questionable. For example, the portrait of Edward V, one of the ‘Princes in the Tower’ (see below) is modelled on a later boy king, Edward VI. They were probably designed to be seen from a distance as a set, rather than to be scrutinised individually at close quarters. This set comes from Hornby Castle in Yorkshire, the seat of the Dukes of Leeds.

Many of these sets have since been broken up, so it is now unusual to find such an extensive group. There is another set of about the same size, painted in a slightly wider range of colours, at Dulwich Picture Gallery. These had been acquired by the founder of Dulwich College, Edward Alleyn, between 1618 and 1620 in four separate batches. Of the original twenty-six kings and queens collected by Alleyn, sixteen now survive in Dulwich Picture Gallery: www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/collection/search_the_collection.aspx
Activity

Guided Discussion

- Do they all look as though they were painted by the same artist? (No, probably not – it looks like two different styles)
- Do some of them look better painted than others – which are the better ones? What criteria are you using to judge them? (Henry VIII is probably the best painted of these; Anne Boleyn doesn’t look so well painted)
- Why might someone want a set like this? (To hang together; to remind them about history; people like collecting sets of things)
- The kings and queens were already dead so how would artists make these sets of pictures? (By copying other paintings, engravings or sometimes tombs)
- What about the kings or queens for whom there were no portraits or tombs? (They made them up!)
- These painters only use certain colours – what are they? (Red, black, brown, gold, white)
- If you were going to collect images of a set of people from today, what type of people would you choose to collect? (Maybe footballers, pop stars or other celebrities?)

Historical Enquiry

Key Concept: 1.6 - Significance
Who are the three most significant sitters from those in this set who lived and ruled between 1485 and 1558, and what are your reasons for selecting them? First select and discuss criteria for determining the historical significance of major figures. Use these criteria to decide who to select.

Cross-Curricular Activity

Citizenship/Art
Make a set of portraits of iconic figures from the twenty-first century. Discuss and define criteria for being considered iconic and then select between six and eight people. Check them in the collection search on the National Portrait Gallery’s website – are they represented in the Collection? (The criteria for inclusion are that they have made or are making a significant contribution to British life and culture.) Then choose media for making the portraits, discussing what would be best – should they all be in the same medium or all different?
A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Additional Portraits for further investigation: Set of Kings and Queens

Further Suggestion

A medieval version of the Historical Enquiry can be carried out with the earlier monarchs in the set.

For either the Tudor or Medieval sets of monarchs, students could suggest two or three additional sitters, with their reasons. Alternatively, students might analyse a museum or historic house display of portraits, such as at Montacute House, either during a visit or online, and carry out a similar significance activity looking at the sitters that have been included: www.npg.org.uk/beyond/montacute-house/room-by-room.php

If students then go on to suggest other different sitters, they will have to identify who to drop from the current display and check that a suitably-sized portrait of their chosen replacement sitter exists in the National Portrait Gallery Collection: www.npg.org.uk/collections.php

Students should discuss how in making real-life choices, such as for a display of historic portraits, their ‘pure’ significance criteria become altered by practical considerations.

Kings and Queens (part of set)
by an unknown artist
oil on panel, c.1620 (NPG 4980 (1, 2, 3))
© National Portrait Gallery, London

King William I
(‘The Conqueror’)

King Henry I

King Stephen
A Portrait Resource for Teachers at Key Stage 3

Additional Portraits for further investigation:
Set of Kings and Queens

Activity

Further Suggestion

Kings and Queens (part of set)
by an unknown artist, oil on panel,
late 16th century? (NPG 4980 (4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11))
© National Portrait Gallery, London

King Henry II  King John  King Edward III

King Richard II  King Henry IV  King Edward V