



a portrait of England

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Pupil Worksheet

Holbein's Portrait - Henry VIII

Introduction

Portraits can tell us a lot about a famous person in history. When a portrait is painted the subject wants anybody who sees the picture to view them in a particular way. If you wanted to be seen as a fit and active person then you won't want your portrait to show you sitting on a sofa, eating a takeaway and watching television. It creates the wrong image.

You have to be seen doing something active or have objects that suggest activity (like holding a football or with a running track in the background) in the picture with you.

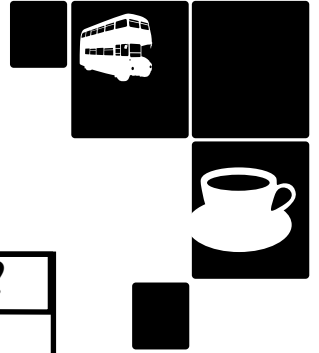
These visual clues were very important for Tudor monarchs like Henry VIII when very few people could read or write or have the opportunity to see the king in the flesh.

You can learn to 'read' a portrait in just the same way that you are taught to read the words in a book. The first activity is meant to give you the skills to do this. In your small groups you have five portraits of famous people. They might be well-known figures from the past or even modern celebrities.

Look at each of the pictures and decide how these people want to be seen by anybody who looks at their pictures. You should discuss each picture in your group. Don't forget that you have to find reasons for your opinions.



Fill in the boxes below:



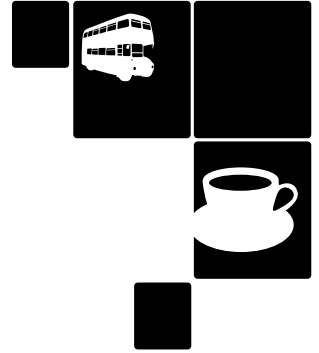
Name of famous person	How do they want to be seen?

As said before, Tudor portraits of kings and queens were often used by the subject to get a message across.

This is usually about the kind of monarch that they wanted to be seen as. Did they want to be seen as wise, kind, powerful or a great leader?



Holbein's Portrait - Henry VIII

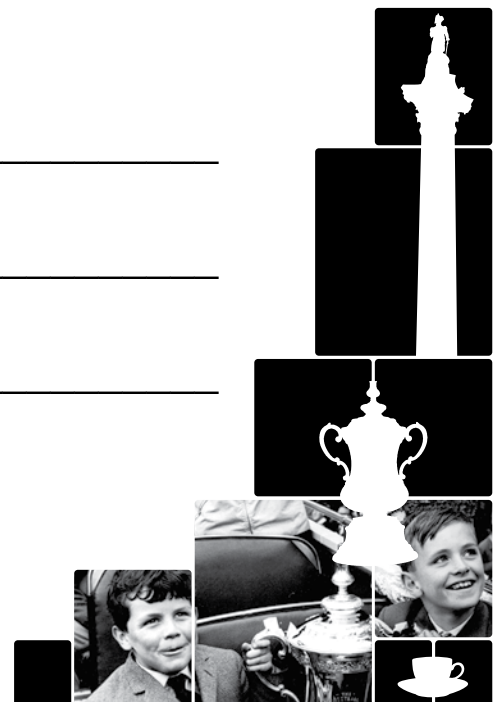


What about Henry VIII? Before you look at the portrait think about all the things that you already know about this monarch. Talk in your group and write down some of the things that you can remember about Henry VIII in the box below.

Using everything that you have written down what words would you use to describe Henry VIII? (e.g. clever, active, weak, funny)

Henry VIII was

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Holbein's Portrait - Henry VIII



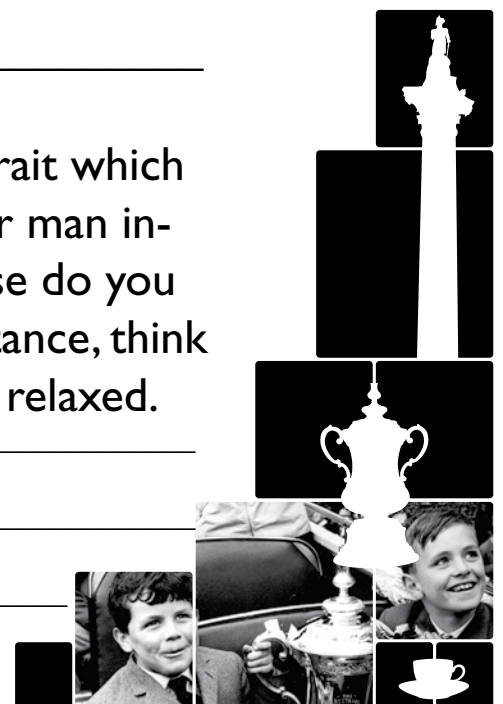
Now look at Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII. Take your time over this. Look at the expression on his face, his clothes and jewellery, the way he is standing and everything behind him.

In what ways did Henry VIII show us how wealthy he was?

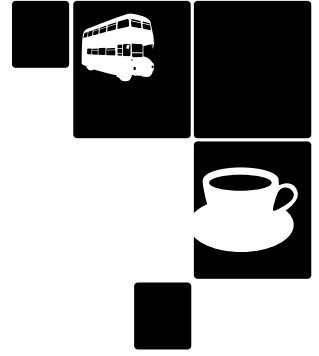
Henry VIII has his legs quite far apart in this portrait. What do you think he is trying to say about himself by doing this?

Is there anything about this portrait that makes you think that Henry VIII wanted to be seen as a military man?

Imagine that Henry VIII commissioned a new portrait which he wanted to use for people to see him as a clever man interested in art, books and music. What kind of pose do you think he would have in this new portrait? (For instance, think about whether he would be sitting or standing, or relaxed.



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In this new imaginary portrait, think of four objects that Henry VIII would have to show people what an artistic and intellectual man he was. What would Henry VIII be doing with them?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

