

Portraits & Identity

Key Stage 2 & 3

This learning resource is designed to help you discover new ways of interpreting portraits and creating responses through making your own artwork. Using a range of drawing and making techniques, you will discover some portraits from the Devonshire Collections. Then you will draw yourself to create a mask to represent you and express your identity.

What you will do: You will look at key characteristics of portraits and carry out a series of studies of yourself (or someone in your home), to design and create a mask that represents an identity. This is a fun way to begin to understand portraits and to explore a little more about yourself or someone you live with.

What you will use: If you want to try making a self-portrait, all you need is a mirror. If you want to portray someone else, they will need to be willing to sit still! You can look at the examples of portraits we have included in the activity sheet for inspiration.

What you will need: A range of drawing materials (from felt pens to paint), sharp scissors, glue, sticky tape or double sided tape, empty cereal boxes or card, scraps of different coloured papers (wrapping paper, envelopes, brown paper or packaging).

Learning Outcomes All learners will:

- Explore a range of mark making techniques
- Build skills in creativity and design to create a mask
- Develop written and spoken language skills to describe portraits and self-portraits

Portraits & Identity Activity Sheet 1

First, let's understand what a portrait is

Can you describe what you think a portrait is in the space below?

Portraits are artistic representations of people (in portraits, people are referred to as 'sitters', regardless of whether they are sitting down or standing up). Portraits can work on different levels:

- A portrait can capture a physical likeness or quality of a person and/or their personality, social status, job, age and gender
- An artist making portraits can present clues about their sitter through pose and facial expression, use of colour and space, or objects within the image
- Sometimes portrait artists flatter their sitters (often described as *idealising*), or represent them as a well-known historical figure or as a goddess or god (this is known as *allegory*)
- Objects are often intended to be symbolic when included within a portrait
- A portrait is rarely just a likeness of a person

Let's look at some portraits

Using the key points provided, explore the two portraits below and try to consider the following

Can you spot what these portraits have in common?

Can you connect them to any of the descriptions of portraits in the information provided above?

Can you describe their character, status and pose?



The Chatsworth Cellarman
By William Baker 1835

Edmund Marsden was the brewer at Chatsworth. The barrel on the table contained 'small beer', a weak beer drunk by the servants (take a close look – it sits on a tabletop trolley on wheels). Edmund Marsden's job was to brew the house beer and provide everyone with a drink at meal times in the servant's dining hall. When Edmund retired, his fellow servants presented him with this picture – think of it as a retirement gift.



Portrait of Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire as Diana
By Maria Cosway 1781-1782

Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire floats towards us on a curving sweep of clouds – something that seems most unlikely! Georgiana is not wearing the fashion of her own time – her dress is based on something much older, from ancient Greece. Take a look at her hairband and you will notice it is shaped like a crescent moon (the curve of the crescent is repeated many times in this painting). Costume, setting and pose suggest there is an element of make believe here.

Portraits & Identity Activity Sheet 2

Now it's time to get creative. Grab your drawing tools, a mirror or your 'sitter' and let's get started

In the space below, use any drawing tools you like to draw the different features of the face

Keep these drawings quick and fun. Is there a striking feature that makes you or your sitter individual or different? Can you exaggerate this?

Next think about the angle or viewpoint you draw from. Draw the side of the nose or just a section of the eye
Can you draw different facial expressions? Smile, frown, or scrunch your nose up.

Draw: **Nose** **Eye** **Mouth** **Ear** **Eyebrows** **Hair**



What colours represent you? Which colours would you like people to link to your personality?

Make a colour swatch with felt pens, coloured pencils or paint.

--	--	--	--	--

Now bring these activities together to create a portrait in the form of a mask, with elements that tell someone else about you. You can research the artist Picasso to explore more about modern portraits. Picasso became famous for creating very powerful and abstract portraits.

Using the drawings and colours you have created, draw or paint the facial features on different papers or pieces of card you have collected. Cut these out and stick them into a large flat piece of card to create a mask – make sure it's bigger than your head. Think about the shapes you use and how you arrange each drawing together. What will your pose and expression be? What clothes, accessories or clues will you include?

Here are some examples to inspire you



Here are the curriculum links these activities will cover:

Art & Design	English	PSHE
Evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design	Develop speaking and listening skills by talking confidently in new learning contexts, communicating ideas and critical analyses.	Build self-esteem by sharing opinions and explaining views on the artwork
To use a range of techniques to record observations as a basis for exploring ideas, while using a range of techniques and different media	Engage in discussion, confidently voice opinions and questions to show understanding	
Develop drawing techniques and sculpture making skills using a range of techniques and media		
Know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms (KS3)		