



Henry VIII (1491–1547)

Follower of Hans Holbein the Younger

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During Henry VIII's reign (1509–47), England split from the Roman Catholic Church and Henry made himself head of the Church of England. Although he died about 40 years before the Armada campaign, he left a very helpful naval legacy for his daughter Elizabeth I and England.



What did he do for England's maritime power? And why was this important for England's resistance to the Armada?

Look closely at the portrait.

What sort of ruler do you imagine Henry VIII to be from this picture?

What is he trying to show in this image?

Such portraits were part of the Tudor propaganda machine. Why was propaganda important for the monarchy?

Reading portraits: pay close attention to...

Costume, jewellery, make-up, hair, facial expressions, posture, accessories, background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge

Objects from one of Henry VIII's ships, the *Mary Rose*, are displayed in the Tudor Room. But do you know why the ship sank?



Mary I of England (1516–58)
and Philip II of Spain (1527–98)

English School, 17th Century

Mary I of England (1516–58) and Philip II of Spain (1527–98)

English School, 16th Century

This is a wedding portrait commemorating the union of Philip II of Spain with Mary I of England (1554–58), and proves that England and Spain were not always enemies. After the death of Henry VIII and his son Edward VI, his eldest daughter Mary – a Catholic – became Queen of England in 1553 (a year before her marriage). This marriage did not result in Philip becoming King of England as he had hoped. Following Mary's death, he tried to court Elizabeth I with little success. When Elizabeth executed Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1587, Philip felt he had the best Catholic claim to the English throne – justification, he believed, for launching his Armada.



What signs of powerful monarchy can you see?
(Try to spot the arms of England)

Did you notice that Mary is sitting, while Philip stands? Why do you think this is?

Can you tell they're a married couple?

Why do you think Mary's marriage to Philip was an unpopular one for many English subjects?

Reading portraits: pay close attention to...

Costume, jewellery, make-up, hair, facial expressions, posture, accessories, background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge

Do you know the name of the church in the background?



Elizabeth I (1533–1603)

English School, 16th century

3. Tudor Rooms (rooms 6 & 6B west side, ground floor)

Elizabeth I (1533-1603)

English School, 16th century

This portrait of the English Queen was painted just after the Armada in the 1590s. Elizabeth herself would not have sat for the portrait. The painter had access to her costume and a 'face template'. This is how Elizabeth projected a 'Gloriana' image (energetic, goddess-like, victorious) rather than her true physical appearance.

Take a close look at the portrait.

Choose two features and complete the table below.

Features

What do they tell us?

e.g. Jewels (rubies, pearls) Symbols of wealth and status

1

2

Prone to vanity, Elizabeth did not like people to know her age.

How old do you think she looks in the picture? What is her real age? Why might she be trying to appear more youthful than she really is?

Elizabeth gave a morale-boosting speech to her troops at Tilbury on the eve of the battle. It included the famous lines:

'I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too.'

Can you imagine the woman in this portrait saying this?

How does the portrait match these words?

Reading portraits: pay close attention to...

Costume, jewellery, make-up, hair, facial expressions, posture, accessories, background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge

Do you know what Elizabeth's favourite jewel was?





Sir Francis Drake (c. 1540–96)

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (?)

Sir Francis Drake (c.1540–96)

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (?)

Drake, one of the best remembered of all English seafarers, came from a relatively poor family in Devon and rose to become a wealthy knight, mainly through privateering (raiding national enemies for profit). Drake could be selfish and individualistic. At one point during the Armada campaign, he neglected his duty of leading the rest of the English ships at night, in order to capture a Spanish ship for his own profit. Yet he was also brave and a master tactician. Nuña de Silva, a Portuguese sailor captured by Drake during his voyage around the world, described Drake as 'a great sailor'. Here he is portrayed with carefully chosen symbols of success.



Take a close look at the portrait. Choose two features and complete the table below.

Feature

What does it tell us?

e.g. Sword

Service to his country

1

2

Which part of the world is shown on the globe? Why might this be?

What do you think his motto 'Thus great things arise from small' tells us about his character?

Reading portraits: pay close attention to...

Costume, jewellery, make-up, hair, facial expressions, posture, accessories, background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge

What nickname did the Spanish give Drake?



The Launch of the English Fireships Against the Armada at Calais, 7 August 1588

Netherlandish school, 16th century

The Launch of the English Fireships Against the Armada at Calais, 7 August 1588

Netherlandish school, 16th century

This shows one of the most famous incidents in the Armada campaign. On the night of 7 August 1588, English fireships were launched and carried by the wind into the Spanish fleet off Calais. This forced the Spanish to cut their anchor cables in order to escape. Consequently, they could not wait for the Spanish army travelling from the Netherlands. The Spanish plan to cross the channel and invade England was effectively over.



Locate the English ships and the Spanish ships. How do you think the Spanish tried to defend themselves against fireships?

What is odd about the time of day shown in the picture? Why do you think it was painted this way?

Spot the English ship that has manoeuvred its way between two Spanish ships in the foreground. What is it doing? Why might such English battle tactics be successful?

Reading pictures: pay close attention to...

The 'story' of the picture, the details and sections, perspective, style (realistic or symbolic), people, symbols (flags etc) background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge:

Why do you think Londoners were given bows and arrows around this time?



The English and Spanish Fleets Engaged, 1588

English school, 16th century

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English school, 16th century

This painting was made immediately following the Armada and probably shows the Battle of Gravelines, the only pitched battle of the campaign.



How can you tell which side is losing?

There is a cartoon-like quality to the painting, partly because the painter is poking fun at the Spanish.

- Can you see
- a) a jester?
 - b) a monk?
 - c) the Pope?
 - d) a figure resembling Philip II in a rowing boat?

Why did the painter include all these figures?

What is he trying to say?

Is this a realistic battle scene? Give reasons for your answers.

Reading pictures: pay close attention to...

The 'story' of the picture, the details and sections, perspective, style (realistic or symbolic), people, symbols (flags, etc.) background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge

Do you know where Gravelines is?



The Somerset House Conference, 1604

Early 17th-century copy, after Juan Pantoja de la Cruz

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Tension remained high between Spain and England after the Armada, leading to further conflict between the two countries. It was only after Elizabeth's death in 1603 that peace negotiations were initiated by James I, now King of Great Britain and Philip III, son of Philip II. These took place at Somerset House in London.



The men are seated in strict order of precedence, the most important by the window. Can you tell the Spanish and English negotiators apart? Can you identify Lord Howard, who was Lord High Admiral of the English navy? How does he stand out?

Did you notice the man in brown? He's Lord Cecil, commonly known as a dowdy dresser!

Despite their fairly plain dress and the rushes on the floor, which features in the painting indicate wealth and power?

Beside the rich cloth, what else do you notice on the table? Why has the artist included only this object?

Reading portraits: pay close attention to...

Costume, jewellery, make-up, hair, facial expressions, posture, accessories, background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge

Why do you think all the chairs are different?



Charles Howard, 2nd Baron Howard of Effingham and 1st Earl of Nottingham

Daniel Mytens, c. 1620

Charles Howard, 2nd Baron Howard of Effingham and 1st Earl of Nottingham (1536–1624)

Daniel Mytens, c.1620

This portrait of the Lord High Admiral, by one of the most famous portrait painters of the era, was painted after he'd retired from active service in 1618. Some courtiers fell from favour after James I's accession – such as Sir Walter Raleigh, who was executed in 1618. Yet Howard managed to remain very successful during both reigns despite the fact that his wife was implicated in a Roman Catholic plot.

What carefully selected symbols of success and wealth can you spot? Choose two features and complete the table below.

Feature

What does it tell us?

e.g. Elaborate table covering

Imported – at great expense – from Asia

1

2

Why do you think there is a naval battle scene – most likely the Armada – included in the background?

Why is this portrait so large? What effect did Howard wish to have on the observer?

What kind of man do you think he was?

Reading portraits: pay close attention to...

Costume, jewellery, make-up, hair, facial expressions, posture, accessories, background, colour, mood, size and location.

Armada Challenge

Lord Admiral Howard compensated for his lack of wartime experience by surrounding himself with experienced captains. Can you name some of them?

