

Who was Queen Elizabeth I?

Elizabeth I was born in Greenwich on 7 September 1533 and was Queen of England and Ireland from 17 November 1558 until her death on 24 March 1603. Anne Boleyn was her mother and Henry VIII was her father.

The Armada Portrait

The 'Armada Portrait' is in the collection of the National Maritime Museum, part of Royal Museums Greenwich. The Armada Portrait was painted shortly after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. In 1588, the Spanish invaded England and they were defeated. The victory increased Elizabeth's popularity and the painting was made as a celebration. The painting shows her hopes and aspirations and strengthens her position as queen. She knew that not only her actions, but also her image formed her identity, which in turn was a powerful symbol of England. Art is a wonderful tool to communicate a message and a portrait can help us imagine what people were like as many include additional objects that were important to the sitter. Objects within the painting are symbolic, such as the globe which signifies Elizabeth's authority and aspiration for power in the Americas. Elizabeth aspired to further the wealth and prosperity of England through new maritime trade routes and stealing existing ones. This enabled England to settle colonies in other parts of the world at the expense of those who lived there by taking away their rights. These actions laid the foundations for the British Empire which had a lasting legacy on the world today. By filling the entire painting with her physical presence, she dominates the composition, and this makes her look more powerful.

Elizabeth was a highly educated and accomplished woman, but as a female queen she would have been in a perilous position and felt insecure and vulnerable. At that time, people assumed women were not as powerful and important as men. She would have known this and she said in a very famous speech, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and a king of England too!". She showed herself as an effective and powerful leader through speeches and portraits. She was trying to inspire awe and wonder to her people and demonstrate that her strength and authority came from within.

Despite many challenges throughout her time on the throne, the period of Elizabeth's reign is now referred to as a 'Golden Age' and she is considered one of the country's most

popular and successful royals. She was an extremely savvy manager of the royal court and saw England through a succession of religious, financial and political disruptions. Elizabeth modelled to the world the fact that women can cope, and indeed thrive, in power after all.

What can this portrait tell us?

Elizabeth looks much younger in the painting than her actual age, and therefore the painting may not be considered a realistic representation. People did not have a television or the internet in the sixteenth century and so the only way for people to know what she looked like was through paintings. We know she wore a lot of makeup that contained lead and that would have over time eaten and damaged her skin and led to health issues later in life. She prevented portraits that may have reflected her differently and therefore, she had control over what her portrait looked like. She wanted to look strong, beautiful and clever. We could compare her to celebrities today who edit how they look in the media. Queen Elizabeth I wore very elaborate garments and dressed to impress. As a follower of fashion her wardrobe was full of gowns made from rich fabrics adorned with jewels and elaborate surface detail. This would have communicated her wealth, luxury, status and global connections.

Like many Tudor portraits, it is packed with meaning and metaphor. Elizabeth chose powerful symbols to express her identity.

The meaning behind the objects:

Pearls: Elizabeth is draped in pearls to symbolise her purity. Elizabeth remained unmarried and therefore was perceived as pure.

Globe: The globe represents England's striving for power in the Americas. Elizabeth is pointing to Virginia, which was named after her.

Crown: The magnificent crown suggests Elizabeth's right to rule as a monarch.

Ruff and sun decoration on her dress: Her sleeves and dress are full of golden suns. The circle of ruff extends from Elizabeth's face like the sun's rays. She is shown as the centre and source of warmth, beauty, and goodness.

Sea scenes: The sea scenes over her right shoulder represent the calm seas and English

ships. Over her left shoulder, she turns away from the stormy waters where the Spanish

ships are struggling and shipwrecked against the rocks.

Mermaids: Mermaids were thought to tempt married sailors at sea, so the inclusion of a

mermaid could show Elizabeth's might against the Spanish seaman and her command of

the seas.

Classroom activity - Describe and Communicate

This activity will support your students to effectively describe and communicate what

they see in the Armada Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I.

Provide a copy of the painting to each student or in pairs. Using a rough piece of paper

or their books, ask students to write as many concrete nouns as they can.

What do you see in the painting? Make a list of the concrete nouns.

Concrete nouns: names an object or a person you can see and touch e.g. crown and

globe.

Next, ask your students to name as many different adjectives as possible to describe the

nouns. Alternatively, ask your students to draw their concrete noun examples and list all

the adjectives they can think of to describe them.

Adjectives: describing words

Noun:

face

Adjective:

luminous

Noun:

crown

Adjective:

heavy

Next, ask your students to name as many different abstract nouns.

Abstract nouns: things that we cannot touch, hear, taste, smell or see, but are felt, like

emotions, ideas and qualities, e.g. beauty and energy.

Ask your students to underline the abstract nouns in these sentences:

She was known to have wisdom beyond her years.

She had a good education and an amazing ability for learning languages.

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Elizabeth's hand on the globe demonstrates hope and aspiration.

Elizabeth was known for her dedication to her people.

Elizabeth had courage to succeed as a woman in power in the 1600s.

Greed was Elizabeth's motivation for England's growth as a nation.

Elizabeth's position between the ship scenes represents peace and calm.

Elizabeth had faith in God and her belief of England winning the invasion was God's will.

Next, ask your students to write a paragraph with fuller sentences inspired by their work so far to expand and illustrate the painting. They should describe the features and qualities of what they see and convey an idea of what Elizabeth was like. They could include how the painting makes them feel and what qualities Elizabeth displays.

- e.g. I think Elizabeth's face reminds me of the Moon, as it is luminous, showing her brilliance and beauty.
- The contrasting views behind her demonstrate her power, status and determination to be a successful queen.
- I think Elizabeth looks determined and courageous despite not having the physical strength of a man.
- Elizabeth looks wise and had a reputation for being a caring queen with immense pride in her people.
- Elizabeth must have had a massive ego to portray herself as a divine and powerful religious icon!

Ask your students to write 'in my opinion':

- the thing that stands out to me most in the painting is...
- what I like dislike is...
- I have learnt that...
- the best thing about the painting is...

Classroom activity - Character Traits

This is a useful exercise for analysing characters in stories, their traits and what makes

them exhibit these traits. This can help with empathy and seeing another's perspective.

What you will need: character trait table and character trait template of Elizabeth I.

Explain to students that emotions are thoughts and feelings and can be a response to

things happening around them. Traits are usually seen through actions and behaviours.

Emotions can be indicative of traits, but not always. Elizabeth might have appeared

confident and brave on the outside due to her accomplishments, however, perhaps on

the inside she was feeling scared and anxious.

As a class, discuss examples of positive and negative character traits, both physical and

emotional, and what they might look like, in more detail.

Positive character/personality traits e.g. confident, optimistic, patient, hardworking,

thoughtful, cautious, responsible, independent, loyal, tolerant, compassionate, kind,

disciplined, generous, determined, sensitive, conscientious, brave, fair, trustworthy,

respectful, reliable, polite.

Negative character traits e.g. tactless, disruptive, impatient, domineering, cruel, rude,

know-it-all, bossy, rude, selfish, aggressive.

Ask your students to discuss if they think character traits can change over time.

Emotions: scared, angry, surprised, nervous, confused, embarrassed, excited, sad,

frustrated, happy, proud, jealous, disappointed, thrilled, worried, anxious, hopeful.

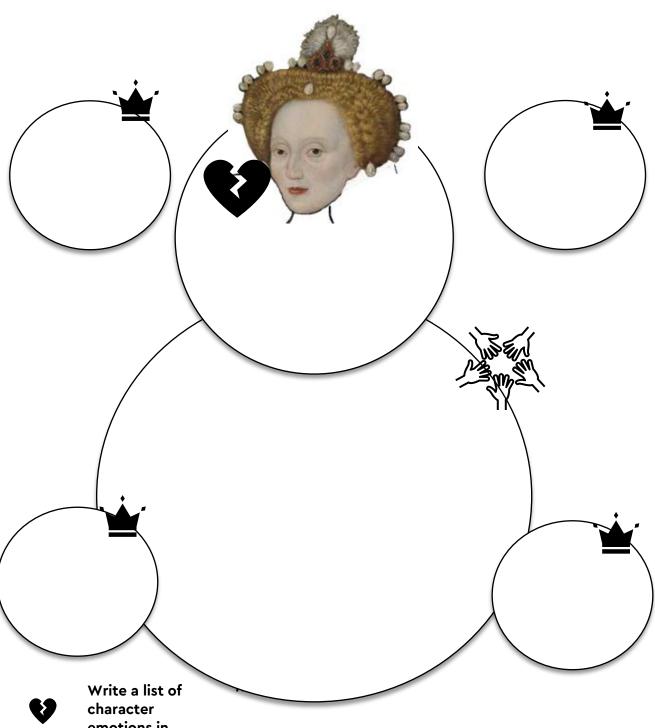
Physical traits: sporty, tall, small, blonde.

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In pairs ask students to reflect on another and make a character assessment, listing each other's positive character traits, both physical and emotional.

Now your students know more about Elizabeth and the Armada Portrait, explain to them that they are going to create a character analysis of Elizabeth I and describe what evidence they have for presenting her with a particular trait. Ask students in pairs to make a list of her traits and feelings/emotions to help students to describe Elizabeth I. What are her positive and negative traits? We obviously do not know everything about her, so your students will need to you use their inference skills.

Character trait:	Because:
Emotional trait:	Because:





character
emotions in
Elizabeth's ruff.
Write a list of
her character
traits in the larger
circle.



Write a list of her physical traits in the smaller circles.

Character analysis of Queen Elizabeth I

Next, ask students to create a fictional story about Elizabeth that demonstrates her feelings and inner thoughts, her traits, actions and motivations.

Classroom activity - I Remember When

This exercise is great to encourage students to talk in front of the rest of the class and use their imagination.

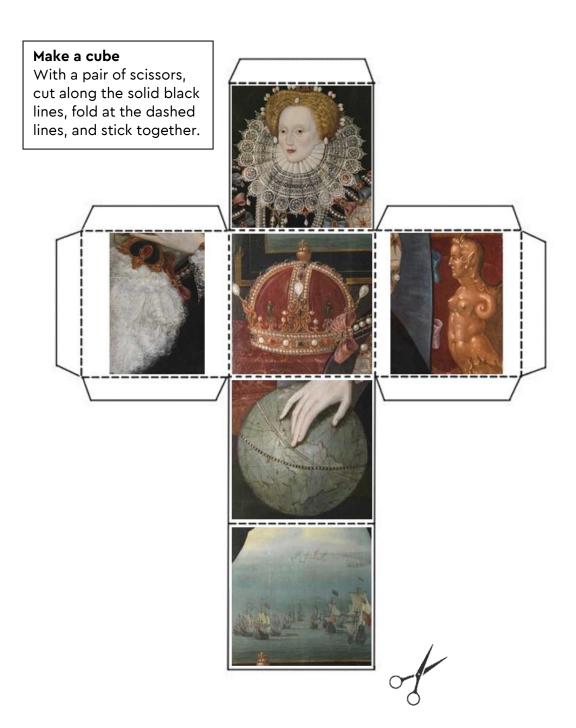
In advance of the session, collect a range of objects such as a ball, toy, book, bucket and spade, anything that could evoke a memory, and place them in a bag so students cannot see them. Ask students to come to the front of the class (or the middle if a circle activity), and pick an object from the bag. Their task is to create a short story about a memory connected to the object. What can they remember, hear, see or smell? This could be a true or fictional story, and it will encourage them to improvise on the spot. The rest of the class can decide if the story is true or fictional. Students must return the object so it can be reused by another student. Alternatively, if you don't have a collection of objects, ask them to think about a place that evokes a memory or story, or have a list of places they could describe, e.g. forest, beach or a family member's house.

Classroom activity - Chatter Box Storytelling

This excercise will support communication, listening, creativity and enable young people to connect thoughts, ideas, feelings and to use their imagination.

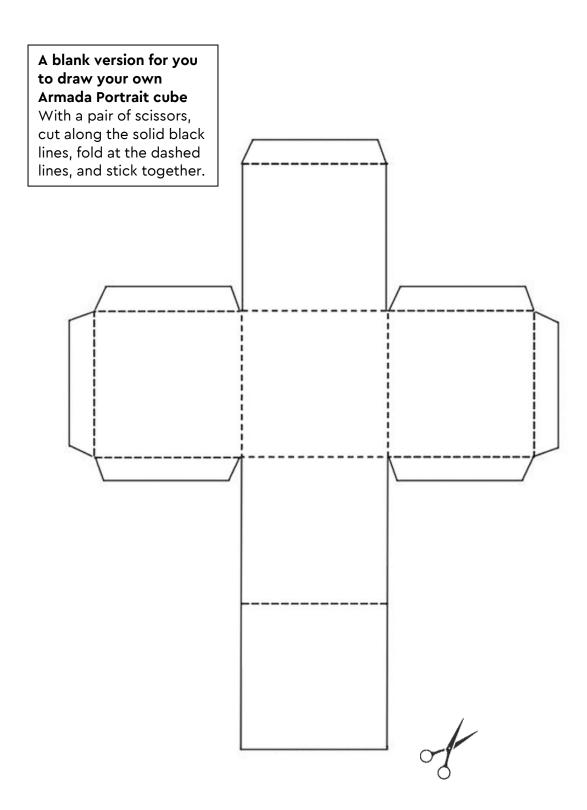
What you will need: 2 x A4 pieces of paper to make a cube and a chatter box, additional paper for drawing and writing, scissors, glue stick, pencils and/or pens.

Make your cube: Cut out the template complete with sections of the Armada Portrait. Alternatively, on the blank version, draw the objects: crown, ship, globe, sun, mermaid, feather.

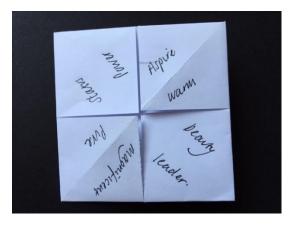


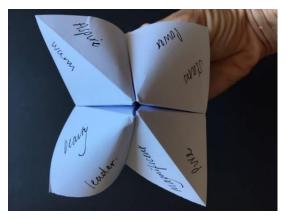






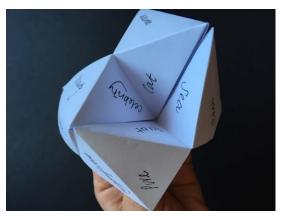
Make your chatter box: click on this <u>link</u> (or do a google search) for a step-by-step guide to make a chatter box: On the top of the chatter box, choose eight words inspired by the painting, for example, magnificent, pure, status, power, aspire, warm, beauty, leader, youthful, victorious, mythical, vulnerable, enchanting.



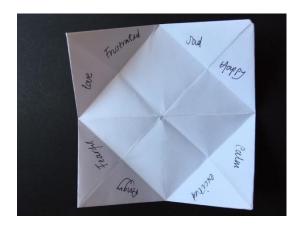


On the top of the inside tab of the chatter box, write four characters and four locations, for example, sea, forest, rooftop, garden, celebrity, cat, alien, grandmother. You could also make up your own here.





On the inside tab of the chatter box, write eight emotions, such as happy, sad, calm, excited, angry, fearful, frustrated, lucky.





Explain to your students that they will take turns as the storyteller:

- The storyteller rolls the cube four times and writes down each object, e.g. globe, feather, ship and crown.
- Chatter box task 1: choose a word e.g. status. Spell out the word by opening the chatter box with each letter e.g. status = six letters.
- Chatter box task 2: choose a location or character for your story. Write it down.
- Repeat chatter box tasks 1 and 2. Write them down.
- Chatter box task 3: open the inside tab of the chatter box to reveal an emotion. Write it down.

Your students should end up with nine words in total. Explain they need to tell a story that links together all nine words. Their words might take them on a funny or scary adventure, it is totally up to them.

They could:

- Begin with 'Once upon a time'
- Imagine their protagonist (leading character) as a hero or a villain
- Invent rules for their game

If you think your students are up for another challenge, they could try linking all the different stories together to build one super-long story and/or write a story or play, act it out and/or design a storyboard for a film.

Classroom activity - Values Portrait

This activity will enable your students to analyse the painting and to consider life values that are important to them. The Armada Portrait shows us the power of symbolism in art to express things about our identity. Explain to your students they are going to be inspired by the Armada Portrait and create their own self-portrait.

What you will need: missing pieces portrait template, values table and a sketch for your self-portrait sheet.

Ask your students to identify the difference between a portrait and a self-portrait? Next, ask them to

look at the painting and discuss what stands out the most:

- What is the effect of including different objects and themes within the painting?
- What do you think the objects symbolise?
- Can you find examples of symbols in your own home or classroom?
- In our modern world which objects signify luxury or status?

Ask your students to discuss what does our identity mean?

- Does the painting create a strong identity? Expand and if so, how do you think the queen wants to be seen? What message did she want to convey?
- Why did she want to look powerful? Do you think the queen looks like a strong character?
- Her clothes and objects fill the composition, what does that suggest?
- Would she look more powerful if she were a man?
- Does the queen feel powerful in the image?
- Does the queen feel vulnerable in the image? How do you think she might be feeling?

Drawing activity:

As your students to colour in and draw the objects that are missing in the portrait.



Activity: What am I?

A riddle is a question and a form of non-rhyming poetry. A riddle describes an object and uses words that can have a double meaning for the viewer to guess what it is.

Choose one object within the painting, e.g. mermaid, and write a riddle to describe it. Your role is to write clues about the object. Here are some for your students to solve:

I am round, but I am not a football; I have a core, but I am not an apple; I have a crust,

but I am not a loaf of bread. What I am I?

The answer: Globe

I start my life as a tiny speck. I'm a jewel in the sea as small as a seed. One day I will

be brought out of the darkness, hanging with some friends on a rope. What am I?

The answer: Pearl

My first is in collar but not in necklace (consonant)

My second is in beauty but not in pretty (vowel)

My third and fourth are the same, and are Frightfully Fancy (consonant)

The answer: Ruff

I am bright and golden and shine brighter than any star. I keep you warm. What am I?

The answer: Sun

I live under the sea, but I'm not a fish.

I have arms, but I'm not an octopus.

I have a tail, but I'm not a dolphin.

What am I?

The answer: Mermaid

I'm looking out at a deep-blue letter.

____ scenes

The answer: Sea scenes

What are your favourite objects?

Discuss with your students how objects are containers of stories and carry traces of our

own personal story and individual identity. Ask your students what their personal

favourite objects are and why? Which objects can't they live without, are sentimental

about, or remind them of a funny memory? Perhaps an object represents their hobbies

or is precious because someone very special gave it to them.

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Values Activity:

Next, ask your students if they were king or queen for a day what would they do? What would their aspirations be to change the world and what difficulties might they face?

Ask them if they think anything is missing from the Armada Portrait that they would add into their own self-portrait? Using the template provided, ask how they could represent the symbols of the values that are important to them, or what they care about, e.g. diversity, equality, respect for others, kindness, trust, honesty, friendship or love.

Example	Draw your symbol here	Your own	Draw your symbol here
of a value		value	
respect			
kindness			
trust			
h a m a a tu i			
honesty			
equality			
equality			





Self-portrait activity:

Next, ask your students to draw their self-portrait, incorporating the symbols they have designed.

They should include the symbols, ideas and their favourite objects from their 'a sketch for your self-portrait sheet'.

Do they wear them, hold them or look at them? Are they hidden in the fabric of their clothes?

How will they grab their audience's attention?

Ask your students to write: In my portrait I have included symbols such as..... and objects such as as it shows me as.......

Glossary	Answers
Portrait	Portraits are drawings, paintings or photographs of a person's face
Self-portrait	A self-portrait is a portrait that an artist has produced of themselves
Spanish Armada	A fleet of ships sent by the Spanish to invade England in 1588

Colony A country under control by another and occupied by settlers from

that country

Empire People or a nation that are ruled by a different monarch from

another country

Collection Unique objects and artworks in a museum

Identity Our personality, beliefs and desires

Vulnerable Fear of being attacked physically or emotionally

Symbolic/symbolism Representing things by a symbol

Composition The way in which something is made

Golden Age A time when a high level of achievement is reached

Representation The description of someone or something and how it is portrayed

Status Someone who is considered important

Values Principles that are important to you

Equality Being equal in rights, opportunities and status

Classroom activity - Bring Queen Elizabeth I to Life

Make learning fun with this dressing-up activity. Your students will be able to construct Elizabeth's image by choosing outfits from Her Majesty's extensive wardrobe.







What you will need: templates, paper, pens or pencils, tape, a toilet-roll tube and scissors.

Queen Elizabeth I wore very elaborate garments and dressed to impress. As a follower of fashion her wardrobe was full of gowns made from rich fabrics adorned with jewels and elaborate surface detail communicating her wealth, luxury, and status.

Elizabeth would have worn a petticoat as underwear, a stiffened corset, stockings, a farthingale (a hooped skirt), a bodice and skirt or gown. Her shoes would have been made of the finest velvet and eventually leather. Her bodice would come to a point below the waist and she would have been able to alter her garments with different sleeves, bodices, skirts, ruffs and cuffs to update her look. Her ruffs were exceptionally elaborate, made in a variety of colours and decorated with lace, jewels and embroidery.

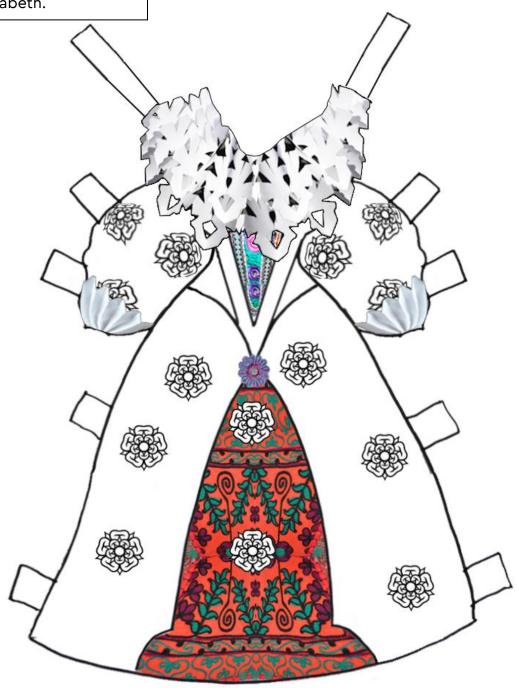
Ask your students to cut out the Elizabeth base template and fix her to a toilet-roll tube to help her stand up. Next, ask your students to cut out the dress templates and use the tabs to attach each one to Elizabeth so they can dress her in different outfits. Your students can colour in the dresses to enhance her garments. They could draw jewellery and elaborate details! Remind them that her clothes were hugely symbolic and amplified her power. The final dress allows them to cut up the centre areas and find their own inspiration for fabrics from images in magazines or nature and then they can take photographs.

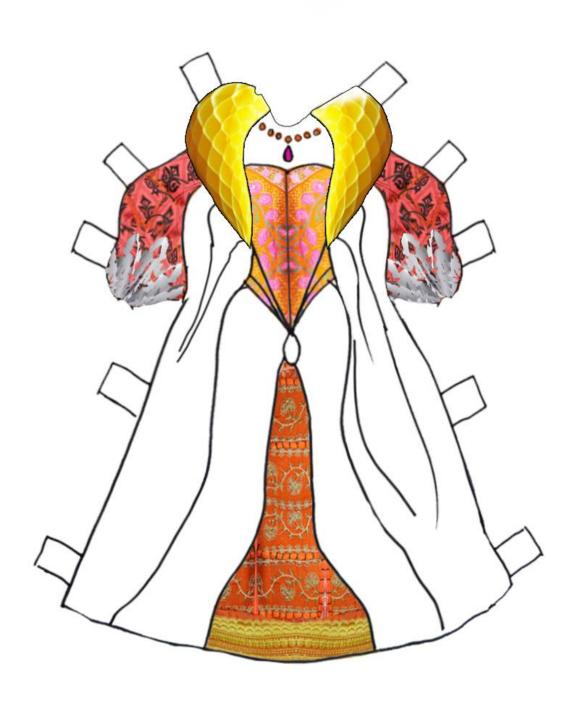
If your students are up for another challenge, they could design what she might wear when meeting her friends, her subjects, her court or the great and good of the Elizabethan era. They could take Elizabeth on an adventure and create a story about what takes place, who she meets and what they say.

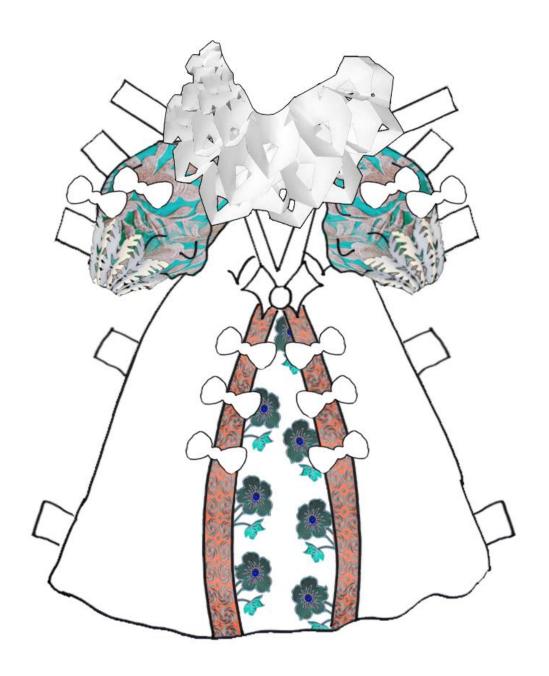


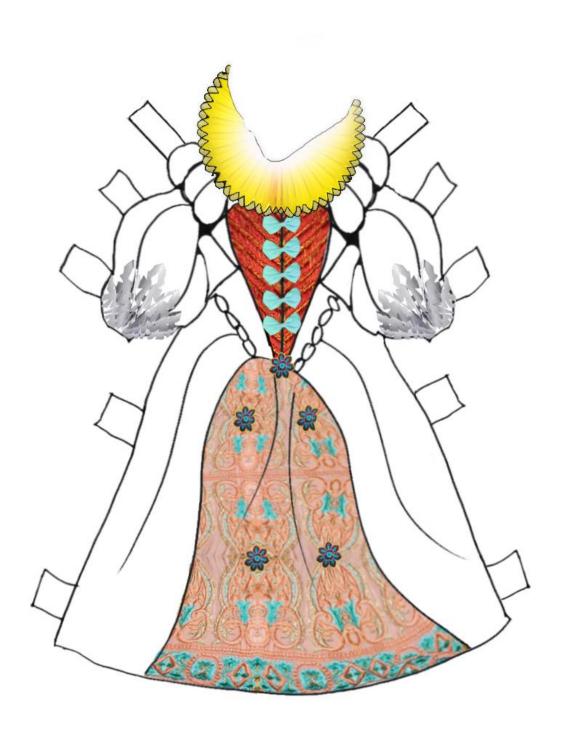
Cut around the box (with her feet) and stick to a toilet-roll tube to help her stand.

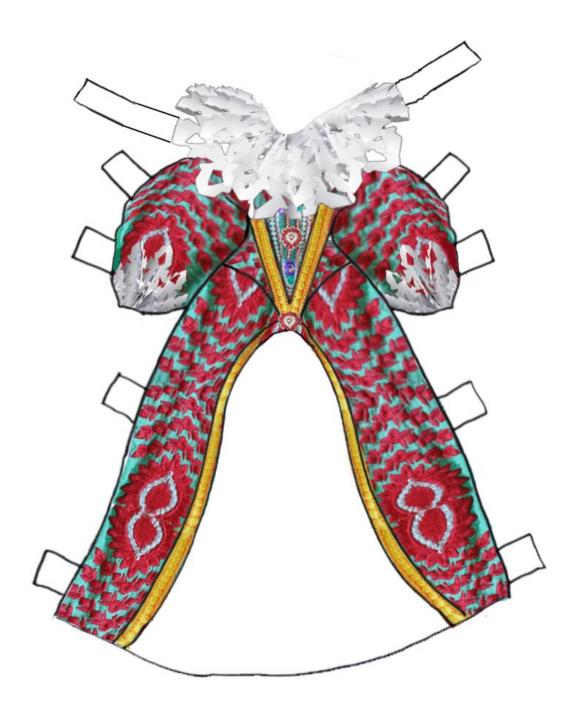
Cut around the black lines, not forgetting the tabs, as you will use these to fold around Elizabeth.

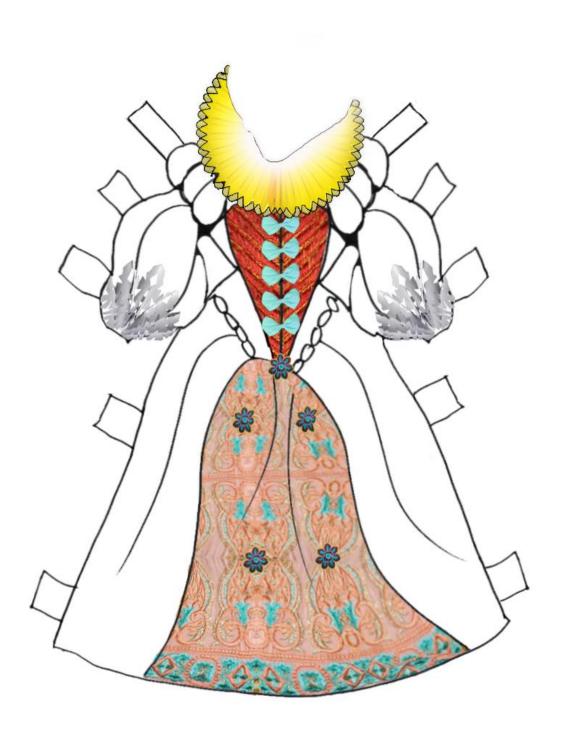


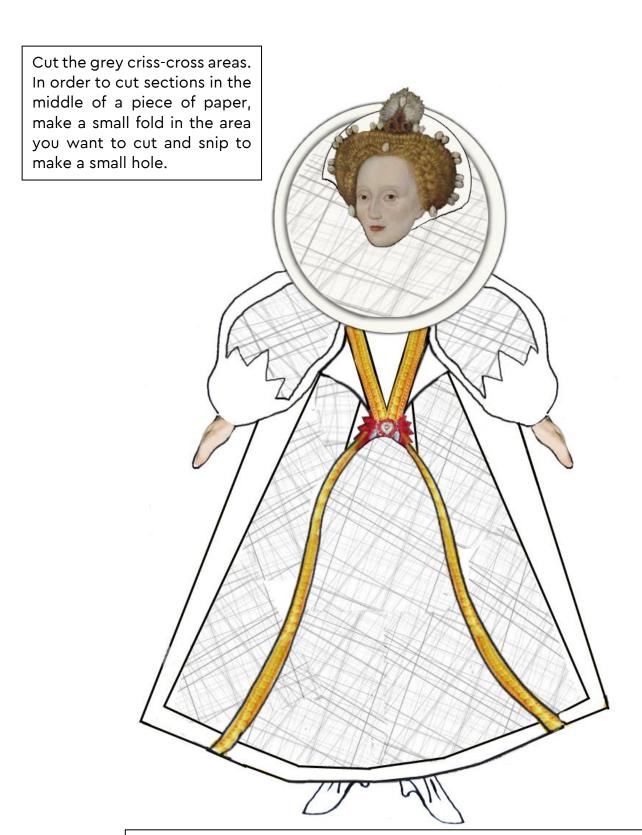












Next, create your garments by holding Elizabeth next to fabrics, natural objects and magazines of your choice, and take photographs.

Classroom activity - Our Favourite Things

This activity will enable your students to analyse the portrait and create their own with objects that are significant to them.

Ask your students to analyse the painting and use the following questions to start a discussion:

- How do your eyes move around the composition and what stands out the most?
- Her clothes and objects fill the composition, what does that suggest?
- Does the image create a strong identity? How do you think the queen wants to be seen?
- What is the effect of including different objects and themes within the composition?
- In our modern world, which objects signify luxury or status?
- How do we manipulate images in the present day? Do you think you can change what people think of you? Does it matter what other people think of you?
- Would Elizabeth look more powerful if she were a man?

Discuss with your students how objects are containers of stories and carry traces of our own personal story and individual identity. Ask your students what their personal favourite objects are and why? Which objects can't they live without, are they sentimental about, or remind them of a funny memory? Perhaps an object represents their hobbies or is precious because someone very special gave it to them.

Ask your students to choose three or four objects that best represent them and state why the object is important and their favourite. They could take photographs or draw the objects if they are too precious to bring into school. Ask them to write a piece to describe each of their favourite objects. Here are some ideas.

'This is my favourite object because...':

It looks and feels like... (colour, shape or size)
It is just like... (simile)
It is used for...
It is important to me...

It previously belonged to...

It makes me feel...

It has been in my possession for...

It reminds me of... (person, time or place)

It lives in my house...

It symbolises me and/or it best represents me by...

If it could speak it would say...

If you could ask your object a question what would you ask?

Create your own portrait:

Now your students have learnt about the significance of the objects in the Armada Portrait and have considered their own objects, they now need to think about creating their own portrait and what their collection of objects says about them. Based on their significance and symbolism, how would they position their objects in their portrait? If your students do not want to feature in their portrait, they could display their objects instead. Consider if they will wear them, hold them or will they look at them? How will the portrait grab the audience's attention? Are some objects more important than others? How will this impact on the composition of their portrait and their position in the frame?

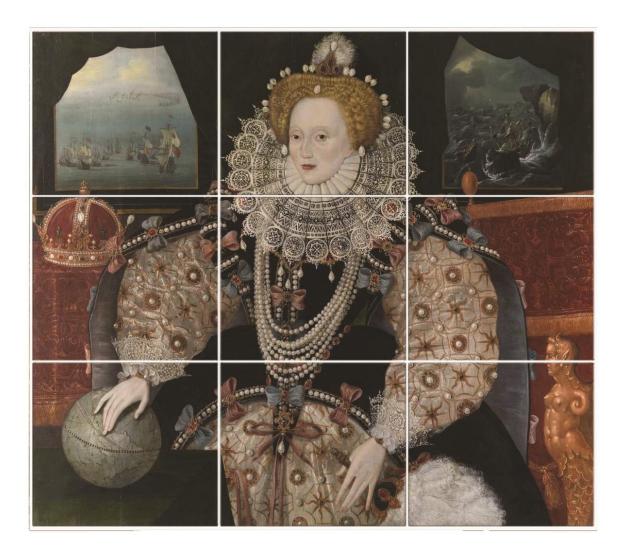
You could take pictures of their portraits with their objects or ask them to make a visual response. Or you could ask half the group to create a freeze-frame gallery of their portraits for the other half of the class to view. Equally they could become the curator. A curator is responsible for the museum's collections with specialist knowledge about a specific subject. Ask the students to either present to the rest of the class the significance of the objects and/or allow the other students to guess the symbolism each object represents.

Review each other's portrait:

- What did you like about it and why?
- What is it about?
- What stood out?
- What did you learn?
- What is your overall verdict?

Classroom activity - Puzzle it Out

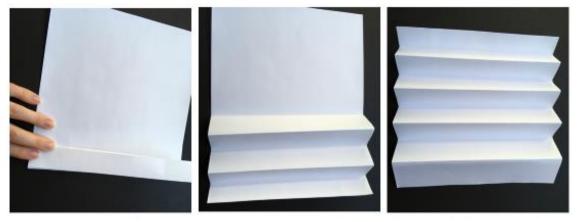
This is an activity designed for your students to use their observational skills and to get to know the portrait. Divide the portrait into nine sections and give each student a section to recreate. Ask your students to draw their section and colour it in. Depending on which artists your students are studying, task them with recreating it in a style and put together like a puzzle for a classroom display.



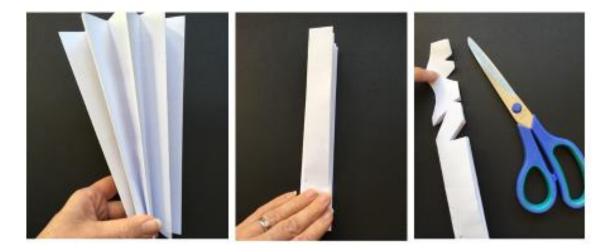
Classroom activity - Ruffs and Cuffs

This is a fun activity and will enable your students to make their own ruffs and cuffs inspired by the Armada Portrait.

What you will need: each student will require 3 x A4 pieces of paper, 2 x A3 pieces of paper, scissors and tape.



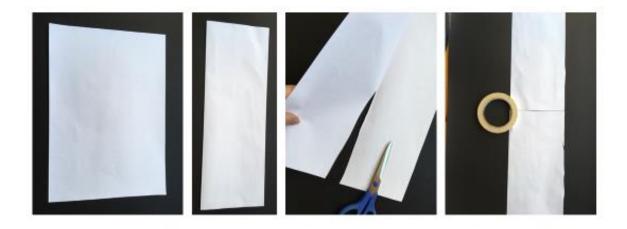
To make a cuff, take a piece of A4 paper and pleat it backwards and forwards as if you were making a fan.



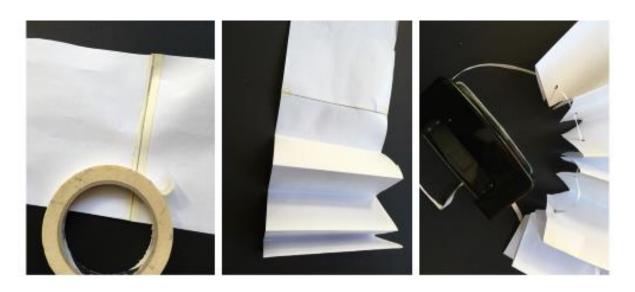
Fold it tight and cut and cut small shapes as if you were making a snowflake.



Take a hole punch and make holes in the middle of your fold (you may have to do it in sections as the paper will be too thick) and thread your string or gift ribbon. Open it out to reveal your design. You will be able to tie it around your wrist. Next, make a second one, so you have two cuffs.



In order to make your ruff, take an A3 piece of paper and fold it in half longways. Cut down the fold. You will have two long lengths. Then, stick both pieces together at the shortest end to make one long piece of paper.



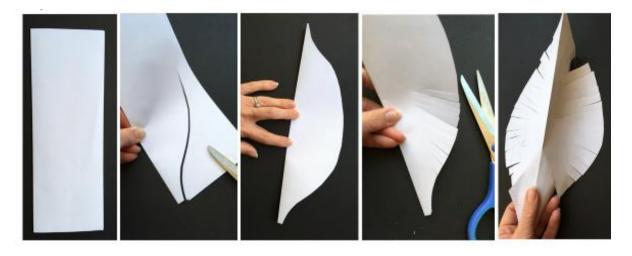
Take your long piece of paper and pleat like you did before. The pleats can be bigger this time. Repeat the process of making holes with a hole punch and threading your string or ribbon.



Once again, fold it tight and cut small shapes as if you were making a snowflake.



The string or ribbon will enable you to tie it around your neck. Make a second one, to ensure your ruff goes all the way around your neck and wear with pride.



To make a feather, fold a piece of A4 paper in half. Draw half a feather shape. Cut slits and open out. You can now be Elizabeth!

Classroom activity - Produce a Pattern

This activity will enable your students to analyse the portrait and create their own pattern and motif, inspired by what is important to them.

What you will need: symbol template, pattern from a drawing template and pens or pencils.

Explain to your students that they are going to design their own pattern for a new dress to be worn by Elizabeth I. She is going to wear this dress for a significant event, so it needs to be magnificence!

Here is some further information about Elizabeth's clothes to spark ideas:

Diamonds: The dress in the Armada Portrait is covered in diamonds. They are painted as black jewels and they also feature in the feathered headpiece she wears on top of her wig. Diamonds were believed to have magical powers and could work as a defence against quarrels, contentions and nightmares. Elizabeth suffered greatly from night terrors.

Sun in Splendour: On her skirt and her sleeves there are numerous golden suns. The sun is an ancient artistic symbol, a signifier of power, enlightenment and life. The ruff around her face acts as a kind of halo or radiating sun.

Colours: The queen's favourite colour scheme was black and white. White represented purity and black loyalty. Colour was loaded with meaning in the 16th century. Red represented blood and power, yellow represented the sun and fruitfulness, green denoted youth and hope, whilst blue represented friendship.

Fabrics: Her gown would have been embroidered with metal threads woven through a piece of fabric, usually silk, to produce the most expensive fabrics known as cloth of gold or cloth of silver. These textiles were restricted to the nobility by legislation in the 16th century. Elizabeth's ruff and cuffs were made of exquisite *reticella* cutwork lace – a technique in which the linen is cut away and the holes are filled with embroidery. Fine work like this usually came from Italy but it may have been made more locally.

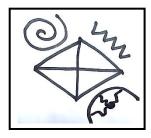
Elizabeth's dresses and fabric incorporated the natural world and semi mythical sea creatures and beasts, similar to those found on maps and globes from the period. It was a commonly held belief that mythical sea beasts inhabited the North Sea and the Atlantic. Including these images in her dress was a means of claiming them as her own.

Handout the template, so your students can start to consider their ideas. Ask your students to draw the diamond and sun that feature in the fabric of Elizabeth's dress, so they can include in their pattern. Next, ask them what they own or what is important to them and how they could represent their values as symbols.

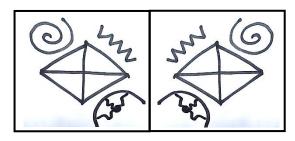
Symbols	Draw your symbol here:	Values	Draw your symbol here:
Sun		E.g. respect	
Diamond		kindness	
What do you own e.g. a pet or a precious object		trust	
What colours will you use?		equality	

Next, your students must consider which elements they want to include in their pattern design and how they will go about making it as a repeat pattern. Here is an example of a method they can use, but they may also have their own ideas. Equally they could use tessellations, mirrors and apps to create a kaleidoscopic effect.

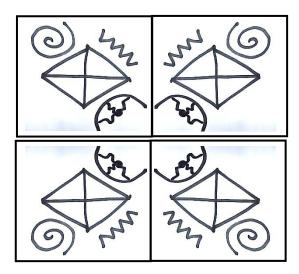
Choose a section of your drawing or a combination of your symbols. For example, the diamond with equal parts represents equality and the swirl represents respect.



Draw the same section and its reflection.



Repeat the section four times and so on to achieve the desired effect.



The Armada National Outreach project has been a partnership between Royal Museums Greenwich and Speakers Trust to support secondary schools in oracy and public speaking. The starting point and inspiration was the *Armada Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I* and her Tilbury speech.



