

## Portraits and Power

School Session Overview

October 2025

Key information	
<p><b>Length of session:</b> 90 mins</p> <p><b>Key Stage:</b> KS2</p> <p><b>Location(s) of session:</b> Queen's House</p>	
Learning objectives	Curriculum links
<p>Learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop their observation and investigation skills</li> <li>analyse famous and lesser-known artworks</li> <li>discuss what power means and how it is explored in art</li> </ul>	<p>KS2 Art and History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of art and design.</li> <li>Decode artwork equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design.</li> </ul>
Key words	
Power, Pose, Symbolism, Icons, Expression, Subtext	
Overview of the session	
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Learners discuss what the word power means to them.</p> <p><b>Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I</b></p> <p>Learners examine this iconic portrait and spot symbols of power in the painting including a globe, crown and Tudor rose. They compare the portrait to others in the same room.</p> <p><b>Activity 1: Pose making</b></p> <p>After exploring more portraits in the gallery, learners recreate the pose and style of a chosen subject.</p> <p><b>Discussion: Icons vs Symbols</b></p> <p>In the Great Hall, learners consider icons and symbols in portraits.</p> <p><b>Projecting their Power</b></p> <p>Inspired by what they have seen, learners work in groups of 3 or 4 to compose their own portrait poses, using costumes and props. Teachers are invited to take photographs to record learners' ideas.</p>	

Suggested pre visit knowledge/ activities	Suggested post visit activities
<p>We recommend that learners are introduced to the idea of what a portrait is before the session. Can a portrait tell us something about who a person is or what they are like? Exploring this question will help children engage more deeply with the portraits they encounter. Encourage children to think about how they can express their personality and the values that matter to them.</p>	<p>We encourage schools to display the photographs taken by teachers during the visit to the Queen's House and to invite learners to create their own self-portraits. These portraits should include meaningful objects that reflect their self-image to and explore different aspects of identity. What do their chosen objects symbolise? What key messages are they communicating about who they are?</p>
<b>Links to useful resources</b>	
<p> <a href="#">Picture yourself   Royal Museums Greenwich</a>  <a href="#">The Armada Portrait: Elizabeth I   Royal Museums Greenwich</a>  <a href="#">Analysing and interpreting an artwork.pdf</a> </p>	