

Portraits and Poses

Royal portraits

A portrait is a painting or photograph of a person. It usually shows their head and shoulders, but may show their whole body. Before cameras were invented, kings and queens often had official portraits painted to show how powerful and important they were.



Portrait of Henry VIII by Joos van Cleve, c1530–1535



Coronation Portrait by unknown artist, c1600



Henry VIII by Hans Holbein the Younger, 1537–47



Portrait of Elizabeth I of England attributed to Nicholas Hilliard, 1590

Elements of a royal portrait

Artists use different elements to show that monarchs are powerful and important.



Facial expression
Henry VIII looks confident because he is staring straight at the viewer.



Pose
Henry VIII looks strong because his feet are wide apart and his arms are open.



Clothing
Elizabeth I's expensive clothes show that she is wealthy.



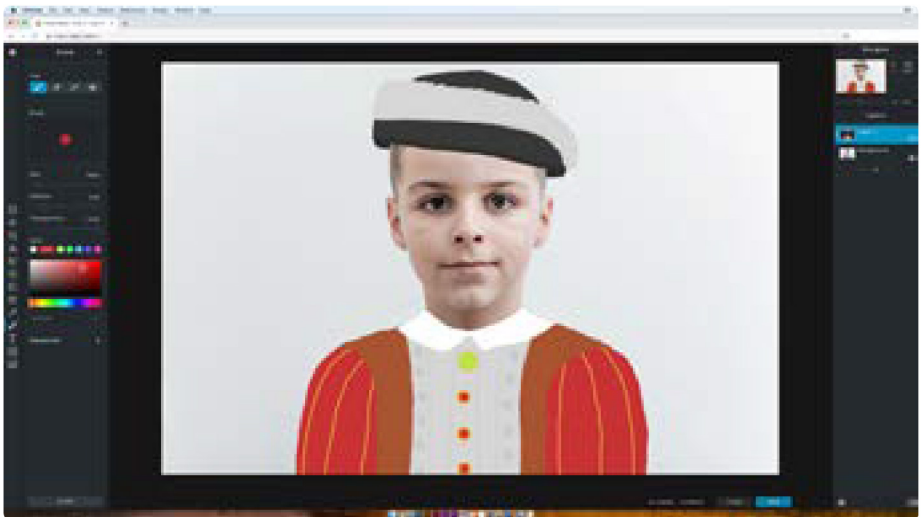
Objects
Henry VIII's dagger shows that he is a dangerous monarch.



Background
The cherubs behind Elizabeth I show that she believed God had chosen her to be the queen.

Creating portraits today

Digital cameras, phones, tablets and computers can be used to create photographic portraits today. Special software and apps can also be used to edit, change and add detail to photographs.



Glossary

background	The part of a piece of artwork that seems furthest away.
facial expression	A look on someone's face that shows how they feel.
monarch	A king or queen who rules a kingdom.
object	A thing that can be touched and seen.
pose	The way a person sits or stands when they are going to be drawn, painted or photographed.