

'Palace in Waiting' Lesson 1: Victoria the Girl



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Curriculum focus - History and Art and Design

Show the class this portrait but don't tell them who it is. In pairs, ask them to list all the things that they can see in the picture. See if they have missed any details:

- What is the girl doing?
- What is she wearing?
- What do the objects in the painting tell us about the girl?
- Does she like dogs?
- What is Fanny the dog doing?
- Who do they think the girl might be?

Tell them she is Princess Victoria – soon to be Queen Victoria. Are they surprised? What do they think she looked like when she was queen? What are the most commonly seen images of Queen Victoria (*small, large, old, dressed in black and white*)?

This painting tells us some of the things that she enjoyed throughout her life e.g. painting, dogs, gardens, the countryside and fashionable clothes. It was painted in 1830 by Victoria's drawing master, Richard Westall. Victoria's education was directed by her governess, Baroness Lehzen, who she was very fond of. Instead of going to school, Victoria was taught by tutors in history, maths and languages. Would your pupils like to be educated in this way?

Sketch book/ iPad activities

Ask the class to choose three objects, items of clothing or animals that they might ask an artist to include in their portrait. They must draw them in their sketch book without showing them to anyone. In pairs, decide who is going to be the artist and who will be the model.

The artist has ten minutes to make a sketch, during which time the model must try and hold the pose. The artist can decide what things the model would like to include in the sketch. After ten minutes, compare the two sets of items and then swap roles.

Questions to consider:

- What was it like to hold a pose?
- Are the sketches similar or different? Were different objects chosen?
- What do they tell the model about someone else's view of them?
- Do they think Richard Westall chose what to put in his picture of Victoria or did she choose? If you think he chose, what do you think Victoria might have opted for if given a choice.