# Portraits & Identity
## Key Stage 2 & 3

**These activities are designed to help you discover new ways of interpreting portraits and creating responses through making your own artwork. Using a range of drawing and making techniques, you will discover some of the portraits you might see if you visited Chatsworth.  Then you will draw yourself to create a mask to represent you and express your identity.**

**What you will do:** You will look at key characteristics of portraits and carry out a series of studies of yourself (or someone in your home) to design and create a mask that represents an identity.  This is a fun way to begin to understand portraits and to explore a little more about yourself or someone you live with.

**What you will use:** If you want to try making a self-portrait, all you need is a mirror.  If you want to portray someone else, they will need to be willing to sit still!  You can look at the examples of portraits we have included in the activity sheet for inspiration.

**What you will need:** A range of drawing materials (from felt pens to paint), sharp scissors, glue, sticky tape or double sided tape, empty cereal boxes or card, scraps of different coloured papers (wrapping paper, envelopes, brown paper or packaging).

**Learning Outcomes**    You will:
- Explore a range of mark making techniques
- Build your skills in creativity and design to create a mask
- Develop written and spoken language skills to describe portraits and self-portraits

**Devonshire Educational Trust Learning Resources**
**Chatsworth.org/learning**

**KS 2&3**

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# Portraits & Identity Activity Sheet 1

**First, let's understand what a portrait is**
**Can you describe what you think a portrait is in the space below?**

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**Portraits are artistic representations of people (in portraits, people are referred to as 'sitters', regardless of whether they are sitting down or standing up!). Portraits can work on different levels:**

- A portrait can capture a physical likeness or quality of a person and/or their personality, social status, job, age and gender
- An artist making portraits can present clues about their sitter through pose and facial expression, use of colour and space, or objects within the image
- Sometimes portrait artists flatter their sitters (often described as *idealising*), or represent them as a well-known historical figure or as a goddess or god (this is known as *allegory*)
- Objects are often intended to be symbolic when included within a portrait.
- A portrait is rarely just a likeness of a person

**Let's look at some portraits**
**Using the key points provided, explore the two portraits below and try to consider the following**
Can you spot what these portraits have in common?
Can you connect them to any of the descriptions of portraits in the information provided above?
Can you describe their character, status and pose?



**The Chatsworth Cellarman by William Baker**



**Portrait of Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire as Diana by Maria Cosway**

# Portraits & Identity Activity Sheet 2

**Now it's time to get creative. Grab your drawing tools, a mirror or your 'sitter' and let's get started**

**In the space below, use any drawing tools you like to draw the different features of the face**
Keep these drawings quick and fun.  Is there a striking feature that makes you or your sitter individual or different? Can you exaggerate this?

Next think about the angle or viewpoint you draw from. Draw the side of the nose or just a section of the eye
Can you draw different facial expressions? Smile, frown, or scrunch your nose up.

**Draw:**          **Nose**          **Eye**          **Mouth**          **Ear**          **Eyebrows**          **Hair**

**What colours represent you? Which colours would you like people to link to your personality?**
Make a colour swatch with felt pens, coloured pencils or paint

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**Now bring these activities together to create a portrait in the form of a mask, with elements that tell someone else about you.**  *You can research the artist Picasso to explore more about modern portraits. Picasso became famous for creating very powerful and abstract portraits.*

**Using the drawings & colours you have created, draw or paint the facial features on different papers or pieces of card you have collected. Cut these out and stick them into a large flat piece of card to create a mask – make sure it's bigger than your head.**

Think about the shapes you use and how you arrange each drawing together.  What will your pose and expression be? What clothes, accessories or clues will you include?

*Here are some examples to inspire you*

# For parents, guardians or teachers

## Portraiture information

The definitions below might help when looking at or discussing the portraits in Activity 1 – and perhaps also to work out what kind of portrait children want to make.

**Abstract**: A portrait can be described as 'abstract' where it is not instantly recognisable as a physical likeness of a person. Abstraction usually deals with the realm of ideas, not material reality. Abstract portraiture might substitute an object for a person (Van Gogh's Chair is a good example of this). Or, it might be possible to tell that you are looking at a face – Picasso's cubist portraits for example – but not an instantly recognisable one!

**Allegorical**: Allegorical portraiture presents the 'sitter' as a character from Greco-Roman mythology or a figure from history. The viewer of the portrait is invited to identify the personal qualities of the 'sitter' with that of the character or figure (for example, a female sitter represented as the goddess of love Aphrodite/Venus might be assumed to be beautiful in reality).

**Idealised**: idealised portraits represent a recognisable individual with certain aspects of their physiognomy flattered (a little like modern-day airbrushing in magazine photo shoots). A nose might be straightened, a waistline diminished).

**Realistic** (instead of likeness)**:** The origins of realism in portraits extends back to ancient Rome, when artists were noted for their 'warts and all' approach to representing individuals on coins, in sculpture and in fresco and painting.

**symbolic** Regardless of these above mentioned categories, portraits operate on a symbolic level. Whether idealised or realistic, the objects surrounding a sitter, often function as extensions of their status, personality or interests.

## Portraits from the Devonshire Collections – usually seen on a visit to Chatsworth



*The Chatsworth Cellarman* by William Baker 1835

Edmund Marsden was the brewer at Chatsworth. The barrel on the table contained 'small beer', a weak beer drunk by the servants (take a close look – it sits on a table-top trolley on wheels). Edmund Marsden's job was to brew the House beer and provide everyone with a drink at meal times in the Servant's Dining Hall. When Edmund retired, his fellow servants presented him with this picture – think of it as a retirement gift. When this was painted – almost two hundred years ago – it was more common for portraits to be made of people from higher social classes.

Portrait of Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire as Diana by Maria Cosway 1781-1782

Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire floats towards us on a curving sweep of clouds – something that seems most unlikely! Georgiana is not wearing the fashion of her own time – her dress is based on something much older, from ancient Greece. Take a look at her hairband and you will notice it is shaped like a crescent moon (the curve of the crescent is repeated many times in this painting). Costume, setting and pose suggest there is an element of make believe here. The crescent moon in her headband most likely refers to the Goddess Diana; goddess of the hunt, the moon, and chastity, among other things.

**Here are the curriculum links these activities will cover:**

| Art & Design | English | PSHE |
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| Evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design | Develop speaking and listening skills by talking confidently in new learning contexts, communicating ideas and critical analyses. | Build self- esteem by sharing opinions and explaining views on the artwork |
| To use a range of techniques to record observations as a basis for exploring ideas, whilst using a range of techniques and different media | Engage in discussion, confidently voice opinions and questions to show understanding | |
| Develop drawing techniques and sculpture making skills using a range of techniques and media | | |
| Know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms (KS3) | | |