

LOOKING AT PORTRAITS



Find a portrait in the Art Museum and spend some time looking at it. Then think about and discuss the questions below.

A portrait is a likeness of a person, couple, or group created by an artist. It can depict only the head and shoulders, the upper body, or the whole body. The person in the portrait is referred to as the sitter.

1. What medium did the artist use to make this portrait? Is it a painting, drawing, photograph, or sculpture?
2. What is the sitter doing?
3. Where is the sitter? What is the background of the portrait?
4. What clues tell you about the sitter? (something he or she is holding, something in the background)?
5. What is the sitter wearing? What do his or her clothes tell you about the sitter's place in society?
6. How much of the sitter's body is shown? Is the sitter shown facing forward or from the side (or in between)?
7. When was the portrait made? How old does the sitter look in the portrait?
8. Is the pose casual, playful, or formal?
9. Is it an individual portrait, a couple, or a group (such as a family)?