



## DISCOVERING WHO'S WHO: Portrait Painting



# VICTORIAN ENGLAND: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS



## WHAT WE LEARNED:

- We learned that the Victorian time period began with Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne in 1837 and ended at her death in 1901.
- We looked at family portraits, individual portraits, and children's portraits to learn about several noteworthy Victorians.
- We discovered how portrait painters use poses and settings to highlight details about their subjects.

## ART ACTIVITY: Acrylic Self Portrait

Today your young artist learned about portraiture during the Victorian era. We explored formal and informal portraits by historic artists like Franz Xaver Winterhalter, William Powell Frith, and John Collier. We also learned about artists like William MacDuff, Mary Gow, and Augustus Mulready who specialized in children's portraits.

To practice what we learned, we presented a modern take on the idea by painting our own self-portraits. Your child was invited to don a Victorian accessory or two before having their photo taken. They then used that photo as a reference to draw and paint their own image on a transparency sheet. Although the drawing step may have been easy, students were challenged to mix their colors from a limited palette.



## SCIENCE AND ART:

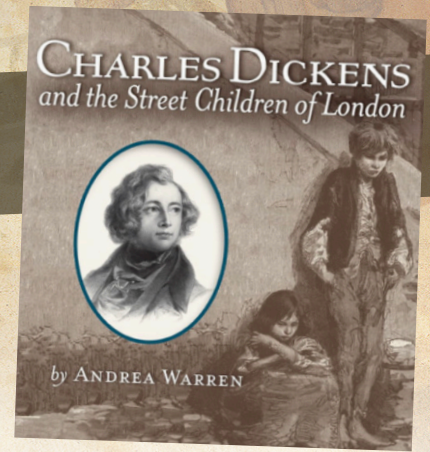
Although photography as we know it began in the Victorian period, the science behind the process can be traced back centuries.

- Click [HERE](#) to watch a short video on "Before Photography" [time: 06:22].
- After your viewing, click [HERE](#) and follow the directions to create your own pinhole camera.



# BOOK Nook

*Charles Dickens and the Street Children of London*  
by Andrea Warren



## A CLOSER LOOK:

Carefully look at each of the portraits below and choose a favorite. Next, write a two to five sentence character sketch describing the subject(s) in your chosen work.

- What do the character's expression, pose, and dress reveal?
- What does the setting tell you about his/her interests?

Once you have finished your sketch click on the pictures to learn more.



*The Kemble Family in  
King Henry IV, part 2,*  
William Hamilton, R. A.



*The Geographer,*  
Johannes Vermeer



*Pas Mèche (Nothing Doing),*  
Jules Bastien-Lepage

## FOR Parents

In his comprehensive book *Victorian Painters*, Christopher Wood notes, "To write a history of the Victorian period is to write of England's golden age. Victoria's reign saw England's imperial, political, naval, and mercantile power reach its height. As so often in history, this produced a correspondingly brilliant flowering of the arts. It was not only prolific but dazzlingly varied." The art and personalities we cover throughout these lessons are designed to inspire your child's curiosity and encourage further exploration into this diverse and fascinating time period.



# CONNECTIONS AT HOME:

## Create a Family Portrait!

Did you know that your brain processes images 60,000 times faster than words? Wow! A picture really is worth a thousand words! So, let's see if you can "introduce" one (or all) of your family members to friends by capturing them in a photograph.

Here are some things to think about as you create your set and pose your subject(s):

- Will your portrait be formal or informal?
- Do you want the background to be carefully staged or casual? Whether carefully staged or casual, what will the mood be—elegant, funny, creative?
- How do you want your subject to dress, in their Sunday best, in everyday attire, or maybe even in costume!
- How will you pose them? Should they have props?
- How do you want to light them? (The mood you want to create can help you decide this.)

Once you've taken your shot, let other family members write captions. Which of their captions best describes what you were trying to achieve? Have fun and be sure to share your portrait with friends!

## HISTORY AND ART:

### Julia Margaret Cameron

Julia Margaret Cameron became one of the Victorian era's most celebrated photographers. Her interest in this art form was first inspired by a famous astronomer named Sir John Herschel, one of Cameron's many important friends. Interestingly, she never actually took a picture until her 48th birthday when her daughter and son-in-law gave her a camera as a gift. Little did they realize the fame their gift would bring. Cameron spent the next eleven years perfecting her artistic technique. In addition to photographing many of her celebrated friends, she also experimented with creating photographic "scenes" from literature. Her trademark, however, was her beautifully lit portraits of children.

To see Julia's photographs and learn more about her technique click [HERE](#). You can scroll through and read about each image by using the arrow at the bottom of each page.





# ADDITIONAL Resources

- Read about William Powell Frith's *The Railway Station*
- Watch this brief video: *Lord Shaftesbury: Everyone A Child Should Know* by Clare Heath-Whyte
- View this Classic Book Summary: *Oliver Twist*
- Look at this Ted-Ed video: Why Should You Read Charles Dickens?
- Watch this interesting video lesson by The Touring Teacher: Children At Work: 19th Century for Kids
- View M&G's past Victorian exhibition tour segment: The Continuing Victorian Narrative: Lightbearers
- View M&G's past Victorian exhibition tour segment: The Continuing Victorian Narrative: Britain's

## Poor Laws and *Oliver Twist*

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

### **M&G Educational Mission:**

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

