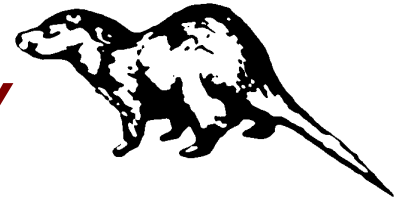


# NUFFIELD PRIMARY HISTORY



## BRITAIN AND THE WIDER WORLD IN TUDOR TIMES TUDOR PORTRAITS: WHO AM I ?

### TEACHERS' NOTES

Ashmead is an urban combined school which encourages an integrated curriculum and topic approach to teaching. The school has a mixed catchment area but has a large proportion of low-achieving pupils.

The topic for the term was the Tudors. The two lessons described were taught in the first week of term. The aim was to use Tudor clothes as a way of introducing the diversity of Tudor society as a whole. As preparation the children had been given the homework task of designing an outfit for a specific purpose which the rest of the class had to try and guess. The day before the first lesson, two parents who belong to a Tudor re-enactment group visited our class. They brought a selection of artefacts and clothes.

The lessons had a historical focus whilst incorporating learning objectives from the literacy strategy such as using a glossary. The key question: 'Who am I?' was aimed at using portraits and pictures as a source of historical evidence and a focus for enquiry, but also provided a valuable stimulus for descriptive writing.

#### **Year group**

Mixed Year 3/4 class, 28 children of mixed gender and a wide ability range, weighted to the less able but with four able children.

**Teaching time** Two lessons, each lasting approximately one hour.

#### **Learning objectives**

*History: for the children to:*

- use pictures and portraits as evidence in an historical enquiry
- understand the social diversity of Tudor life.

***Literacy: for the children to:***

- use a glossary
- extend and use new vocabulary
- write pen portraits of characters.

**Key question**

- ‘Who am I?’  
(What can we tell about this person from the clothes he/she is wearing?)

**Resources**

Glossary of Tudor clothing

A selection of information books which include glossaries

Copies of portraits and prints of Tudor people, depicting a range of clothing.

**The teaching [Lesson 1]****Episode 1**

*Focus: Whole class. Using a glossary as a shared text to extend vocabulary.*

We began with a general discussion about the previous day’s ‘Tudor’ visitors, naming as many items of Tudor clothing as possible. This led to me asking where we could find the names of the clothes. Having investigated dictionaries and failed to find ‘coif’ or ‘farthingale’, we identified glossaries as a source of specialist vocabulary and examined a selection of glossaries in Tudor books.

We then used a clothing glossary as our shared text and read through it, discussing each item of clothing and who would wear it.

**Episode 2**

*Focus: Individual work. Using a glossary to consolidate new vocabulary and label clothing.*

The children were given a picture of a Tudor lady and gentleman to label, using the glossary, to consolidate their knowledge of the specialised vocabulary involved.

**Episode 3**

*Focus: Individual work followed by whole class discussion. Identifying the differences in clothing between rich and poor.*

The children were each given a picture of a rich and a poor Tudor man. They were asked to ‘spot the difference’ and identify as many differences as they could between the two.

We then discussed as a whole class what differences they had identified, focusing on why they thought there were differences. They identified that money would be a main cause. By asking what sort of work they thought rich and poor people would do, the children were able to recognise that rich clothing was totally impractical and intended to impress, whereas the poor had to have clothes they could work in. They were also fascinated to hear that dress was constrained by laws dictating who could wear what.

## The teaching [Lesson 2]

### Episode 1

*Focus: Paired work. Introducing portraits as the focus for a game of Tudor clothing 'I spy'.*

In pairs the children were given a portrait and told to play a game of 'I spy' using only the Tudor names for items of clothing. The game was modelled with the whole class first and the children were encouraged to use the glossary if necessary.

The aim of this game was to get the children to look in detail at pictures that they were going to be using for the main part of the lesson, and also to give them the opportunity to consolidate some of their knowledge of Tudor clothes.

The game worked well and was enjoyed by all but two children who found it hard to work as a pair. However, they were sufficiently interested in the task to attempt to resolve their differences.

The episode finished by me asking a few children to recount their 'I spies'. They were very proud at being able to use Tudor names and catching out their partners!

All the children were able to participate successfully at their own level with the more able choosing some really obscure articles of clothing and the less able the more obvious.

### Episode 2

*Focus: Using a portrait as a source of historical evidence and as a focus for enquiry. Modelling a 'Who am I?' enquiry with the whole class.*

I chose one of the portraits (The Earl of Essex) used in the 'I spy' game and introduced it by asking the children to imagine they had found it in their loft; they didn't know who it was or anything about it, but they had to use it to find out as much as they could about the person.

Initially the children began by stating what Essex was wearing without drawing any conclusions from it, such as 'He has a ruff', 'He's wearing a peascod', 'He's rich'.

I then developed the enquiry by further questioning:

‘How do you know he is rich?’ ‘Because he’s wearing silk’.  
 ‘Why wouldn’t poor people wear silk?’ ‘It was too expensive’.  
 ‘Why was it too expensive?’...

Eventually the children were very forthcoming with a wide range of suggestions, ranging from ‘He must have been a soldier because he’s got an armour collar under his ruff and he’s carrying a sword’, to ‘He must have lived in Elizabeth I’s time because he is wearing a starched ruff and they didn’t come in until the 1560s’.

The children were able to recognise that, although they knew nothing about the person in the portrait, they were able to use it as a source of evidence and draw some significant conclusions. They were also able to see that different members of the class had used the same evidence to come to different but equally plausible conclusions.

### **Episode 3**

*Focus: Individual writing exercise – Who am I? Writing a character portrait (focusing on appearance) using portraits as a source of evidence.*

I had modelled a ‘Who am I?’ for the whole class. The children were now given the task of writing their own, based on a portrait. The aim was to read out their descriptions for the rest of the class to identify the picture.

The less able children were able to work independently using the glossary to write simple descriptions based on what they could see in their pictures.

The more able children were able to extend their descriptions to include their conclusions and assumptions about the character, based on the evidence before them.

### **Episode 4**

*Focus: Whole class plenary session. Individual children read out their ‘Who am I?’ for the others to guess.*

All the portraits were placed along the wall so that everyone could see them. Four or five children were asked to read out their descriptions for the rest of the class to guess which picture each referred to. This went down really well, with the children eager to continue when it was time to stop. The children were interested in the details of each other’s descriptions, particularly if they had used the same portrait but drawn different conclusions or focused on different evidence.

We finished by summarising the different sources of evidence for historical enquiry, and contrasting the main sources used for our Tudor project with our previous World War II topic, where we had been able to use primary evidence from grandparents or other eye-witnesses.

## Learning outcomes

- The children were able to use the evidence from the portraits as a source of historical enquiry.
- Much of the discussion and some of the writing reflected an awareness of how differences in clothing reflected the diversity of Tudor life.
- The children referred to the glossary for terms and meanings throughout both lessons.
- The children wrote lively descriptive pieces based on observation of the portraits.
- The children were motivated by the game element of ‘Who am I?’ and ‘I Spy’.

## Reflection

I was pleased with most aspects of the lessons, particularly the questioning and discussions, which engaged the interest of all the children and enabled them all to participate in historical enquiry in a meaningful way.

The use of portraits as a prompt for character writing stimulated some detailed and lively descriptive work and could certainly form the basis for a future literacy-focused lesson.

I felt the use of clothing as a ‘way in’ to investigate the diversity of Tudor life worked well, and the children have ended the lessons with a sound foundation on which to build their understanding of the differences between rich and poor in Tudor society.

### Nuffield Primary History project

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