TERRA
FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

Name: David McKoski

School: Chicago Academy High

Subject: Visual Arts

Grades: 9–12

Teacher Lab

Lesson Plan

Topic of the Lesson: Portraits as Records of Individuals, Times, and Places

Theme of the Unit: Defining Identity through Portraits

Timeframe: 4–6 days

American Artworks on Which Lesson is Based

Erastus Salisbury Field (1805–1900)
Portrait of a Woman Said to be Clarissa Gallond Cook, in Front of a Cityscape, 1838–39
Oil on canvas, 34 3/4 x 28 3/8 in.
Terra Foundation for American Art,
Daniel J. Terra Art Acquisition Endowment
Fund, 2000.4

Thomas Easterly (1809–1882)
Keokuk, or the Watchful Fox, 1847
Daguerreotype, National
Anthropological Archives, National
Museum of Natural History,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington,
D.C.

Dawoud Bey (born, 1953)
Brian and Paul, 1993
Polaroid diptych, 29.5 x 43.5 in.
Walker Art Center, Justin Smith
Purchase fund, 1994
1994.74.1-.2
Copyright held by artist

Enduring Understandings—themes & ideas central to lesson and artwork
- Portraits are a means of recording people—personality, character, and status—and may also be expressions of beauty.
- Portraits tell us something about the times in which they were made.
- Portraits result from the relationship between the maker and subject.
- Identity involves tension between who we are and how others see us.

National Standards Addressed:
Visual Arts Content Standards
> Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks
> Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture
- Students apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life
> Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making
> Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
- Students describe meanings of artworks by analyzing how specific works are created and how they relate to historical and cultural contexts

Illinois Learning Standard(s):
Visual Arts
27.B4a: Analyze and classify the distinguishing characteristics of historical works by style, period, and culture.
26.B4d: Demonstrate knowledge and skills that communicate clear and focused ideas based on planning, research, and problem solving.

Chicago Reading Initiative Correlation:
        _x_word knowledge _x_writing _x_reading _x_fluency

Student Objectives (*Students will. . .*)**:**
- Investigate how portraits define individual and collective identities particular to a time and place.
- Evaluate the implications of making an artwork about another person's culture, race, or identity.
- Evaluate the implications of making an artwork that reflects one's own identity.
- Create portraits that record American identity in our contemporary place, time, and environment.

Vocabulary Students Will Learn:

background	composition	culture
candid	content	Daguerreotype
commission	context	ethics

expression	manipulation	seated
foreground	middle ground	self-portrait
formal	narrative	sitter
full-length	object	stereotype
gesture	portrait	subject
iconography	portraiture	symbol
identity	pose	
informal	profile	

Information Important to Understanding the Artworks:

Erastus Salisbury Field

About the Artist:
- Born: 1805, Leverett, Massachusetts. Died: 1900, Sunderland, Massachusetts
- Gender: male
- Largely self-taught, Field began his artistic career in 1826 in the Connecticut River Valley, working as an itinerant portrait painter.
- Like many other self-taught portraitists, Field worked in a style that emphasized flatness, minute detail, and sharply delineated forms; and he portrayed his subjects with a plainness and frankness. His style downplayed the sitter's unique personality and instead presents a more stable and eternal image for posterity.
- From 1841 Field lived mainly in New York, advertising himself as a daguerreotypist and seeking commissions for portraits in this early photographic medium. He adapted to the new technology as it began to undermine the market for painted portraits and he continued to make daguerreotypes throughout the remainder of his life.
- Field continued to paint, turning from portraiture to literary and biblical subjects for which photography did not present competition.

Source:
Terra Foundation for American Art Web site: http://www.terraamericanart.org/collections/code/emuseum.asp

About the Artwork:
- The painting depicts Clarissa Gallond Cook and is virtually identical in pose and background to a painting that Field produced earlier of her sister Louisa. Field differentiated the sisters through details of their hair styles, dress, and the pose of their hands.
- Louisa and Clarissa were married to the Cook brothers, owners of a merchant schooner that sailed along the Hudson River. Similarities in the portraits may have been intended to reflect these double family ties.
- Field included elements intended to help "define" the sitter. Although artists at the time typically portrayed women with elements of nature (such as flowers and fruit), often symbolic of fertility, virtue, and piety, Field presented the sitter with a vista of a fantasy port city in the background, which may reflect her family's business affairs.
- The prosperous-looking community next to the busy port consists of red-brick buildings and churches. The sitter's expression appears confident and her gaze is direct. She holds what may be business papers, which, along with the background, suggest she might have been active in business affairs.
- The red drape and marble column and parapet framing the background vista are meant to signal Clarissa's affluence and refinement. These architectural elements are typical in paintings of the era and reflect the influence of European art, after which Field and earlier American artists modeled their work.

Sources:
- Farragher, John, et al. *Out of Many: A History of the American People,* AP Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.
- Pohl, Frances. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
- Terra Foundation for American Art Web site: http://www.terraamericanart.org/collections/code/emuseum.asp

About the Time Period:
- Field's painting was made during a prosperous time for New England merchants, who had the means and desire to own portraits of themselves and family members.
- Among the provincial middle class such portraits were regarded as similar in function to decorated furniture and other useful arts. These portraits were also intended to reflect social status more than physical and psychological individuality.
- Like other portraitists, Field often used the same costumes and props from one painting to another, so sitters in his paintings often share similarities.
- At the time the painting was made, many Americans still looked to Britain for values, standards, and artistic models. Monumental neoclassical style architecture found in Europe and hinted at in Field's painting, became popular for public buildings. Many progressive artists and writers, however, were interested in finding distinctively American themes.

Sources:
- Pohl, Frances. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
- Farragher, John, et al. *Out of Many: A History of the American People,* AP Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.

Thomas Easterly

About the Artist:
- Born: 1809 Guilford, Vermont; and Died: 1882, St. Lois, Missouri.
- Gender: male
- Easterly is known as one of the foremost Daguerreotypists (practitioner of an early form of photography) of the 19th century. He learned the process in New York between 1841 and 1844.
- In 1844 Easterly left New York City and worked as a traveling photographer throughout Iowa and Missouri for several years. He eventually took over a studio in St. Louis in 1848, where he had produced Daguerreotypes of Keokuk the previous year.
- Some scholars have credited Easterly with making the first photographs of Plains Indians.
- Easterly had a successful career for ten years, but remained faithful to the Daguerreotype process after the introduction of newer photographic methods, which caused his business to decline.

Sources:
- J. Paul Getty Museum Web site: http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artMakerDetails?maker=1842
- Pohl, Frances. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002.

About the Artwork:
- The portrait of Keokuk is a Daguerreotype—the first widely used form of photography. The method required long exposures, which resulted in sharp details and may partly account for the impassive and stony-faced expression of sitter.
- Easterly's Daguerreotypes of Keokuk, made in 1847, are thought to be the earliest photographic portraits of a Native American.

- Keokuk was the leader of the Sauk and Fox Nation. He was known for his diplomacy in negotiating with government officials.
- He is shown in a stark interior setting. His head is partially framed by imposing bear-claw necklace (a symbol of his physical and spiritual power). He is also wearing medallion that identified him as a Native leader—a further symbol of his authority.
- Keokuk directly engages the viewer with his gaze, but seems emotionally inaccessible. Unfamiliarity with the camera, a new technology at the time, may have resulted in sitters' awkwardness or discomfort in front of the camera.
- Like painters, Easterly and other photographers could manipulate their images through choice of costume or setting, creating their own understanding of the frontier and the people who inhabited it.

Sources:
- Pohl, Frances. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
- "Faces of the Frontier," National Portrait Gallery Web site: http://npg.si.edu/exhibit/frontier/pop-ups/02-01.html

About the Time Period:
- Manipulated images of the frontier and its inhabitants were largely produced for the urban/Eastern public that couldn't experience them first-hand. Such images made a powerful contribution to the emerging American self-image.
- The U.S. government promoted the assimilation of Indian peoples by encouraging them to adopt European or "civilized" ways.
- The Indian Removal Act of 1830 gave the federal government the power to relocate Native Americans in the east to territory west of the Mississippi River. Though the Native Americans were to be compensated, this was not done fairly. The act had devastating consequences for many of the eastern tribes.
- The doctrine of Manifest Destiny, first expressed in 1847, held that the expansion of white Americans across the continent was inevitable and ordained by God.
- While American artists were portraying western Indian peoples, eastern Indian tribes were being removed from their homelands. Artists were attempting to portray Native Americans in a natural state as the subjects' environments were being destroyed.
- In this portrait, we do not see the sitter in his natural state. Instead he seems to confront modernity and white America's encroachment.

Sources:
- Farragher, John, et al. *Out of Many: A History of the American People,* AP Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.
- Pohl, Frances. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002.

Dawoud Bey

About the Artist:
- Born: 1953 Queens, New York; based in Chicago.
- Gender: male; African American.
- Portraits are central to Bey's work as a photographer. He is known for his large-scale color Polaroid images.
- Bey has photographed extensively in urban communities throughout the country. His approach has been to enlist the participation of various communities and his subjects in the creation of his work. Bey's models have had a voice in determining what they will wear and how they will be portrayed.
- Urban youth have been frequent subjects for Bey. The artist has said "My interest in young people has to do with the fact that they are the arbiters of style in the community;

their appearance speaks most strongly of how a community of people defines themselves at a particular historical moment." (Patton, p. 267)

Sources:
- ArtsConnectEd Web site: http://artsconnected.org/resource/81372/brian-and-paul
- Patton, Sharon. *African-American Art*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1998.

About the Artwork:
- The large-scale format of these portraits gives the sitters heroic proportions.
- The sitters, one black one white, face one another but gaze outward.
- The three-quarter view, saturated colors, direct gaze, costume elements, and use of the diptych format (typically a pair of paintings joined by hinges) call to mind European portraits of the 15th and 16th centuries.
- The image is a studio photograph but without props that provide clues for greater understanding of the subjects.

Source:
Patton, Sharon. *African-American Art*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1998.

About the Time Period:
- Despite the prosperity of the 1990's, many Americans felt left out.
- Doubts and fears about the fate of individual communities multiplied. Many Americans had begun to fear for their personal safety, even within their own communities.
- Urban segregation was on the rise and the worst riot of the century broke out in 1992 in Los Angeles over racial tensions and police brutality.
- The period witnessed a political and social struggle to redefine American values. Multiculturalism—a movement emphasizing the unique attributes and achievements of formerly marginal groups and recent immigrants—gained currency.
- The work and concerns of artists of color sparked discussions throughout the art world about both exclusion and stereotyping.
- Debates within the United States about ethnic identity and the manner in which this identity was to manifest itself in both art and politics were informed by global events.
- Defenders of more traditional forms of artistic expression began to believe that American culture was eroding in the face of the increasing demand of marginalized groups—people of color, gays, and lesbians—for representation.

Sources:
- Pohl, Frances. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
- Farragher, John, et al. *Out of Many: A History of the American People,* AP Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.

Resources for Students to Review

"Themes in American Art: Portraiture," National Gallery of Art Web site: www.nga.gov/education/american/portraiture.shtm

Entries on "Erastus Salisbury Field" and "*Portrait of a Woman said to be Clarissa Gallond Cook, in Front of a Cityscape,"* Terra Foundation for American Art Web site: www.terraamericanart.org/collections (go to "List of Artists" and search on "Field")

"A Rich Simplicity: Folk Art from the Terra Foundation for the Arts Collection," Traditional Fine Arts Organization Web site: http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/3aa/3aa659.htm

"Faces of the Frontier," National Portrait Gallery Web site: http://npg.si.edu/exhibit/frontier/pop-ups/02-01.html

"Dawoud Bey: The Chicago Project," The Smart Museum of Art Web site: http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/chicagoproject/about_artists.shtml

"*Brian and Paul*," Walker Art Center Web site: http://collections.walkerart.org/item/object/3124

Frances Pohl, *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002, pages 123–126, 155–163, p. 128.

Sharon Patton, *African-American Art.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998. "The Evolution of a Black Aesthetic," p. 267

Farragher, John, et al. *Out of Many: A History of the American People,* AP Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.

Materials/Supplies Needed for the Lesson:

chart paper   copies of yearbooks or pages copied from
markers   yearbooks
LCD projector   digital cameras

Student Activities

Day	Emphasis of this Lesson Idea/Outcome	Activities
1	Identify how portraits define individual and collective identities particular to a time and place.	Organize students in groups of 3 or 4. Provide each group with an envelope containing vocabulary words for the lesson. In groups, students categorize the vocabulary, labeling each category and determining the theme of the lesson. After each group presents and displays their charts, the class discusses similarities and differences in how words were categorized. Discuss with students the meaning of "portrait." Then discuss enduring understandings and objectives for the lesson. Next students examine yearbook pages or individual year-book photographs from 2 or 3 different time periods. Project the photos or create stations where they are displayed and have students rotate through the stations. Have students collect information about the images that define individual and collective identities from a particular time and place (see "Yearbook Comparison Matrix" graphic organizer

		attached)
		After collecting information on the Matrix students discuss as a class what they uncovered by looking at the images.
		Questions to help guide discussion:
		1. How do students show their individuality?
		2. What do you see that supports your answer?
		3. Do the photos reflect primarily the interests of the school or its students?
		4. What does a comparison of photos from different times tell us about changes in our society? What visual clues do you see that communicate these changes?
		Homework
		Select 2 photos of yourself:
		1. A photo you would like to be remembered by. Briefly explain why you would like to be remembered by this photo.
		2. A photo that you would not like to be remembered by. Briefly explain why you would not like to be remembered by this photo.
		(Students may be given this assignment several days in advance to allow time for them to locate photos.)
		Complete "Connecting Artists to Their Work" handout (attached), identifying the following individuals: Erastus Salisbury Field, Thomas Easterly, and Dawoud Bey, and discover 3 things about their connection to portraits. (These artists will be introduced on day 2 of the lesson.)
2/3	Evaluate the implications of making an artwork that reflects one's identity. Evaluate the implications of making an artwork about another culture, race, or identity.	**Homework Reflection** Think-Pair-Share Activity: Students respond to the following questions and then share their ideas with a partner. Class discussion follows. • How are the 2 photos of you similar or different? • What makes them similar? • What makes them different? • How does each reflect your identity? • What makes you like one photo over the other? **Introduction to Works of Art** Students complete the "Exploring the Hidden Messages of Portraits" handout that has general questions about portraits (see attached). Next the class discusses how they answered the questions. Show students 3 portraits from different eras (by Field, Easterly, and Bey). In small groups (3-4) students will complete a "close read" of one of the portraits assigned to them, recording their information.

		Class Discussion: Each group reports on how they described the portrait assigned to them. Following the discussion, present the following questions, recording responses on a class chart: 1. How are the images similar or different? 2. What makes them similar? 3. What makes them different? 4. How does each reflect the person's identity? 5. What do you think the images tell us about the time period? 6. Why were the individuals represented in this manner? 7. Do you think they had control over how they were to be painted or photographed? **After Class Discussion:** Students return to their groups to uncover further information about the artist, the work or art, and the time period. Packets of information are provided to each group. After learning more information about the artist, artwork, and time period, students answer the following questions in small groups: 1. What does this portrait tell us about the times in which it was made? 2. What do you see in the portrait that supports your answer #1? 3. Who had control over the creation of this portrait, the sitter or the painter? Who was in control of the final outcome? 4. How did the artist portray the status of the sitter in this portrait? Class Discussion: • Do responses change after reading background information? • How have responses changed? • Why have they changed?
4/5	Create portraits to record American identity in the contemporary place, time, and environment in which you live.	**Students Create Portraits** Write a 5 minute free-flow response to the following questions: 1. What do I look like? 2. What would I like to look like? 3. How have I changed over the years? 4. How would I like to be remembered? Discuss with students the importance of thinking about whom they are as individuals and how they will individually represent themselves through photos. Provide students a list of questions to think about while taking their photos (see "Photo Reflections" handout attached). Students take a series of self-portraits and then select one final portrait that best captures a sense of self.
6	Create	**Final Assessment:**

	portraits that record American identity in the contemporary place, time and environment in which we live.	Student photos are assembled and the following questions answered by students: - How are the images similar or different? - What makes them similar? - What makes them different? - How does each reflect the person's identity? - What do you think the images tell us about the time period? Explain your answer. **Vocabulary Assessment:** - Students are given an envelope with the same vocabulary they categorized on day 1. Students again categorize the words. - This chart is then compared with the first one. Students discuss how and why their categories might have changed.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Yearbook Comparison Matrix

Question: What does a comparison of photos from different periods in time tell us about changes in society?

Questions to Think About	Yearbook #1	Yearbook #2	Yearbook #3	Yearbook #4	Similarities and/or Differences
What's the style of clothes?					
What's the hair style?					
How are students similar or different within the same time period?					

How do students represent their individuality? (What do you see that supports your answer?)					
Do the photos reflect the interests of the school or its students?					

Summary: Based upon the visual clues you identified in the images from 1925–1980, what changes have occurred in American culture?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Connecting Artists to Their Work

Using the internet, resources in the library, or classroom materials, research the following artists and discover 3 things about their connection to creating portraits. You may want to explore the time period, place, reasons they created portraits and anything else you find interesting about the artists.

Erastus Salisbury Field

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

1. Thomas Easterly

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

2. Dawoud Bey
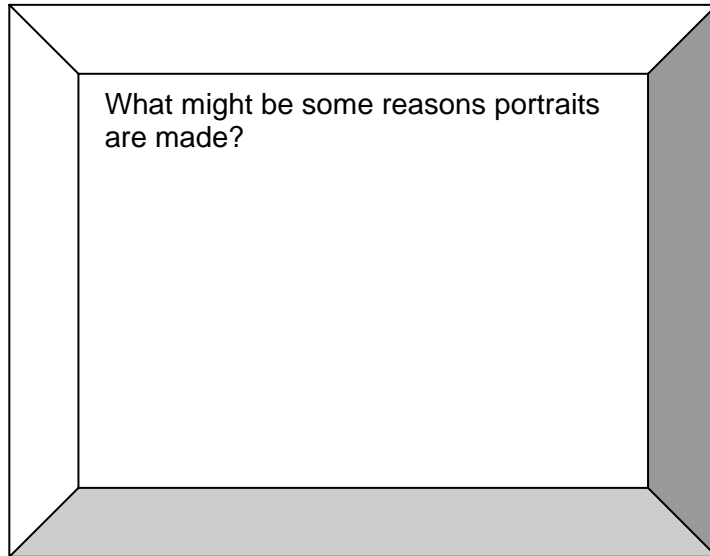
1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____
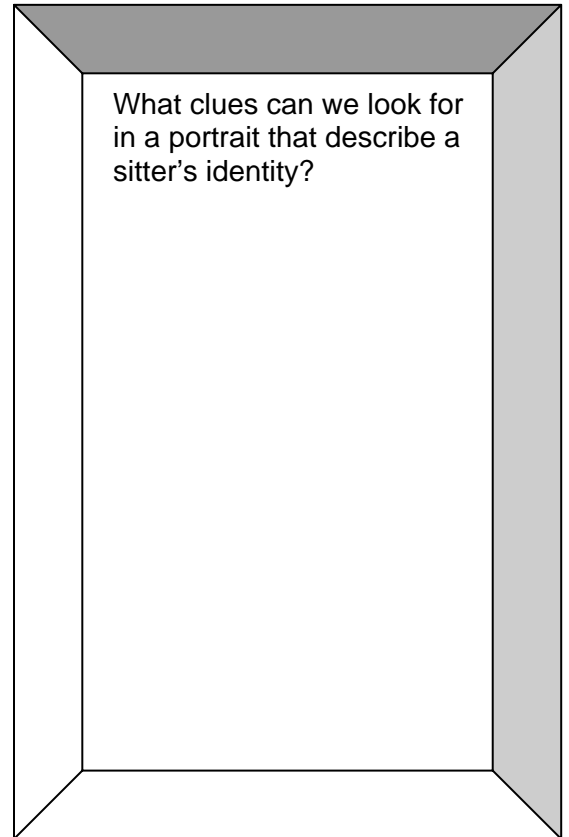
3. _____

_____

Name: _____ Date: _____
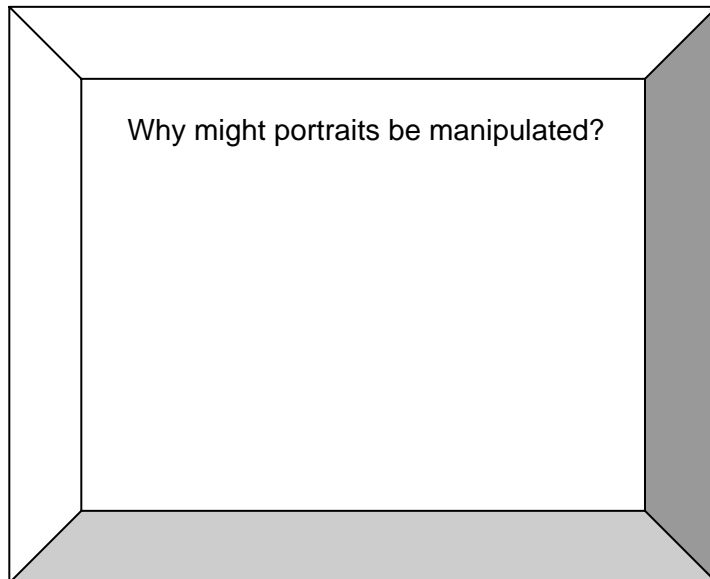
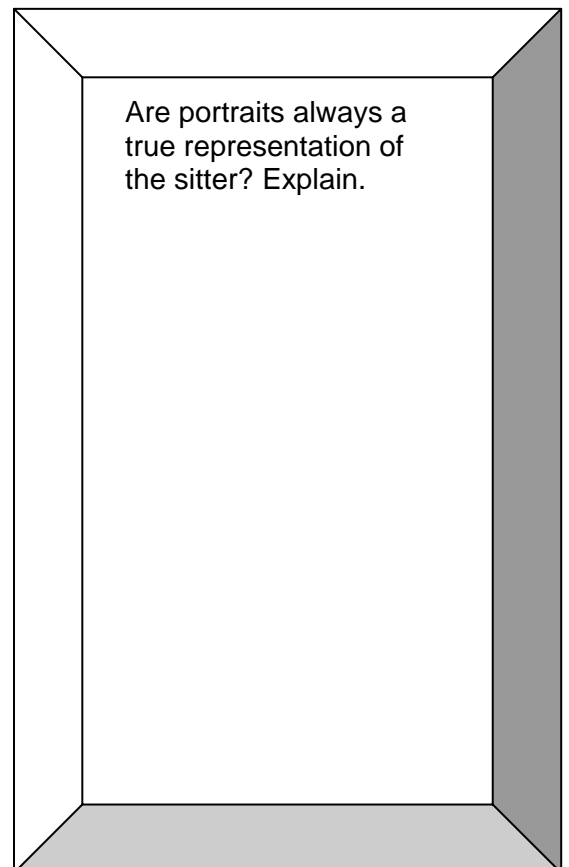## Exploring the Hidden Messages of Portraits
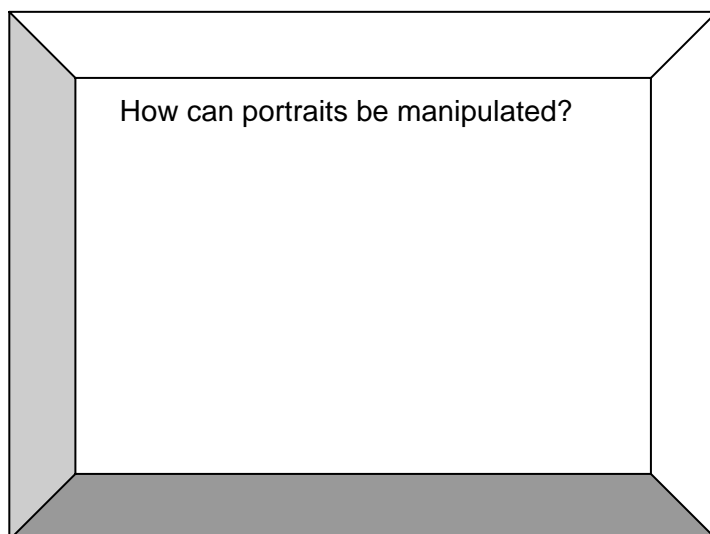
What might be some reasons portraits are made?

What clues can we look for in a portrait that describe a sitter's identity?

Why might portraits be manipulated?

How can portraits be manipulated?

Are portraits always a true representation of the sitter? Explain.

Photo Reflections

Before photographing yourself respond to the following questions. Continue to reflect on the questions and your responses as you are taking your photo.

What do I look like?

What would I like to look like?

How would I like to be remembered?

Your image here

How have I changed over the years?