



Great Fire of London

Guided Portrait Discussions

These portrait discussions give questions for a teacher to ask the children, with possible suggested answers in brackets. It may be necessary for the teacher to probe a bit further with supplementary questions and to add little bits of information to arrive at the full meaning.

Charles II by John Michael Wright (or his studio) c.1660-5, NPG 531

Can you find any clues that tell you he is a king?

(Very posh clothes and gold chain – though a few other really rich people also wore clothes and chains like this too. The real clue is the orb – ball with a cross – in his right hand)

How would you show that someone was a king or queen if you were doing a painting?

(Maybe give them a crown – also possibly a sceptre and orb, too, and perhaps sit them on a posh throne)

Samuel Pepys had to go and tell Charles that London was on fire and that something needed to be done about it fast. Does Charles look like someone who would take bad news quite well, or not?

(He was actually quite a friendly man, though his portraits don't always show him that way, and he probably felt very grateful to Samuel Pepys)