



# Smithsonian's History Explorer Podcast

## Teacher Guide



## Portraiture and Identity

*with curator Shannon Perich*

**Podcast Link:** <http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/museumportrait.mp3>

**Video Podcast Link:** <http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/museumportrait.m4a>

**Image Gallery:** <http://americanhistory.si.edu/connect/podcasts/history-explorer-portraiture-and-identity>

### Pre-Listening Questions

- Look carefully at each image—who is this person? What can you learn about him or her from this photograph? Is there anything that stands out to you about the way this portrait is framed?

### Discussion Questions

- Look in your textbook or online for other examples of historical portraiture (the [Library of Congress](#) and the [National Portrait Gallery](#) are great places to start). Pick one portrait you find intriguing and keep in mind Shannon's thoughts on identity and portraiture. What do you now notice about the portrait? Describe the portrait as if you were a curator here at the museum.
- Look at the portrait of Colin Powell. If a photographer were to create an abstract portrait of you, what images would he or she include? What about another important historical figure?

### Activity

- In pairs, have students photograph each other. Ask students to consider how they would like to be portrayed in the photograph as the sitter, and what issues they would like to consider when they are the photographer, and who their audience is. Or, have students choose one person to photograph, and explain why they chose the person they chose and how the elements of the photograph represent that person and his/her time period.

### Related Resources—for continued instruction or resources for your students' research

National Museum of American History:

- Portraits of a City: The Scurlock Photographic Studio's Legacy to Washington, D.C.  
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives/scurlock/index.html>

History Explorer:

- Object Portraits— <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=7879>
- American Presidents: Life Portraits— <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=987>
- Family Photo Album— <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=1511>
- Civil War Portraits— <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=7097>
- Martin Luther King Through the Scurlock Lens— <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=7808>

Thinkfinity:

- Photojournalism Guide—from National Geographic Expeditions  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/09/g68/photographyguidestudent.pdf>

### National Standards—from the National Center for History in the Schools

- NSH (5-12) HT4: Historical Research Capabilities

**Have your students email their question, comments, and discoveries to [thinkfinity@si.edu](mailto:thinkfinity@si.edu)**

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Name:

Date:

Period:

Topic:

*Listen to the podcast. Take notes and answer the questions.*

1. Look carefully at each image—who is this person? What can you learn about him or her from this photograph? Is there anything that stands out to you about the way this portrait is framed?

2. Look in your textbook or online for other examples of historical portraiture (the [Library of Congress](#) and the [National Portrait Gallery](#) are great places to start). Pick one portrait you find intriguing and keep in mind Shannon's thoughts on identity and portraiture. What do you now notice about the portrait? Describe the portrait as if you were a curator here at the museum.

3. Look at the portrait of Colin Powell. If a photographer were to create an abstract portrait of you, what images would he or she include? What about another important historical figure?

**Give it a try and email your question, comments, and discoveries to [historyteachers@si.edu](mailto:historyteachers@si.edu)**

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