

What did Elizabeth look like?



SOURCE 1



SOURCE 2



SOURCE 3

SOURCES 1, 2 and 3 all show Queen Elizabeth. One of them was painted when she was twelve years old. No one expected then that she would become queen. The other two were painted at the beginning of her reign (when she was in her twenties) and at the end of her reign (when she was in her sixties). Can you decide which picture is which? Your teacher can tell you whether you are right.

Elizabeth became queen in 1558. After the divisions of Mary's reign, Elizabeth had to win the loyalty of her people – Catholics and Protestants alike. She had to convince them that she was the right person to be ruler of England.

Equally important, she had to convince the doubters who thought a woman could not govern a country by herself.

1. Which of the following words do you think Elizabeth would want people to associate with her: powerful, cruel, good, weak, beautiful, young?
2. Make a list of methods a politician can use today to win people's loyalty. Could Elizabeth have used any of these methods?

One of the best ways for Elizabeth to win people's loyalty was to tour the country, and let people see her. But Elizabeth had a problem. Many parts of the country were too remote and too hostile to a Protestant queen for her to risk travelling there. So instead, Elizabeth used portraits and pictures to let people see her.

Elizabeth wanted to create an image of herself which would impress her subjects. This meant that paintings of the Queen had to be controlled. It would be no good if paintings of Elizabeth showed her to be ugly, old and weak.

In 1563, and at intervals throughout her reign, the government issued portraits of the Queen. These were to be copied by all artists. No other portraits of the Queen were allowed. Masks of Elizabeth's face were also issued. On the whole, this policy seems to have worked. Artists were still copying these 'official' pictures years later. Even miniatures – to be worn round an admirer's neck – copied the official portraits.

Portraits, however, would only have been seen by a few people. They would be hung in the houses of the rich and powerful to show their loyalty to Elizabeth. The government also needed to control other pictures of Elizabeth that everyone would see.

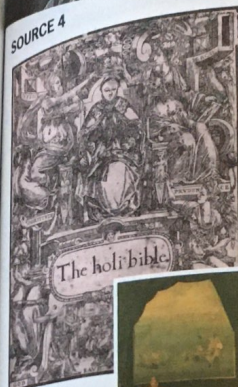
3. Look at Sources 1–8. Match them up with captions A–H in the box.
4. Which of these sources would be seen by most people? Give your reasons.
5. Which picture would Elizabeth be most pleased with?
6. Choose one of Sources 1–8 which you think is most reliable in showing what Elizabeth really looked like. Explain your choice.
7. Compare Sources 4 and 8. Did the view of Elizabeth's reign change after her death?



SOURCE 4



SOURCE 7



SOURCE 5



SOURCE 8



SOURCE 6

8. Check whether each of these statements is right or wrong. Your teacher will discuss your answers with you.
 - Elizabeth became queen in 1558.
 - Elizabeth was ugly.
 - Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII.
 - Elizabeth was a better queen than Mary.
 - The Spanish Armada tried to invade England in 1601.

Captions

A Painted when she was twelve years old and no one expected she would become queen

B Painted at the end of her reign when she was in her sixties

C Painted shortly after Elizabeth's death, when people were quite relieved she had died and were glad that a new monarch was on the throne. It shows her looking old and weary

D Painted twenty years after her death, when many people were looking back to 'The Golden Age of Elizabeth'. Elizabeth is seen as St George killing off Catholicism

E Painted at the beginning of her reign when she was about 25 years old

F Painted in 1588, shortly after the Spanish Armada was defeated. The Armada is shown sailing towards England and being wrecked off the Scottish coast. Elizabeth's hand is on a globe to show that she is Empress of the world

G A picture from the front of the English Bible. There was a Bible in every church and many people had their own Bibles

H A miniature of Elizabeth. This would be worn around the neck in a locket, or in a ring

Activity

You are a member of Elizabeth's government. You are in control of portraits. Decide which three portraits on this page you want people to copy. You will need to explain which groups in society you are trying to get your message across to, and explain what message about Elizabeth you are trying to get across.