

Victorian Hackney

Family Life *activity sheet*

A portrait is an image of a person or a group of people. It is usually a drawing or painting or a photograph.

Before photography, which was invented in Victorian times, the only way to record what a person looked like was to make them sit, often for long periods of time whilst an artist drew or painted them.

Even in Victorian times it was very expensive to have family portraits taken, and only the rich could afford to have a family portrait painted.

Here is a picture of the Butters family who lived in Hackney in Victorian times:



For us today looking at portraits from the past, we can learn a lot about the fashions of the day or where people lived and what their lives were like. We can even guess at what the people in the portrait may have been thinking.

Activity

Draw or paint a portrait of your family. It may be difficult to get everyone to sit down at the same time so do individual portraits and then join the pictures together at the end.

Don't forget to draw yourself! You can use a mirror for this or a photograph of yourself. You may want to draw people doing things they like or holding something connected with them like a football, a book or a toy.

If in a hundred years time somebody looked at your picture, what do you think they would be able to work out about your family?