The woman in this portrait is Louise Élisabeth, and she was cousins to the king of France. Louise Élisabeth worked closely with the artist, Noël-Nicolas Coypel, to create a portrait that told a story about who she was and how she wanted other people to see her. Louise Élisabeth is dressed in a costume, and is surrounded by imaginary flying babies. She is dressed as Venus, the Roman goddess of love and the two babies represent Eros and Anteros, Venus’ children. The artist is using his imagination to manipulate, or change, the way Louise Élisabeth looks to give her some of Venus’ characteristics such as beauty, grace, and the ability to make people fall in love.

Noël-Nicolas Coypel (French, 1690-1734), Louise Élisabeth, Madame la Princesse de Conti, as Venus, 1731, oil on canvas. Bequest of John Ringling, 1936. SN381

When looking at a portrait, we can focus on six different aspects of the portrait: facial expression, focal point, gesture, clothing, setting, and objects. Using this portrait of Louise Élisabeth as an example, let’s explore each of these aspects.

- **Facial Expression**
  What emotion is the person experiencing and where are they looking?
  *Louise Élisabeth is calm and just barely hiding a smile.*

- **Focal Point**
  Where is the person looking?
  *Louise Élisabeth is looking to her right, off into the distance.*

- **Gesture**
  What body language and movement is the person doing?
  *Louise Élisabeth is sitting with one arm to her chest and the other in her lap.*

- **Clothing**
  What can you tell about the person based on what they are wearing?
  *Louise Élisabeth is wearing a costume to dress up as Venus.*

- **Setting**
  Where is this person located? What is the background?
  *Louise Élisabeth is outside on a high place, looking down into a valley and near a forest.*

- **Objects**
  What things is the person holding or placed near?
  *Louise Élisabeth is draped in flowers, one of the babies has an arrow.*

**KEY TERMS**

- Portrait
- Facial Expression
- Focal Point
- Gesture
- Clothing
- Setting
- Objects
Louise Élisabeth chose to dress up as Venus for her portrait. Choose a fictional character from a book, movie, or television show to dress up as in your portrait. Consider the six aspects of portraits and plan your drawing before diving in.

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Plan your portrait by filling out the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facial Expression</th>
<th>You are feeling...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focal Point</td>
<td>You are looking...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesture</td>
<td>Your body is...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>You are wearing...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>You are located in...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects</td>
<td>You are surrounded by...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Using this plan, draw a self-portrait of yourself dressed as a fictional character. Use colored pencils, markers, or even a pen to create your self-portrait. Include your full body (toes to top of head) to best show off your clothing and gestures. Include several objects in the portrait to help demonstrate the character you are dressed as.

3. Now that you’ve drawn your portrait, create a short story about your portrait and what character you are dressed as. Answer the following questions, and then use your answers as inspiration for a short 2-paragraph story about your portrait.

- What is your facial expression?
- Why are you making that expression?
- What is your focal point?
- Why are you looking in that direction?
- How is your body posed?
- Why are you in that pose?
- What are you wearing?
- What does your clothing say about you?
- Where are you located?
- Why are you in that location? How did you get there?
- What objects do you have around you?
- What do those objects tell the viewer about you?