

Portrait Personalities: Finding a Friend

When an artist paints a portrait he/she sometimes tries to show us what a person is like on the inside, not just what he looks like on the outside. To find out what messages the artist may be revealing about the subject of a portrait, we must look for the visual clues that he/she has left for us. (*Visual clues can be:* use of color, line, shape, light and shadow, texture; objects contained in the portrait; background; facial expressions and body language.)

First, think about what kind of **character traits** or **qualities** (kind, good listener, honest, etc.) are important to you in finding and making friends. List them below.



Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. (American), (1876 – 1951), *The Twins: Virginia and Jane*, 1917, Oil on canvas, H. 60 x W. 72 inches, James A. Michener Art Museum, Gift of Oliver Pearson.

Now, walk around the Museum (or search the Michener’s collection online on [Google Arts and Culture](#)) and look for various **portraits**. Can you find a portrait of a person that would fit the qualities you are looking for in a friend? **Write the name of the portrait here:**

This portrait might not match all your qualities entirely, and that’s ok! This person might have other personality traits that you might not have included at first!

Now, what **visual clues** do you see in this portrait that reveal his/her personality? List them below:

Is there anything that you would like to know more about this person that you can’t find from looking at the portrait? If so, list your question below.

Now, write a **short biography** describing, in detail, your “friend’s” personality on the other side of this page. (Refer to your list of visual clues above for ideas.) Be sure to share your biography with a friend or classmate and let them try to guess which portrait you chose! (Or trade with a friend or classmate and try to guess each other’s.)

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