Portrait

**A few definitions**

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/portrait>:

* a painting, drawing or photograph of a person, especially of the head and shoulders
* a detailed description of somebody/something
* the way of printing a document in which the top of the page is one of the shorter sides

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/portrait>

A portrait of a person, place, or thing is a verbal description of them.

Chambers:

a drawing, painting or photograph of a person, especially of the face only. **2** a written description, film depiction, etc of someone or something

Cambridge

A portrait is also a [description](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/description) or [representation](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/representation) of something:

WIKIPEDIA

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_painting>

1. **Portrait painting** is a [genre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hierarchy_of_genres) in [painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painting), where the intent is to represent a specific human subject. The term 'portrait painting' can also describe the actual painted portrait. Portraitists may create their work by commission, for public and private persons, or they may be inspired by admiration or affection for the subject. Portraits often serve as important state and family records, as well as remembrances.

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It might seem obvious that a painted portrait is intended to achieve a likeness of the sitter that is recognisable to those who have seen them, and ideally is a very good record of their appearance. In fact this concept has been slow to grow, and it took centuries for artists in different traditions to acquire the distinct skills for painting a good likeness.

=🡺 “***[Technique and practice »](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_painting%22%20%5Cl%20%22Technique_and_practice)***

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**B-Portrait (literature)**

[*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait\_(literature)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_%28literature%29)

“The **portrait**, as a literary [genre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre), is a written description or analysis of a person or thing. A written portrait often gives deep insight, and offers an analysis that goes far beyond the superficial. It is considered a parallel to [pictorial portraiture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait).

The imitation of [painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painting) is apparent in the name of the genre itself, which is a painting term. Historians of [antiquity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_antiquity) recognised the task of the portrait as representation; we find the beginnings of the narrative portrait in [Livy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livy) and [Tacitus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacitus). However, the portrait began to emerge from the need to describe yourself (self-portrait) or one's contemporaries, as in the *Essays* of [Montaigne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montaigne). This latter work develops a line of questioning around the movement of the representation of the individual (or of a society) from the pictorial mode to the discursive mode.

The portrait can be realised in [prose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prose) or in [verse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verse_%28poetry%29). Its objectives vary according to context: sociocultural, sociopolitical, historical, or again according to the subjectivity of the portraitist (the writer). Thus one can speak of a fictional portrait (corresponding to the characters who populate the fictional universe of each [author](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Author)) as much as a realist one (representing real-life people).

The portrait oscillates between [reality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality) and [fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiction), between [eulogy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eulogy) and [satire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satire), between one portrait which imitates its original and another which moves away from it (such as the [caricatures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caricatures) found in newspapers or in [Molière](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moli%C3%A8re)). Nevertheless, the objective portrait which describes the flaws and qualities of the individual represented (or equally the object or the idea) is quite widespread. The literary portrait evolved through the centuries and its development has been shaped by writers as well as literary critics and theorists. “