

2-A Paul Revere, 1768

John Singleton Copley, (1738–1815)



2-A John Singleton Copley (1738–1815), *Paul Revere*, 1768. Oil on canvas, 35 1/8 x 28 1/2 in. (89.22 x 72.39 cm.). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Joseph W. Revere, William B. Revere, and Edward H. R. Revere, 30.781. Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Art

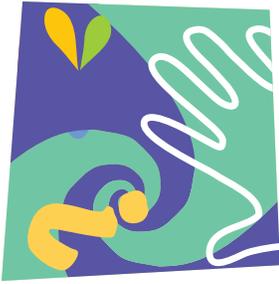
This portrait of Paul Revere captures an important moment in his work as a silversmith. With tools that rest on a table in front of him, he appears ready to engrave the gleaming surface of a teapot. The portrait gives him an air of importance. Revere's arched brow draws attention to his right eye. His left eye remains shadowed, while his forehead seems to be brightly lighted. Revere wears a spotless linen shirt, which is open at the neck, and a woolen vest with gold buttons. His workbench is a highly polished and unscratched table. Aside from the engraving tools, the table is free from a silversmith's clutter or any other signs of an active workshop. This tells us the tools are mainly in the picture to show what Revere did for a living.

The Artist

In the American colonies, painting portraits was generally considered more of a practical trade than a fine art. A portrait's success was largely measured by how much it resembled the actual person. Because Copley had a special talent for recording the physical features of the people he painted, he became the first American artist to achieve material success in his own country. Copley's portraits reveal clues about the personality, profession, and social position of his subjects.

The Historical Perspective

Copley painted this portrait some years before Revere's famous ride to alert patriots that the British were coming. At the time of this sitting, Revere was known as a silversmith with a growing Boston trade, not as an American hero. Although Revere had been active in revolutionary politics at the time of the portrait, Copley wisely kept the portrait free of anything controversial. Revere's portrait remained in the Copley family's attic until the end of the 19th century, when Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poem, "Paul Revere's Ride," finally brought attention back to the patriot's story. In 1930, Revere's family members donated Copley's portrait of their famous ancestor to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Conversations and Teaching Activities

Head Start Children ages 3 to 5

Encourage children to look closely at this portrait—the objects, the background, the colors used. Ask questions, introduce new vocabulary, and find books that relate to the artwork.

Describing



- ✓ Look at the painting. What do you see?
- ✓ What is Paul Revere holding?
- ✓ What is a portrait?
- ✓ What is a profile?

Analyzing and Interpreting



Ask the following questions to stimulate thinking and discussion:

- The title of this portrait is *Paul Revere*. Do you know why it has that name?
- How would you want your portrait taken? Would you want your left side painted, your right side, or would you rather look directly at the painter? Why?
- Does Paul Revere look like anyone you know?
- Have you ever seen anyone dress like that? Can you find the buttons on his shirt? Do you know what he is wearing over his shirt?
- What does silver look like? What is a silversmith? Traditionally, in Revere's time, a silversmith was named for making "silverware" (cutlery, bowls, plates, cups, candlesticks, etc.).
- Is the teapot small, medium, or large? Will it hold a lot of tea or a little tea?
- Can you see all of Revere? Children might say: I can't see all of him; I don't see his ear—it is covered by his hair; I can barely see his left eye; Where are his legs?
- What is under the teapot?
- What could Revere be thinking? Show me your thinking face.
- Which parts of his body do you see?
- Look at his eyebrow. Why do you think it is raised?
- Look at the picture's black background. Why do you think the painter made it so dark? Would you paint it a different color?
- Why do you think the painter wanted Revere to pose like this?
- How long do you think it took Revere to make the pot?
- Are there other things you would like to tell me about this painting?



Connecting and Extending

Introducing Vocabulary

chin	painter
eyebrow	portrait
forehead	silversmith
gaze	teapot
holding	tools



Connecting and Extending continued...



A Picture Book of Paul Revere by David Adler (Holiday House, 1995)
This book provides an overview of Paul Revere's life, highlighting major events.

The Tool Box by Anne Rockwell (Walker and Company, 2006)
A boy introduces readers to a saw, hammer and nails, and sandpaper to smooth wood and plaster.

Who Uses This? by Margaret Miller (HarperCollins Publishers, 1990)
Brief text, in question-and-answer form, and accompanying photographs introduce a variety of objects, their purpose, and who uses them.

Related Family Literacy Experiences

Parents and children can:

- ✓ sing the song "I'm a Little Teapot" while waiting in line or riding in a car or bus.
- ✓ pretend to have tea together.
- ✓ take turns posing for and drawing a portrait.



Related Educational Experiences

- ✓ Have a tea party with the children.
- ✓ Teach the children about making tea. Talk with them about the difference between warm tea and iced tea.
- ✓ Talk with children about the importance of tea in other parts of the world.
- ✓ Have a tea party.
- ✓ Teach the children about teacups and saucers with dramatic play props.
- ✓ Give the children an opportunity to see how different-sized teapots or teacups hold different amounts of tea.
- ✓ Document tea tasting—raspberry tea, tea with or without lemon. Make a graph to find favorites.
- ✓ Have children pose for pictures in a manner similar to the portrait.
- ✓ Have the children pose to music.
- ✓ Photograph a "portrait" of the children.
- ✓ Have the children make jewelry with silver-colored beads.

The ideas listed are just a few of the many activities that could be used to introduce or extend children's learning. Your knowledge of your children and families supports your ability to ensure positive learning experiences and outcomes for students. As an educator, you probably have ideas for books, songs, finger plays, and activities that you have thought of when introducing or extending children's learning related to the "A Head Start on Picturing America" artworks. We encourage you to confer with your colleagues, visit the local library or bookstore, and share your ideas with others.

