



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

**SECONDARY**  
**CORONATION SYMBOLS:**  
**ART & DESIGN**  
TEACHER NOTES



**SPACE TO STIR AND BE STIRRED**

TOWER OF LONDON • HAMPTON COURT PALACE • BANQUETING HOUSE  
KENSINGTON PALACE • KEW PALACE • HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE AND GARDENS



This pack has been designed as a resource for schools wishing to learn about the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and the history and symbolism behind it.

This **Secondary Lesson Plan** and resources are targeted at KS3 but can be adapted for older students.

This session forms part of a suite of Coronation resources. It follows on from the **Coronation Assembly** and **Coronation Values and Symbols** lesson. Please see our website for these and other Coronation resources.

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/schools/the-tower-of-london-schools-coronation-competition/coronation-learning-resources>

## LESSON OVERVIEW

As Britain prepares for the coronation of HM King Charles III, this lesson focuses on the symbolism of the coronation ceremony.

By investigating some of the key objects used in the coronation ceremony, students will discover the symbolism of these objects both collectively and individually. Exploring how colours, objects and flora and fauna can be used to represent meaning, emotion, status or personal attributes, students will consider some of the many symbols in the world around them and will begin to learn how to identify symbols and infer meaning. They will examine historic and contemporary portraits of monarchs and leaders in order to discover how artists use symbols to convey messages. Drawing on this learning, students will then work on creating their own set of symbols to illustrate the core British values that they feel King Charles III might wish to carry forward to represent the causes and views of a modern Britain.

In addition to supporting the History curriculum, this lesson could form part of your school's Art and Design programmes. It seeks to encourage students to explore a range of art works and to consider how they might convey meaning through images.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Students will:*

- Understand how symbols can be used to convey a message or meaning.
- Explore the symbolism of some of the objects traditionally used within the coronation ceremony.
- Consider how to use colour, flowers, animals and objects to develop their own symbols to represent the core values which they feel are most relevant for Britain today.

## CURRICULUM LINKS

### Art & Design KS3

- To use a range of techniques and media, including painting.
- To analyse and evaluate their own work, and that of others, in order to strengthen the visual impact or applications of their work.
- To learn about the history of art, craft, design and architecture, including periods, styles and major movements from ancient times up to the present day.

### History KS3

- The study of an aspect or theme in British history that consolidates and extends pupils' chronological knowledge from before 1066.

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Familiarise yourself with the slideshow and adapt it if necessary to suit the needs and abilities of your students.
- If you taught our previous lesson, **Coronation Values and Symbols**, have the list of values identified in this session to hand.
- Look at the links to suggested artists in the accompanying **Extension Activity** and select any who you feel might inspire your students.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES NEEDED

- Paper
- Art materials



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 4: WHAT IS A CORONATION?

On 6th May 2023, the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III will take place at Westminster Abbey.

- You may have already discussed this in school. Ask students to share their ideas in pairs.
- What objects are traditionally used in coronations?
- Who will be present at the coronation?
- What does the coronation represent?

### Slide 5: THE CORONATION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

**Images:** The coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2nd June 1953

**Embedded video:** Link to edited film clip of the Investiture and crowning of Queen Elizabeth II

A coronation is the ceremony at which a king or queen symbolically receives their crown.

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was the first to be televised live. At the Queen's request, the ceremony was broadcast on both radio and television. It was watched by more than 20 million people in the United Kingdom and many more around the world.

### Slide 6: SYMBOLIC

- What does it mean if something is symbolic? Ask students and gather answers.
- When we say an object or action is symbolic it means it's used to represent an idea, a quality or a value without using words.
- For example, the act of lighting a candle can often be symbolic of remembrance, or of hope shining out of the darkness.

### Slide 7: LIGHT BULB

**Images:** Light bulb

For hundreds of years, artists have been using symbols to add meaning to paintings. There is a common language of symbols. You may not realise it, but we still do this today.

- What does a light bulb symbolise?
- Can you think of any other symbols you use?
- Gather answers. Responses might include: road signs; emojis; hazard labels; clothing labels; logos

### Slide 8: EVERYDAY SYMBOLS

**Images:** Yawning face emoji; Hazard sign; Rainbow; Pedestrian crossing sign

Symbols are a great way to communicate a message as they can be understood by anyone, regardless of language.

- What do these symbols mean? Ask students and gather answers.
- Emojis are the fastest growing language ever and this is constantly evolving as new emojis are created.
- The rainbow symbol was used to show support and appreciation for the NHS during the pandemic. The rainbow has been used by LGBTQ+ groups to symbolise inclusivity of all identities regardless of how a person defines themselves.
- Rainbows are often used as a symbol of hope, as they appear after a storm or rain.

### Slide 9: CORONATION OBJECTS

**Images:** The coronation of King Harold (Bayeux Tapestry); The Coronation Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c.1600, based on a lost original; the coronation of King Henry III, 1216

- Can you remember the names of the three objects used in the coronation ceremony? (Crown, orb and sceptre)



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 10: THE CROWN, SCEPTRE AND ORB

**Images:** St. Edward's Crown, 1661; The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross, 1661; The Sovereign's Orb, 1661

The crown, sceptre and orb are traditionally used in the coronation of a new king or queen in Britain.

- What do you think these objects symbolise when we use them together? Ask students to share their ideas in pairs.
- When these three objects appear together, they symbolise the monarchy. They also symbolise tradition and the past.
- Each item also has its own meaning individually.

### Slide 11: THE SCEPTRE

**Images:** The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross, 1661

The Sovereign's Sceptre is a rod or staff which is covered in precious stones. It symbolises 'kingly power and justice'. In the past the monarch had power over their subjects, but also had a duty to protect the laws of the land and to ensure people had access to justice.

- Have you ever seen another person – real or fictional – who carries a staff or stick? (e.g. Gandalf in The Lord of the Rings).
- Why do they use it?
- What might it symbolise for them? Does it have a similar symbolism to the Sovereign's Sceptre?

### Slide 12: THE ORB

**Images:** The Sovereign's Orb, 1661

The orb is a golden ball with a cross on the top. It is an important medieval symbol of royal power. The cross on the top represents Christ, and the golden sphere is earth. It is divided into three sections which traditionally symbolised the three continents known in medieval times – Europe, Asia and Africa. This was to remind the ruler that his power derived from God who had power over all the earth.

### Slide 13: SAINT EDWARD'S CROWN

**Images:** St. Edward's Crown, 1661; Gov.uk crown logo

This is the crown which is used to crown the new king or queen. St. Edward's Crown was made for the coronation of King Charles II in 1661. It replaced an earlier medieval crown destroyed in 1649 during the English Civil War. The medieval crown was thought to have belonged to St. Edward the Confessor and the 1661 crown still bears his name.

Following her coronation in 1953, Queen Elizabeth II opted for a stylised image of this crown to be used on coats of arms and other insignia in Commonwealth countries to symbolise her royal authority.

### Slide 14: THE IMPERIAL STATE CROWN

**Images:** The Imperial State Crown, 1937

The Imperial State Crown is worn at the end of the coronation ceremony and for formal occasions such as the State Opening of Parliament. It is made up of hundreds of precious stones and jewels, some of which have been worn by past kings and queens.

- How do you think it might feel to wear this crown?

### Slide 15: WHAT DO THE CROWNS SYMBOLISE?

**Images:** St. Edward's Crown, 1661; The Imperial State Crown, 1937

The crowns symbolise the authority of the monarch and the crown image is often used as an emblem or logo on things connected to the royal family or the government.

- What does the crown symbolise to you?
- Collect answers. These might include: power; the position of the monarch as ruler; connections to past kings and queens; inheritance; wealth; strength.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 16: THE CORONATION PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPH

**Images:** The Coronation Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, 1953; The Coronation Portrait of King George VI and his family, 1937

The coronation photograph is the first official image of the new monarch wearing their crown. It's an important statement that will be seen by millions of people around the world.

Here are two official coronation photographs: one taken of Queen Elizabeth II on her coronation day in 1953; and one taken at the coronation of King George VI, her father, in 1937.

- What are the similarities and differences between these two photographs?
- Can you think of some good describing words for each portrait?
- Do you feel that one of these images is more dramatic than the other? Which one?
- The first image, of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, is the more dramatic of the two. It was taken by photographer Sir Cecil Beaton. How does Beaton create drama in this image?
- Answers might include: his use of lighting; the dramatic backdrop; the Queen is depicted on her own.

The Queen is shown holding the orb and sceptre and wearing the Imperial State Crown, Coronation Robes, and the Coronation Gown designed by Norman Hartnell. These objects show her power and authority but also symbolise tradition and the kings and queens who have gone before her.

- The Queen's head is almost turned in profile (side-on to the viewer). Where else do you see the head of a king or queen in profile? (stamps, coins, medals)
- Which portrait do you prefer and why?

### Slide 17: QUEEN ELIZABETH I

**Images:** The Armada Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c.1588

Here is another portrait of a Queen which includes a crown.

- Do you know which Queen this is?
- What do you think the crown represents in this painting?

This is Queen Elizabeth I, painted almost 450 years ago around 1588. It represents the Queen's right to rule and re-asserts her authority at a time of English exploration and colonisation.

- In the full version of this portrait, the Queen has her hand on a globe. Why do you think this might be?
- The globe represents England's quest for power in the Americas. Her finger is pointing at Virginia, which is named after her.
- What does the Queen's collar remind you of? What might it symbolise?
- Queen Elizabeth I's face is entirely circled by the ruff which extends out like the rays of the sun. Her face is in the centre, representing a source of warmth, beauty and goodness.

Black and white was Queen Elizabeth I's key colour scheme, symbolising purity and faithfulness. In the background is a mermaid. Mermaids were said to tempt sailors onto the rocks, so perhaps this is a symbol of the Queen's strength against the Spanish who she was at war with at the time.





## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 18: HERALDIC BEASTS AND OTHER ANIMALS

Artists often include animals in their works. Animals often symbolise the qualities we associate with them, for example dogs often represent loyalty.

- Can you think of some other animals, and the qualities they might symbolise?

### Slide 19: HERALDIC BEASTS

**Images:** Lion; White greyhound of Richmond; Silver Yale of Beaufort

Images of real animals and mythical beasts have been adopted by the monarchy as personal emblems throughout history and can often be found in coats of arms, palaces and institutions across the country.

The Tudors used animals as a form of branding. The animals sent a message about the Tudors' own qualities and strengths. Here are some of the animals represented in King Henry VIII's Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace, which originally featured ninety royal beasts above green-and-white striped poles.

#### Lion

The Lion of England has been used by monarchs since the early 12th century. The arms of three lions likely dates to the reign of King Richard I (Richard the Lionheart). The current Coat of Arms for England depicts the three lions walking. It represents 'Englishness' and later 'Britishness', with qualities such as strength, courage, dignity and pride.

#### White greyhound of Richmond

Dogs have been favoured pets for monarchs for many centuries. The House of Lancaster adopted the greyhound as one of their symbols and it became known as the Greyhound of Richmond when Henry VI granted a white greyhound to his half-brother Edmund Tudor (Henry VII's father). It symbolises loyalty and honour.

#### Silver Yale of Beaufort

This is a mythical beast with the body of an antelope, the tusks of a boar, a lion's tail and swivelling horns. It represents defence in battle.

### Slide 20: THE ROYAL COAT OF ARMS

**Images:** The Royal Coat of Arms

The Royal Coat of Arms is used by the ruling monarch to represent their authority. You might recognise parts of it from the back of coins, or from signs on public buildings.

There is a Scottish and an English version of the Coat of Arms. The one shown here is the English version.

The lion is the national animal of England and the unicorn is the national animal of Scotland. The lion is wearing the Royal crown. The shield is quartered:

- two quarters show the three walking lions of England;
- one quarter shows the standing lion of Scotland, which is shown twice on the Scottish version of this coat of arms;
- one quarter shows a harp for Ireland.

In the grass at the bottom is a thistle, a Tudor Rose and a shamrock, to represent Scotland, England and Ireland.

- Where else have you seen a coat of arms?
- Does your school have a special badge?
- What do you think your school badge symbolises?
- Where else have you seen three lions?

### Slide 21: THE THREE LIONS

**Images:** Three Lions Crest

You might recognise three lions from the crest worn by the England football teams. The lions have been appearing on flags and crests since the 12th century when soldiers carried flags with three lions on a red background to inspire them in battle.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 22: COLOUR

Colours can often symbolise feelings and emotions.

- We sometimes give our emotions colours. Can you think of any examples?  
Red – anger or love  
Blue – sadness  
Green – jealousy or illness
- At football matches fans sometimes dress in their team's colours. How else do we use colours as symbols? (Traffic lights, etc.)

### Slide 23: HIDDEN MEANINGS

**Images:** Queen Elizabeth II meeting Canadian President Justin Trudeau, March 2022

We have already seen some formal portraits of Queen Elizabeth II, but the Queen also used symbolism in some of her informal pictures. As a constitutional monarch, the king or queen of Britain isn't able to voice their own political opinions, but in this photo, taken soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the Queen may be viewed as sending a subtle message of support for Ukraine by choosing to place blue and yellow flowers in the background, to match the colours of the Ukraine flag.

### Slide 24: LAPIS LAZULI

**Images:** The Virgin and Child, c.1480; Lapis lazuli

Lapis lazuli is a blue stone that was originally found in modern day Afghanistan. When crushed it forms the pigment used by artists to make blue paint. The pigment was very expensive and was called 'ultramarine blue', meaning 'beyond the sea'.

Lapis lazuli was usually used to paint the most important part of the picture. Often the Virgin Mary is painted in an ultramarine dress. The colour can symbolise importance and value and also represents the wealth of the person commissioning the painting.

- What colours might represent something valuable or important today?

### Slide 25: FLORA AND FAUNA

Flowers can often be used to symbolise emotions, for example red roses can represent love whilst pink roses can represent friendship. Some flowers also have their own meanings, based on their individual qualities. Oak leaves for example represent strength – like the strong oak tree.

### Slide 26: BRITAIN AND THE COMMONWEALTH

**Images:** Queen Elizabeth II's coronation dress, 1953

Queen Elizabeth II's coronation dress was designed by Norman Hartnell.

Many countries have adopted a flower as part of their national emblem. These flowers are usually chosen for historic or cultural reasons. Hartnell's dress included flowers to symbolise the four nations of the United Kingdom, including:

- a thistle for Scotland
- a shamrock for Northern Ireland
- a leek for Wales
- a Tudor Rose for England

#### The Scottish thistle

There are various legends as to why Scotland has a thistle as its national flower, but the most popular links to the battle of Largs in 1263 when the invading Norsemen were sneaking up on the sleeping Clansmen and stepped on a thistle, crying out in pain and alerting the Clansmen to their presence.

#### The Irish shamrock

Legend suggests that St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, saw how important the shamrock was to the druids and used a three leaved clover to teach non-Christians about the Holy Trinity when converting them to Christianity in the 4th century.

#### The Welsh leek

According to legend, St. David, the patron saint of Wales, is said to have told his Welsh soldiers to identify themselves by wearing a leek on their helmets in an ancient battle against the Saxons.

#### The Tudor Rose

The Tudor Rose is an invented flower from the reign of King Henry VII. His marriage to Elizabeth of York united two warring houses: the Tudor Rose combines the red rose of the Lancaster house with the white rose of the York house.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

Around the bottom of the dress, clustered around the roses, are the flowers of the Commonwealth countries where the Queen was also Head of State at the time. These were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon).

### Slide 27: BARACK OBAMA

Images: Barack Obama, 2017

In this portrait of former US President Barack Obama, the artist uses flowers to symbolise the places that are significant to Obama:

- The purple African lily symbolises his father's Kenyan heritage;
- The white jasmine represents his Hawaiian birthplace and time spent in Indonesia;
- The multicoloured chrysanthemum signifies Chicago, the city where Obama grew up and where he eventually became a state senator.

- What flower would you choose to represent yourself?
- What flower do you think has properties that might represent Britain today?

### Slide 28: OBJECTS

We've explored the symbolism of some of the objects used in the coronation ceremony, but other objects can also be used to represent different things. For example, a watch is used to represent time passing.

- What else could you use to represent the passing of time?
- Answers might include: an hourglass; a candle; a bubble

### Slide 29: THE AMBASSADORS

Images: The Ambassadors, Hans Holbein the Younger, 1533

This well-known painting shows Jean de Dinteville on the left (a French ambassador in the court of Henry VIII who is representing his country while in England) and Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavaur on the right (a leader within the English church). In the middle of this painting, our eyes are drawn to two shelves full of objects. On the bottom shelf is a globe, some mathematical tools, a musical instrument and a book of music.

- What do you think these objects symbolise?
- Answers might include: the interests of the two men; the intelligence of the two men; the beliefs of the two men.

On the top shelf is a celestial globe (a globe of the stars), a Middle Eastern rug and various instruments used for navigation.

- What do these objects symbolise?
- Answers might include: the men are well-travelled; they have an understanding of maths and science; technical instruments like these were very expensive so this could also show their wealth.

The lute on the bottom shelf has a broken string and the mathematical dividers are open. This was painted at a time when King Henry VIII was starting to pull away from Europe as he established the Church of England, so these objects could also symbolise the division and unrest caused by the actions of the King.

### Slide 30: WHAT ARE THE KEY VALUES THAT BRITAIN NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE?

In the previous lesson, you thought about the values that King Charles III might wish to demonstrate to best represent Britain today and in the future.

- Can you recap some of these values?





## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 31: WHAT ARE THE KEY VALUES THAT BRITAIN NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE?

This is an opportunity for your students to create their own artwork by creating a set of symbols to represent what they see as the core British values that King Charles III might wish to take forward into his reign.

As a class, it might be useful to discuss what could symbolise some of the key values you identified in the previous lesson. You could also consider some of the causes you felt were important.

- As we enter a new period in history, can you create your own work of art that uses symbols to describe some of the values that you feel King Charles III might wish to take forward into his reign?
- Perhaps you could draw a 'Portrait of Britain', including a selection of key symbols?
- Or you might like to create your own still life picture of objects that represent core values?
- Or maybe you could design a logo or a new standard for this new era we are entering?
- Use the **Extension Activity** sheet to help you.



## USEFUL LINKS

### **The Coronation Regalia, including videos and interactive links:**

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/the-crown-jewels/>

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/crown-jewels/>

### **The Hampton Court Beasts:**

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/hampton-court-beasts/>

### **‘The Ambassadors’ painting:**

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/hans-holbein-the-younger-the-ambassadors>