



# Sir Anthony van Dyck

**Painter**

**Born:** 22 March 1599

**Died:** 9 December 1641

## ARTY FACT!

Van Dyck would often only paint the head of his portraits, other artists would have completed the background and clothes.

## Anthony van Dyck's life

Anthony van Dyck was born into a rich family in Antwerp. He was only 10 when he began to learn how to be an artist. By his late teens he was the chief assistant to Peter Paul Rubens (a very famous artist of the time.)

When he was 21, van Dyck travelled to London where he saw a collection of paintings by the Italian artist, Titian. Titian is famous for using bright colours in his paintings and van Dyck thought they were very beautiful. In order to learn more about using colour he travelled to Italy, where he spent six years studying. When he returned to Antwerp, van Dyck was already known as a great portrait artist.

## What makes Anthony van Dyck special?

Because van Dyck had found success so young, he was full of self-confidence. He also had enough money to buy fine clothes. He was described as behaving more like a nobleman than an ordinary person. This meant he was invited to important events and parties. He became well known and soon it was very fashionable for the rich people of Antwerp to have a van Dyck portrait painted.

King Charles I of England collected art and wanted the best artists in Europe to visit his court. In 1632 he gave van Dyck the role of court painter. Van Dyck was an overnight success and was knighted shortly after. He painted almost everyone in the English court. Van Dyck portraits had a more relaxed style than traditional formal paintings. His ability to portray people at their ease went on to influence generations of painters.

### WHAT CAN YOU SEE?

Can you find a portrait by van Dyck on display?  
Read the label next to the painting to find out who it is a picture of.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Whose portrait will you paint? Have a go at drawing their face.  
Look carefully.  
Get a friend to add in the clothes and background.