

## Notes for Teachers

### How to use this resource

Encourage your students to follow our research journey by reading through the resource.

They will encounter a selection of prompt questions and activities as they go through, which will encourage them to reflect on what they are reading.

### 1. Planning the Project

'The Twins' is one of the most popular paintings in the Fitzwilliam Museum, and thousands of visitors enjoy looking at it and talking about it every year. There are several other paintings in the museum by Millais. He was a famous Victorian artist and his life and works have been extensively researched and documented. But, other than their names, we didn't know anything about the twins who were depicted in his painting. We were interested in finding out more about them: who they were, and what happened to them after the painting was made.

We decided to explore the lives of these two young women, hoping to discover more about the lives of women in the Victorian age - individuals whose stories have for many years only been told in relation to the men around them.

Before we finalised our project plan, we spent time in the gallery looking in detail at the painting, to help to guide our research questions.

Click on the thumbnail in the top right of the screen to download a high-resolution image of 'The Twins' and take a long, careful look at it.

Spend 5 - 10 minutes noting down everything that you can see.

What are your immediate reactions to the picture?

Make a quick list of any initial questions you would like to ask.

The painting is a made of oil paint on canvas, and measures 153.5 x 113.7cm.

It depicts two young women, aged around 20, wearing similar outfits. There's a close physical resemblance between the two, and the title tells us that they are twins.

But there are subtle differences too.

**Look at their clothes and faces – what differences can you describe?**

## **Confident Kate?**

Kate is wearing a hat and looks directly at us, with calm eyes and a faint smile on her lips. Her body seems relaxed.

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE HER? CONFIDENT? ASSERTIVE? COCKY?**

## **Anxious Grace?**

Grace inclines her head towards her sister. She too looks at us, but less squarely. The brows above her large round eyes are slightly raised.

**HOW DOES SHE APPEAR TO YOU? WORRIED? NERVOUS? INQUISITIVE?**

## **Kate's Outfit**

Kate holds a dog whip in her gloved hands, while a wolfhound stands obediently at her side. At first glance she appears to be very well turned out. But look more closely. There's a tuft of hair escaping from under her hat. A white handkerchief is poking out of her pocket.

**WHAT DOES THIS SUGGEST ABOUT HER?**

## **Grace's outfit**

Grace's outfit seems immaculately crisp and clean, with bold ruffles of lace down her front. She grips her hat tightly in her left hand. A useful prop perhaps to fidget with and help calm her nerves?

We decided that it would be interesting to know more about these two: who they were, what they became.

So we started to do some reading.