

LESSON PLAN

HOW WOULD YOU DESIGN A STATUE OF APHRA BEHN?

A IS FOR APHRA

Summer 2021

Dear Teacher,

We hope you enjoy the lesson plans about the life and work of Aphra Behn available at www.aisforaphra.org – there is also lots more information about her life and work available on the website.

We created these lesson plans to be part of our campaign to get a statue of Aphra Behn in her home city of Canterbury in Kent.

As part of that campaign, we really wanted young people to contribute ideas about how they imagine Aphra Behn.

This lesson plan encourages students to visualise how they see Aphra Behn. It works best if taught after *at least one* of the other downloadable lessons on Behn's life and work available on our website.

The committee of A is for Aphra would love you to send us 3-4 of the most interesting designs from your class, so that we can consider using them in the sculptors' brief we will issue in the autumn.

Please send images of interesting students' work (along with the first name of the student and year group) to hello@aisforaphra.org by 24th September 2021.

Yours faithfully,



Charlotte Cornell
Campaign Chair, A is for Aphra

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Aphra Behn (10th July 1640 - 16th April 1689)

Aphra Behn was one of the first English women to earn a living from writing alone, becoming a role model for many other women who followed her even to this day.

She was a writer, playwright and poet, creating a whole string of extremely successful work in her own lifetime.

She was also a very intersting character in here own right, having spent time in her early adulthood working as a spy for the English royal family in the Netherlands and then ending up in a debtors prison as a result of not being adequately paid for this work. However, through her steel and creativity she began to carve out a career for herself as a writer. Theatre was again flourishing after the dark days of the Plague and the English Civil War and she took advantage of the opportunity, gradually building up a reputation as a talented and respected writer.

She's probably best known today for her short novel 'Oroonoko' which tells the harrowing story of an enslaved African prince. It's exploration of race, gender and slavery, uncommon themes at the time, have helped to make it a highly influential and inspiring work of literature.

When she died in 1689 Behn had become important enough to be buried in Westminster Abbey, she was quoted as saying that she had led a life "dedicated to pleasure and poetry."





Aphra Behn Portraits

There are a few surviving portraits of Aphra Behn so we do have some idea how she might have looked or dressed, however as with all portraits, these may not be a true likeness. They do give us some valuable clues though, especially regarding hairstyles and costume.

TASK: Take a look at these four portraits and draw up a short list of similarities and differences. (Aim for at least five similarities and five differences)


















Costume of the late 17th Century

These images show some of the fashionable ways that ladies wore their hair in a similar style to the way that Aphra Behn's hair is depicted in a number of the portraits.
TASK: Do you think these hairstyles could come back into fashion soon?
(Write 2 - 3 sentences offering your opinion.)









These female portraits were all painted around or during Aphra Behn's lifetime and offer us an insight into the fashionable costumes of the day and the way in which women were portrayed.
TASK: How would you describe their clothes and what sort of image of them was being promoted? (Try to write 3 - 4 sentences about this)



















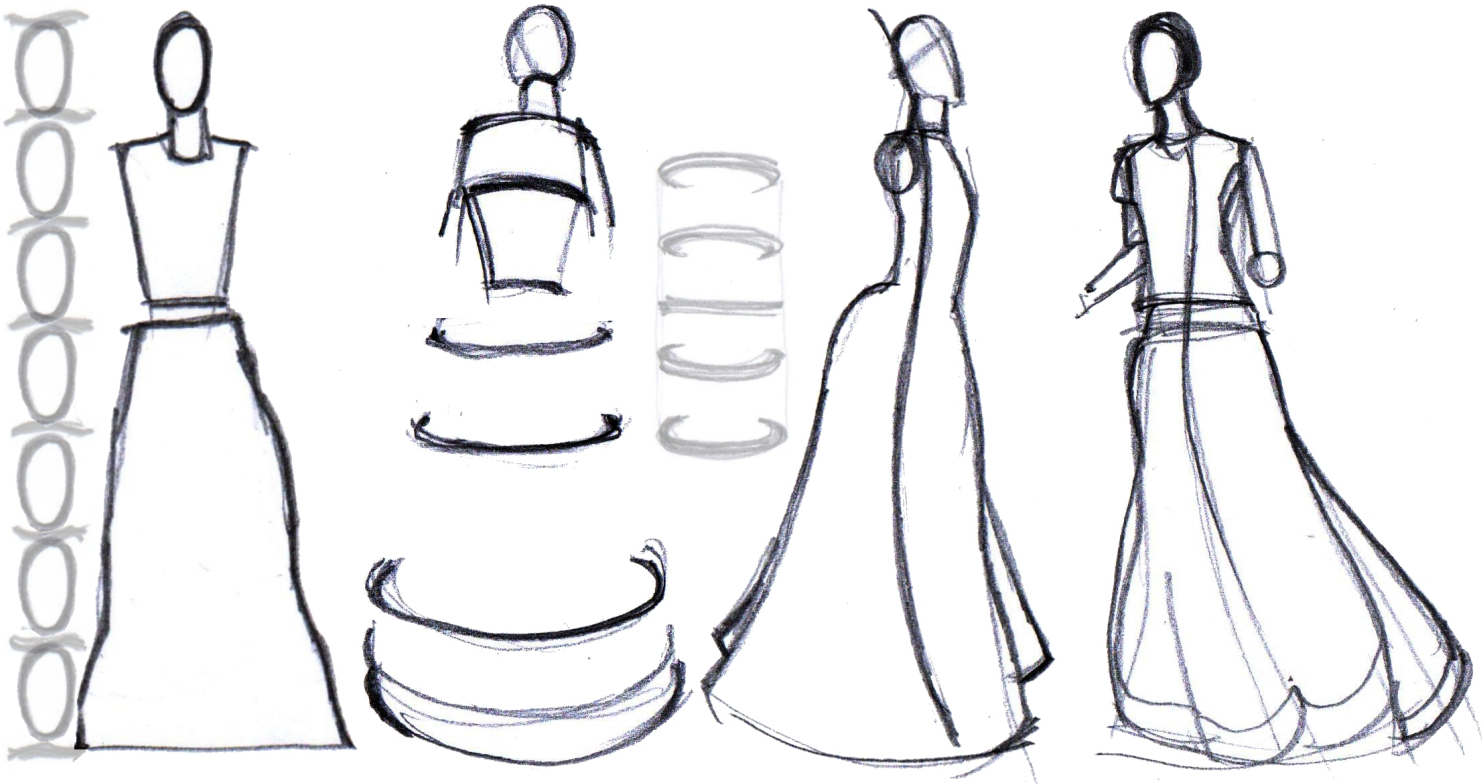
Your Statue Design

Before beginning it's worth looking at a few tricks that artists use when they are drawing people. Firstly, it's always worth sketching the basic structure out to begin with. This helps you to get the correct proportions. (how parts of the body compare to one another)

In drawing 1 you can see how one 'head' shape fits into the body twice and from the waist to the floor another four times. This is only a rough estimate but it helps.

In drawing 2 you can see how 'curves' appear to change direction depending on whether they are at the top or bottom of the drawing, this helps to make the figure look more three dimensional.

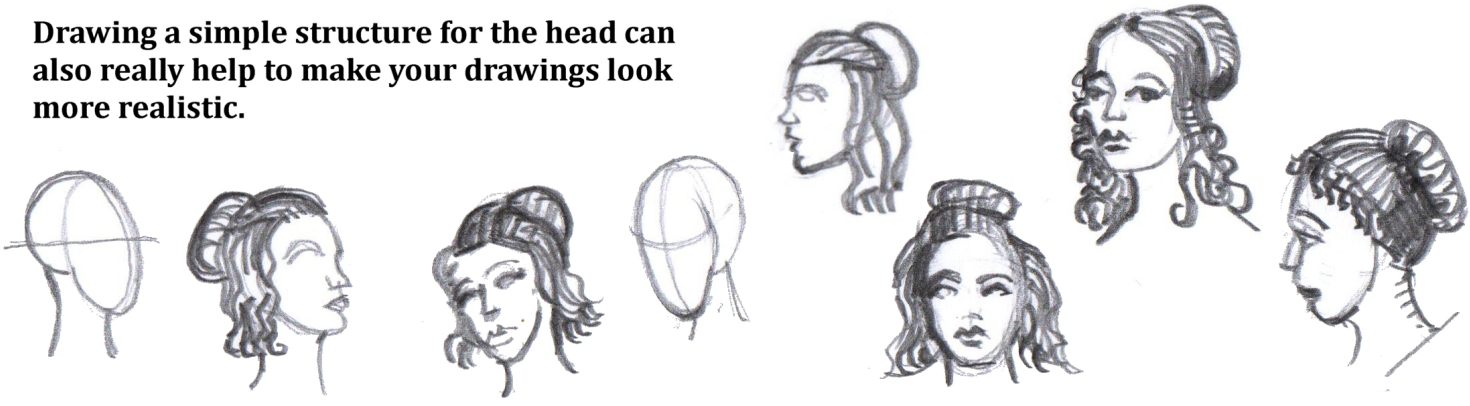
Finally, in drawings 3 and 4 you can see how making the desing follow a simple 'curve' can make it seem more life-like and add more movement into your design.



1 **2** **3** **4**

Once you have the basic structure of the pose, then you can start adding the detail. That's when it's a good idea to refer back to the earlier images of hairstyles and costumes to help. Remember, you don't have to copy 'one' costume, you could take elements from different ones and mix them together to create your own design. Once all of the clothing starts to take shape you can then start to add smaller details, patterns, jewellery, accessories etc.

Drawing a simple structure for the head can also really help to make your drawings look more realistic.





TASK: Designing the statue





Using what you have learnt about drawing the figure and all of the reference material you have available you can now start to draw out your statue design.

Remember it can be in any pose you choose and can also be 'in action', doing things, holding objects or you can even include simple background elements . . .
. . . use your imagination and be creative!





