About 400 years ago in the palace of the King of Spain, all the ladies of the Royal Family and the King’s court wore magnificent dresses, even if they weren’t very comfortable. Young children were clad in the finest silks and satins, decorated with shiny pearls, sparkling gems, embroidered ribbons, and the most delicate lace. If their elegant finery squeezed, poked, scratched, or weighed the children down, it was of little concern.

This little girl was a princess named Ana Mauricia. Her title, Infanta, means that she was the daughter of the King. Only six years old, she already wore a tight-fitting dress that resembled the lavish gowns worn by the fashionable ladies of the court. The pleated ruff that surrounds her neck and frames her face was made of yards and yards of expensive lace stiffened with starch. It was probably held in position by a wire frame attached to the collar of her dress. The young Infanta poses for her portrait with one arm bent at her waist to show off her rings and call attention to the heavy jeweled crucifix on her chest. A more child-like or playful pose would have been unseemly for the King’s daughter.

Since cameras had not been invented yet, the Infanta’s father, King Philip III, employed artists to paint portraits that would display the wealth of the Royal Family and establish the Spanish court as the most fashionable in all of Europe. Juan Pantoja de la Cruz was exceptionally skilled with a fine brush and was able to paint luxurious fabrics, intricate laces, and dazzling jewels in minute detail.

**CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS**

Create a collage portrait with scraps of fine fabrics, ribbons, lace, and abandoned costume jewelry.

List your current activities at school, home, and sports. Then decide which of those activities you would be able to pursue if you were a fashionably dressed boy or girl in 1607. (At the Spanish court, boys and gentlemen, as well as girls and ladies, wore lace ruffs and splendid clothing.)

At age 14, Infanta Ana Mauricia married Louis XIII of France and became France’s queen, known as Anne of Austria. Read about her life and find more portraits of her on the Internet.

PRINT THE IMAGE ON PAGE 2 FOR YOUR STUDENTS.
Juan Pantoja de la Cruz. *Infanta Ana Mauricia.*

1607. Oil on canvas. 26 x 21 in. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Mary Frick Jacobs Collection, BMA 1938.203