

The King and Queen:

1. The Queen – Marie-Antoinette

- Marie-Antoinette was an Austrian princess. She was only 15 years old (right) when she was married to Louis. She was forced to leave behind all of her friends and family when she crossed the French border: she even had to strip out of her Austrian clothes!
- In 2006, Marie-Antoinette was made the subject of a Hollywood blockbuster starring Kirsten Dunst in the title role. In this lesson we will examine how she has been portrayed by Hollywood, and how accurate this interpretation is.



Task 1: A scene from the film



- Does this image create a positive or a negative impression of the queen?
- Label key features in the margins.
- Your teacher will now show you some other still images from the film in the form of a **PowerPoint show**. Discuss the impression created by each.

Task 2: What was she really like?

Marie-Antoinette was deeply unpopular with the French people. Read through the following list to find out why:

Bad word	Statement	Good Word
Distrusted	She was Austrian by birth, not French. The people called her "l'autrichienne" (the Austrian bitch).	
	She spent fortunes on jewellery, clothing and parties, earning the nickname "Madam Deficit [debt]"	Sociable
	She built a life-sized toy village and liked pretending she was a milkmaid	
	When told the people had no bread, she allegedly said "Well let them eat cake"	
	She hated the rituals of the French court, such as having to eat, dress and even give birth in public!	

a. Write one word in each empty box to summarise the point being made in that row.

b. Which of these weaknesses do you think was the most damaging to the monarchy? Why?

Extension Task: The Film Trailer

Your teacher will now show you the 3-minute promotional trailer for the Hollywood film from YouTube. After watching it, you will be required to provide answers to these questions after a classroom discussion:

- a. In what ways does the film create a positive impression of the Queen?
- b. In what ways does the film create a negative impression of the Queen?

c. This poster suggests that Kirsten Dunst's "dodgy teeth" made her a strange choice to play a "romantic lead".

Which actress do you think would have been the best choice to play Marie-Antoinette? Explain.

Which actor do you think would have been the best choice to play King Louis XVI? Explain.

