

**Portrait of a Boy, 1890 by John Singer Sargent [856-1925]**

1. What do the difference between the two poses says about how each sitter probably felt about posing for this picture.
2. Homer is dressed in an outfit based on a story that was extremely popular with mothers. However, this costume was also beginning to be associated with being a “mamma’s boy.” Do you think Homer is portrayed as a “mamma’s boy”? Why or why not?
3. How would you pose under similar circumstances?
4. How has Sargent used the room and accessories in this painting to intensify Homer’s feeling of impatience?
5. Who is more important in this double portrait?
6. How did the artist emphasize Homer’s importance?
7. Sargent made his living painting portraits of wealthy Americans and Europeans. How do you think this work, done for a friend, might have differed if it had been commissioned by a wealthy family who wanted to hang it in a prominent place in their home?
8. Sargent was praised for his “truthful” portrayal of children at a time when childhood was becoming an important focus in Europe and America. Pretend you are an art critic and explain what you consider to be “truthful” about Homer Saint-Gaudens in this work.

**CONNECTIONS Historical Connections:** the Gilded Age; industrialism, child labor; orphan trains

**Historical Figures:** Historical Figures: Jane Addams; John Peter Altgeld; Charles Loring Brace; Andrew Carnegie; John D. Rockefeller; Cornelius Vanderbilt

**Economics:** capitalism

**Literary Connections and Primary Documents:** *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, Frances Hodgson Burnett; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain, and *Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain; *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott; stories of Horatio Alger (1834–1899),

**Arts:** portraiture; American expatriate artists; influence of Velásquez, Van Dyck; Lewis Hine