

SCULPTURE: HOW IT'S DONE

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/y/michelangelo-wax-model/>

Go to the website at the top of the page; here you will find two audio files and one text.

Task 1: Before you listen, read the text, where an explanation of the origin of the piece is given. Answer the following questions.

1. What was the figurine created for?



2. Why was the project problematic? Look for information on the Internet and write a small paragraph (50 words).

3. Did Michelangelo create his pieces directly on canvas or marble?

4. Why were people interested in Michelangelo's models?

Wax model of a slave, by Michelangelo, Florence, Italy, about 1516–19. Museum no. 4117-1854 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. This credit line represents the 'Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum' (a non-departmental public body established by the National Heritage Act 1983).

Task 2: Now listen to the first audio file, which is a description of the figure and answer the questions.

1. How many statues did Michelangelo plan? What was their purpose?
2. Why did Michelangelo never complete the work?
3. What do the works in this part of the gallery show?
4. Why did artists create wax models?

Listen again and complete the gaps in the transcript:

Male narrator:

*In one of the _____ in front of this audio point, there is a
_____ reddish wax model showing the _____ figure of a
male _____. It was made by Michelangelo, arguably the greatest
artist of the sixteenth century. It was made as a study for a figure of a
_____ - one of 40 large _____ statues
that were planned to decorate the _____ of Pope Julius II. But
Michelangelo, who received the _____ in 1505, was kept
so busy by the Pope and his successors that he never completed the tomb.*

Many of the objects in this part of the gallery are _____, rather than finished _____. They show the early stages in the creative process when an artist is exploring and developing ideas. Models helped a _____ to finalise a design before _____ in marble or other _____ materials. Wax was an ideal material to make quick sketches as it becomes supple when warm and can be shaped and re-worked as an idea changes.

Michelangelo _____ many of his preparatory models. But his fame - as well as a growing interest in the creative process - led collectors to acquire and preserve some of his drawings and models. Thanks to generations of collectors who treasured this _____ wax model, it has survived for more than 500 years

Task 3: The second audio file is a description of the process followed to create a wax model. Listen to the audio file and fill in the gaps in these extracts from the transcript. What tenses are used?

Female narrator:

Models would often _____ (keep) in the sculptor's studio after the design _____ (finalise). According to the sixteenth century artist and writer, Giorgio Vasari, in his 'Life of Michelangelo', sculptors also used models during the marble carving process.

Male voice:

'One must take a figure of wax or some other material and _____ (lay) it horizontally in a vessel of water; then, as the water is, of course, flat and level, when the figure _____ (raise) little by little above the surface the most salient parts _____ (reveal) first, while the lower parts (on the underside of the figure) remain submerged, until eventually it all comes into view.

In the same way figures must _____ (carve) out of marble by the chisel; the parts in highest relief must _____ (reveal) first and then little by little the lower parts. And this method can _____ (see) to have been followed by Michelangelo in his statues of the prisoners.'

WRITING FOLDER 3: Listen again, as many times as you need, to the last audio file, on the process of creating a wax model. Order these student's notes on the process and write a short text (150-180 words) summarising the steps in the process; use the notes as a guide. Use the appropriate tenses and sequencing words.

Add/colour

Cool/wax

Create/shape of the model.

Grind/pigment (red earth or
vermillion)

Heat/wax

Mix/wax and animal fat

Stir/mixture

Work/wax/a central support