



Art History

English Lessons



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Michelangelo

Michelangelo, Master of Renaissance Art



Michelangelo Buonarroti, born on March 6, 1475, in Caprese, Italy, was a key figure in the Renaissance, renowned for his extraordinary contributions to art and sculpture. His work is celebrated for its technical brilliance and emotional depth, making him one of the greatest artists in history.

Michelangelo's early career began in Florence, where he trained as a sculptor. His talent was evident in his early works, including the *Pietà* (1499), a marble sculpture of the Virgin Mary holding the dead Christ. This piece is admired for its detailed portrayal of emotion and its masterful use of marble.

One of Michelangelo's most famous works is the *David* (1504), a colossal statue representing the Biblical hero. The sculpture is renowned for its anatomical precision and its depiction of human strength and beauty. This work established Michelangelo as a leading artist of his time.

Michelangelo's talents were not limited to sculpture. His work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, painted between 1508 and 1512, is one of the most celebrated achievements in Western art. The ceiling features scenes from the Book of Genesis, including the iconic image of *The Creation of Adam*, where God's and Adam's hands almost touch. This fresco showcases Michelangelo's skill in depicting the human form and his innovative use of space.

Despite his achievements, Michelangelo was known for his perfectionism and sometimes struggled with his commissions. He continued to work until his death on February 18, 1564, in Rome. His legacy lives on through his masterpieces, which continue to inspire and influence artists around the world.



Complete the sentences using the words below:

sculptor-precision-renaissance-detail-perfectionism-fresco-commission-legacy-anatomical-masterpiece

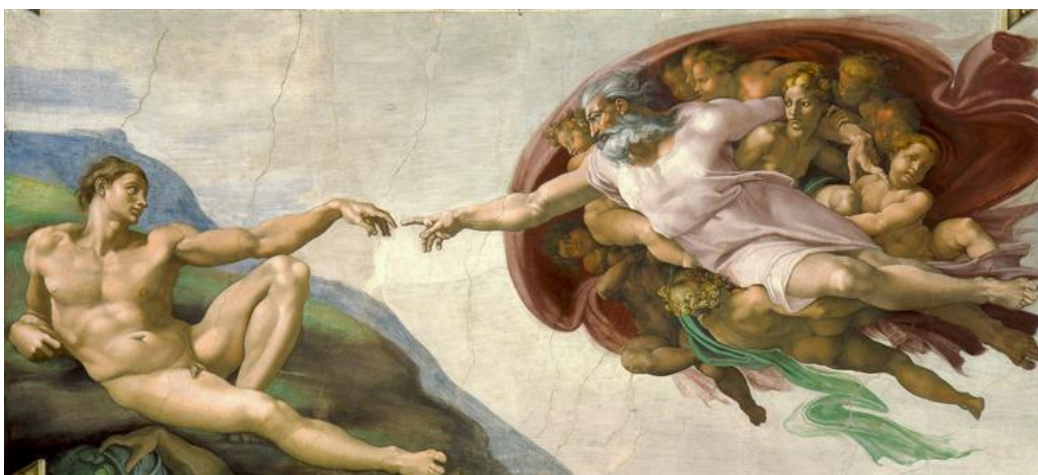
1. Michelangelo was a renowned who created famous works such as the *David* and the *Pietà*.
2. The *David* sculpture is celebrated for itsand lifelike representation of the human form.
3. Michelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling is considered one of the greatest achievements of theperiod.



4. The *Pietà* is noted for its emotional and the detailed portrayal of the Virgin Mary and Christ.
5. Michelangelo's for his art led him to meticulously work on each piece, striving for perfection.
6. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is covered with a that depicts scenes from the Book of Genesis.
7. Despite his success, Michelangelo sometimes struggled with his due to his high standards and demands.
8. Michelangelo's continues to inspire artists and art lovers around the world.
9. One of the notable features of Michelangelo's work is his skill in representation, as seen in his sculptures and paintings.
10. His work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling took four years to complete, a testament to his dedication and



 **Look at the works of art and answer the questions on the next page:**



1 Have you ever had the chance to see any work of Michelangelo in a museum? If so, how did you feel? If not yet, would you like to? Justify your ideas.

2 The majority of the artists could master one style only, either painting or sculpture. Michelangelo, however, was considered a very gifted artist in both. What is your opinion on that?



Now read this online article about the “Pieta”, one of his most famous works inside the Saint Peter Basilica in Rome, and answer the questions that follow:

<https://mymodernmet.com/michelangelo-pieta/?fbclid=IwAR1z7hi9WH9bFw0FDm4VaWchznbquemP1EE28ApMLgEO-Sg1K7CB1rbXJ9Q>

- 1. Why did Michelangelo sign this sculpture contrary to his habit?**

- 2. What makes this sculpture so special?**

- 3. What are your emotions when you see this work of Art? Do you think that it is only aimed at touching Christians with the reminder of the tragic death of Jesus? Express your ideas in a paragraph.**



Answers to the vocabulary exercise:

1. Michelangelo was a renowned ___sculptor_____ who created famous works such as the *David* and the *Pietà*.
2. The *David* sculpture is celebrated for its ___precision_____ and lifelike representation of the human form.
3. Michelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling is considered one of the greatest achievements of the ___Renaissance_____ period.
4. The *Pietà* is noted for its emotional ___detail_____ and the detailed portrayal of the Virgin Mary and Christ.
5. Michelangelo's ___perfectionism_____ for his art led him to meticulously work on each piece, striving for perfection.
6. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is covered with a ___fresco_____ that depicts scenes from the Book of Genesis.
7. Despite his success, Michelangelo sometimes struggled with his ___commission_____, due to his high standards and demands.
8. Michelangelo's ___legacy_____ continues to inspire artists and art lovers around the world.
9. One of the notable features of Michelangelo's work is his skill in ___anatomical_____ representation, as seen in his sculptures and paintings.
10. His work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling took four years to complete, a testament to his dedication and ___masterpiece_____.

Answers to the questions of the video

1. Why did Michelangelo sign this sculpture contrary to his habit?

The piece was so celebrated that, fearing he wouldn't be given credit, Michelangelo—who is known for never signing his work—famously inscribed it with his name. According to Vasari, the artist overheard onlookers erroneously attribute the piece to Il Gobbo, a Milanese artist. In response, Michelangelo “stood silent, but thought it something strange that his labors should be attributed to another; and one night he shut himself in there, and, having brought a little light and his chisels, carved his name upon it.”

2. What makes this sculpture so special?

Michelangelo crafted sculptures that focused on balance, detail, and a lifelike yet idealized approach to the human form, all these Renaissance ideals. In order to suggest balance, he rendered the sculpture as a pyramid. Such a silhouette also suggests stability, which Michelangelo further implied through the use of heavy drapery covering Mary's monumental form. While, in this sense, the Virgin's large size lends itself to the sculpture's naturalism, it paradoxically also appears unrealistic, as she appears much larger than her adult son.

3. What are your emotions when you see this work of Art? Do you think that it is only aimed at touching Christians with the reminder of the tragic death of Jesus? Express your ideas in a paragraph.





For more ideas on how to use masterpieces of Art to teach critical thinking, you can read my blog post here:

<https://www.ruthlessteacher.com/how-to-use-works-of-arts-to-teach-critical-thinking/>

And about the use of images in the language classroom, another of my blog posts here:

<https://www.ruthlessteacher.com/the-use-of-images-in-language-learning/>

I have made a pdf with a set of questions that I use a lot with my students when we study all types of images, you can download it here:

<https://www.ruthlessteacher.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Questions-about-images-in-class.pdf>





Painter-Sculptor

[Michelangelo](#) di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni or more commonly known by his first name Michelangelo (1475 – 1564) was an Italian sculptor, painter, architect and poet of the [High Renaissance](#) born in the Republic of Florence, who exerted an unparalleled influence on the development of Western art. Considered by some the greatest living artist during his lifetime, he has since been described as one of the greatest artists of all time. (information from [Wikiart](#)).

Works of Art

You can see Michelangelo's work online here:

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/michelangelo/all-works#!#filterName:all-paintings-chronologically.resultType:masonry>

The portrait of the artist included in the text is done by Marcello Venusti (after 1535) and you can see it in Casa Buonarroti in Florence

<https://www.casabuonarroti.it/en/museum/collections/other-works/portrait-of-michelangelo/>

The first sculpture is called "The pieta" (1499) and you can see it in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome

<https://www.basilicasanpietro.va/en/saint-peters/the-pieta-of-saint-peters.html>

The second sculpture is called "David" (1504) and you can see it in Galleria dell' Accademia in Florence

<https://www.galleriaaccademiafirenze.it/en/artworks/david-michelangelo/>

The third painting is called "The creation of Adam" (1508-1512) and you can see it in the Capella Sistina in Rome

<https://www.thesistinechapel.org/the-creation-of-adam>



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For any questions you may have you can message me at info@ruthlessteacher.com

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