

Exploring Sculpture Resource



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How to use this resource

This resource has been created to help you explore sculpture with your pupils. Each section contains **QUESTIONS** and **ACTIVITIES** to begin talking about, drawing and making sculpture. You can use the accompanying Sculpture Cards as inspiration.

You can use this resource however suits you and your pupils, e.g. working through the full resource, picking out an activity from each section, or focusing on one activity as a standalone lesson.

1. Introducing Sculpture

QUESTIONS: Exploring the idea of sculpture

- What is a sculpture? What makes it different from other art forms e.g. a painting or picture?
- Who thinks they have seen a sculpture before? Where do you think you might find sculptures? E.g. in a museum, in the town square, in an art gallery, in a park?
- What descriptive words would you use for a sculpture? Big/ small/ 3D/ solid/ delicate/ strong/ balanced/ bumpy/ smooth.
- What do you think sculptures are made from? Stone/ wood/ metal/ plaster/ clay. What other materials could you use? Paper/ everyday objects/ food/ nature?

Wakefield Sculpture Cards

Accompanying this resource, you will find a series of 10 Sculpture Cards of sculptures from the local area, with examples from Yorkshire Sculpture Park, The Hepworth Wakefield and public spaces.

You can use these cards to introduce local sculptures to your pupils, and as inspiration for the activities in this resource.

ACTIVITY: Initial reactions

This could be individually, in pairs or in small groups:

- Write down 5 words to describe the sculpture e.g. what it looks like, how it makes you feel, what it might feel like to touch.
 - Describe the location of the sculpture e.g. outside a shop, in the countryside, in a museum.
 - How big do you think the sculpture is? Are there any clues in the location?
 - Read the facts about the sculpture. Have you found out anything new? Add extra words to your original descriptions.
- + Extension: Students could present their sculptures back to the class.

2. What is Public Sculpture?

Some of the examples in the Sculpture Cards are public sculptures, which means they are in spaces that everyone can use e.g. parks, squares, green spaces, roads and streets.

ACTIVITY: Sculpture and Place

- In groups, pick out a sculpture from the Sculpture Cards which you think is an example of a public sculpture. What makes it a public sculpture?
- Where is the sculpture? Why do you think it is in that location?
- What type of public spaces do we see in the Sculpture Cards? Can you think of any other types of public spaces that might have sculptures?
- If you could move the sculpture to another location, where would it be? E.g. in an art gallery, in the countryside, in the town centre, in a park. Why?

Public sculptures can be permanent, for example a statue to commemorate a special person or moment in history, or temporary like an artwork or installation which appears for a short time or a special event.

Public art is often commissioned, which means the artist makes it for a specific purpose rather than art which they make based on their own feelings or motivations.

QUESTIONS: Purpose and location

- Why are public sculptures made? E.g. to remember a person, to tell a story about Wakefield, to make a public space look better.
- Who will see the sculpture? How might the location affect the meaning of the sculpture?
- What are public sculptures made from? Why do you think the artist used those materials? How does the location and weather change what materials are used?
- Once an artwork is made, do you think it can change? If so, what factors do you think might change an artwork?



CASE STUDY: The Wakefield Sculpture Trail

The Wakefield Sculpture Trail is a series of six sculptures across the Wakefield City Centre, commissioned by Wakefield Council. Wakefield is famous for having lots of great sculptures. Two famous sculptors were born in Wakefield - Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore, and Wakefield has two brilliant sculpture galleries, The Hepworth Wakefield and Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

The sculptures selected for the Wakefield Sculpture Trail were created especially for Wakefield, its places, history and communities. Some of the sculptures are included in the Sculpture Cards. If you want to look at the trail in more detail with your pupils, [this website and video](#) contains lots of great information about the sculptures, their stories and the artists who made them.



The Gathering, Halima Cassell, 2023. Image credit: Scott Merrylees, Wakefield Council.

3. Talking about Sculpture

This section of the resource focuses on activities to support your pupils to talk about sculpture in more depth. You can use it with the Sculpture Cards, while exploring sculptures in your local area, on a trip to a gallery or museum, or while using other images of sculptures on a particular theme e.g. wartime sculptures, sculptures in Britain, animal sculptures.

Describing Sculpture

QUESTIONS: Looking at and describing sculpture

- What do you first notice about the sculpture?
- What type of shapes can you find in the sculpture? E.g. pointy, sharp, curvy, organic.
- What colours can you see in the sculpture? Do the colours remind you of anything? Do you think they are warm or cold colours?
- What is the surface like? What textures can you see? What do you think it would feel like if you could touch it?
- How do you think the sculpture was made? What materials is it made from?
- How big do you think the sculpture is?
- How does the sculpture make you feel? E.g. big, small, calm, angry, sad, thoughtful.
- If the sculpture could speak, what would it say?
- What do you think this sculpture is about? Does it remind you of anything?
- What do you think inspired the artist to make their sculpture?

ACTIVITY: Comparing sculptures

In groups or individually, ask pupils to choose a sculpture they are curious about.

- Write down 3 words to describe the sculpture. This could include:
 - how the sculpture looks
 - what the sculpture is about
 - the texture of the sculpture
 - the materials used to make the sculpture
 - the size of the sculpture
 - how the sculpture makes you feel
- Compare your words, are they similar or different? Why is it important that we have different ideas?

ACTIVITIES: Looking and describing

1. Look for sculptures that match these words:
Texture: *Rough, bumpy, smooth, hard, soft, solid*
Emotion: *Happy, confused, calm, angry, sad*
 2. Look at a picture of a sculpture. Now close your eyes - what details do you remember? Share them with a partner/group. Open your eyes and have another look. What did you remember? What did you forget?
- + Extension for KS2: Find an example of a sculpture that looks like or represents something that we can see in real life. This is a figurative artwork. Find an example of a sculpture that is based on shapes, lines, or colours, which means you can see lots of different things in it. This is an abstract artwork.

ACTIVITY: Sculptural materials

Gather some materials to help pupils consider sculptural materials e.g. wood, metal, plastic, cardboard, natural objects, man-made objects.

Choose an object from the materials that you think is the most similar to your sculpture. Think about the colour, texture, surface, shape, weight.

- Why have you chosen that object?
- How does the object feel?
- How is it similar and different to the sculpture?

Links to other resources:

- [YSP Light, Sleep and Wellbeing Connection](#) Enquiry questions for exploring sculpture.
- [YSP Sculpture and Nature Hunt](#) Talking, looking, finding sculpture.
- [The Hepworth Wakefield Teacher's Resources](#) Teacher's notes from past exhibitions. Themes: Questions, Materials, Senses, Interaction, Scale.
- [Art UK – The Super Power of Looking](#) Lesson plans and resources to observe, analyse, question and interpret artwork. Themes: portrait, landscape, history, still life and identity.
- [Art Encounters: Portable Sculptures](#) Talking about sculpture, places, people.
- [Discover Henry Moore](#) Henry Moore's story, life, artwork.

4. Drawing Sculpture

Drawing sculptures can help us understand them better. This section of the resource has activities you can use to draw in different ways and encourage pupils to explore line, shape and texture.

You can do the drawing activities using the Sculpture Cards, while exploring sculptures in your local area, on a trip to a gallery or museum, or while using other images of sculptures.

QUESTIONS: *Discussing drawing*

Many sculptors and artists use drawing as part of their making process.

- Why is drawing helpful to an artist when making sculpture?
 - To capture the things that inspire them e.g. shapes, patterns, textures
 - To help them develop ideas from their imagination
 - To test out different ideas before starting to make a sculpture
 - To work out technical details such as measurements of a sculpture, or how it might fit in a space
- Why is it important to try out different drawing techniques?
 - To explore different types of mark making.
 - To draw more freely or more technically
- What can you discover through drawing? How is it different from taking a photograph?

ACTIVITIES: *Drawing warm-ups*

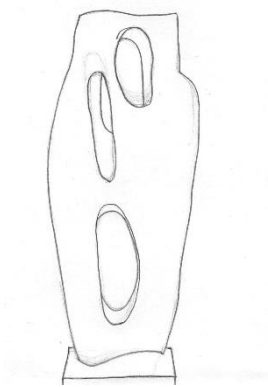
1. In pairs, draw a sculpture with your finger on the other person's back.
2. Draw a sculpture for 30 seconds, now draw it again for 2 minutes. What extra details could you show in the second drawing?
3. Spend a minute looking closely at a sculpture. Turn the image over and draw it from memory. What did you remember and what did you forget?
4. In pairs, one person look at a sculpture (it's important the other person can't see it). The person looking at the sculpture should describe the shape of it. The person who can't see it should draw the sculpture just from the description. Compare the drawing to the sculpture, is it similar? Swap roles and repeat with a different sculpture.



ACTIVITIES: Exploring shape

We can explore the shape of a sculpture by focusing just on line.

1. Trace the outlines of your sculpture with your finger to help you see its shape.
2. Draw your sculpture using a continuous line. This means you don't take your pencil off the paper. If you need to draw something in the middle of your sculpture, just draw across it. If you need to change a shape, just go back over and draw a new darker line.
3. Draw the outline of your sculpture with your eyes closed.
4. Draw the outline of your sculpture with your non dominant hand (the hand you don't normally write with).

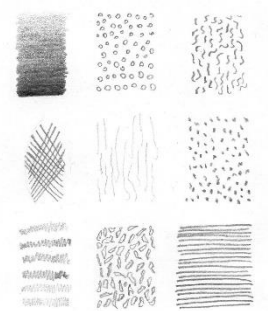


Sculpture shapes
Image: Harriet Fletcher

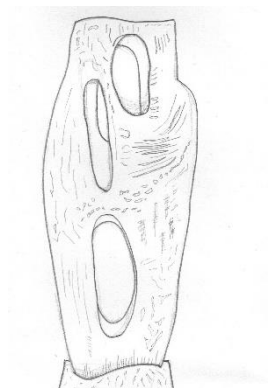
ACTIVITIES: Exploring texture

Sculptures have textures on their surfaces. These might be rough, raised, scratched, bumpy, smooth or shiny.

1. Create a series of marks to show different textures. Use your pencil in different ways to capture the textures you can see in a sculpture.
2. Draw marks or take rubbings from objects and materials e.g. shells, bark, stones, corrugated cardboard, a basket, a sieve. This could be done as an outdoor activity, exploring different textures around school, or inside, capturing textures from household and classroom objects.
3. Add texture to one of your sculpture line drawings. Use different types of marks to show the different textures you can see. Think about where to apply the marks. This could be done by drawing marks onto tracing paper and layer over/ collage onto a sculpture line drawing.



Texture Marks
Image: Harriet Fletcher

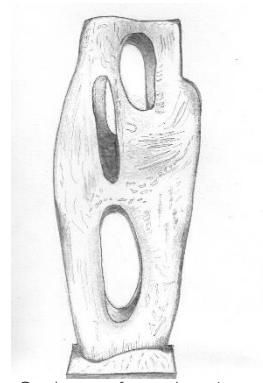


Sculpture with texture
Image: Harriet Fletcher

ACTIVITIES FOR KS2: Exploring 3D form

We can show that sculpture is 3D in our drawings by thinking about the way a sculpture interacts with light e.g. casting shadows, reflecting light, and having dark sections inside holes.

1. Capture the dark and light areas of your sculpture. Shade very dark sections where there is no light, e.g. inside holes, at the bottom of the sculpture where there are shadows. Leave other areas light or use a rubber to make sections lighter.
2. Draw the negative space around your sculpture. Negative space is the space which surrounds the sculpture, not the solid shapes.
3. Create the negative space by shading your paper using a dark pencil or a graphite stick and then rubbing away the sculpture form using a rubber.



Sculpture form drawing
Image: Harriet Fletcher

Links to other resources:

- [YSP Outdoor Art Sparks](#) Themes: Noticing, Collections (shape, patterns, textures), Viewpoints, Sounds in nature, Colour, Making sculpture outside.
- [The Hepworth Wakefield Primary Worksheet](#): Barbara Hepworth inspired worksheet.
- [Criminal Ornamentation Education Pack](#) Themes: pattern, design, cultural pattern, textiles, material, craft, nature, find, debate, make.
- [Art Encounters: Strange Characters Worksheet](#) Themes: Opinions on sculpture, writing, suggestions for drawing/making activities.
- [Lorna Graves and Sculpture in Relief Themes](#) ancient drawing and sculpture, sculpture in relief, drawing into sculpture.

5. Making Sculpture

Introduction to Making Sculpture

This section of the resource includes a variety of methods, materials and techniques that you could use to explore the process of making sculptures.

ACTIVITIES: Sculpting

Some sculptors use soft materials like clay that they manipulate to create 3D shapes and forms.

- Use playdough, cloud dough or plasticine to introduce the idea of sculpting to children. This could be a KS1 activity, or a warm-up activity for KS2 before moving onto clay.
- Explore the material with your hands, rolling it into a ball, pinching, stretching, squashing, twisting and moulding it to make different shapes and forms. This could also be done with clay. When working with clay, air dry clay can be used as an alternative to buff clay that has to be fired.
- Join shapes together to create more complex sculptures. Blend them together using a finger. If using clay, make stronger joins by using the 'score and slip' process – score the surfaces you are going to join to make them textured and then apply a small amount of water to make a clay slip that will stick shapes together.

ACTIVITY FOR KS2: Sculpting with armatures.

An armature is a basic skeleton for a sculpture. Create an armature using foil, newspaper, masking tape and/or wire for support. Apply papier-mâché, air dry clay, Modroc or plaster to the armature to make it into a 3D form.

ACTIVITIES: Carving

Some sculptors use a solid block of material as a starting point for their sculpture, using tools to carve and cut away at the surface to create their form.

1. Soap carving is a great way to explore the carving process with a soft material. Use a pencil to draw a design onto a bar of soap. Carve out shapes, forms and holes using tools like plastic knives or clay tools. Add patterns and textures using a pencil or tools.
2. Carve into polystyrene Safeprint sheets. Use drawing tools like pencils or biros to create a 2D artwork with 3D details like a traditional frieze. Press into, carve away and add textures across the surface so some of the surface is more raised than other parts.

ACTIVITY: Casting

Some sculptors create a mould that they pour a liquid material into to make a sculpture. The liquid material might be a metal, resin or plastic, which then sets hard.

Often these materials are used as they last longer, and are weatherproof so they can be in an outdoor setting. Casting can also be used when an artist wants to create a series of sculptures that are all the same.

1. Use sand or jelly to explore the casting process. Pupils can add sand or jelly into a mould, and then observe how a solid shape remains once the mould is taken away.

ACTIVITIES: Assemblage and Making

Some sculptors work with recycled materials and found objects to create sculptures, sometimes referred to as *assemblage*.

1. Use pipe cleaners or wire to create 3D drawings - Start with a line drawing as inspiration. Use pipe cleaners or florist/ flexi wire to make a 3D squiggle, tracing the line drawing. You can then bend it into new shapes or add extra pipe cleaners or wire.
2. Use card or cardboard to make flat shapes that can be joined together to make geometric sculptures and 3D forms. This is a good way to explore large-scale making – pupils can construct their sculpture in teams, attaching their shapes together using tape, cable ties, string and/or cut and slot techniques.
3. Build sculptures using found objects that you have in the classroom or that pupils collect and bring in. Each pupil could be asked to bring in 2-3 ordinary objects e.g. buckets, balls, wooden blocks, stationary, books, natural objects, fabric or clothing.
 - a. Task them with creating quick, 1-minute sculptures like artist Erwin Wurm. Find out more about his work here: [Erwin-Wurm-Teachers-Notes.pdf](#).
 - b. Create sculptures in response to descriptive words e.g. solid, delicate, balanced, or emotions e.g. happy, confused, calm. You could also use artist Richard Serra's verb list as inspiration e.g. to arrange, to stack, to curve.

ACTIVITIES: Sculpture Display

Have a mini exhibition of your sculptures. Think about how you can display your work together.

- Will your sculptures be displayed on the floor, on a plinth, on a wall, inside or outside?
- How will you lay out your sculptures? Will you place similar sculptures together? Put them on different levels with some higher up than others? Have them in a row or in groups?
- Write a description of your display which tells the story of your sculptures.

Links to other resources:

- [Our Year Sculpture videos](#) Simple Sculpture Making, Sculpture Inspired by Barbara Hepworth and Sculpture from Nature videos with artist John Mayson showing sculpture techniques you can use in the classroom.
- [Wakefield Museums and Castles - Living Sculpture Domes](#) Living sculpture, clay (greenware), natural materials.
- [Wakefield Museums and Castles - Pollution Pods video](#) Pollution, environment, clay making using greenware, natural inspiration.
- [Art UK - Weave a Sensory Sculpture](#) Temporary sculpture, textiles, making.
- [Art UK - Animals and Us: Kenny Hunter Sculptures](#) Cast sculpture, figurative sculpture, animals, questioning public sculpture, making clay sculpture.
- [Art UK - Lorna Graves and Sculpture in Relief](#) Ancient drawing and sculpture, sculpture in relief, drawing into sculpture.
- [Access Art Sculpture Resources](#) What is Sculpture?, dip your toes into sculpture, sculpture artists, sculptural materials, making activities.
- [Modelling the head in clay](#)
- [Make an Armature for Sculpting](#)
- [The Met - Soap carving for kids](#)
- [Richard Serra's Verb List](#)
- [Tate - How to Cast like Rachel Whiteread](#) Making sculpture (casting demo).



Sculpture Glossary

ABSTRACT: Exploring an idea without trying to represent an actual person or thing

ASSEMBLAGE: A collection of things, a composition made up of scraps or junk

BRONZE: A metal alloy of copper and tin and sometimes other elements e.g. zinc

CAST: To shape a substance by pouring it in a liquid or soft form into a mould, then letting it harden

CARVE: To cut with care or precision

COMMISSION: When a client hires an artist to create a custom artwork

COMPOSITION: The way in which different elements are put together in an artwork

CONSTRUCT: To make, form or build by combining or arranging parts

FORM: The shape or structure of something 3D

FOUND OBJECT: A natural or man-made object which already exists in the world and is repurposed by an artist for an artwork

INSPIRATION: Being stimulated to do or feel something

INSTALLATION: A type of 3D artwork that is made specifically for a place or space

LANDSCAPE: Natural scenery, the land we can see in one glance

MAQUETTE: A sculptor's small model, which is made before their final artwork

MEANING: The sense or information that is communicated

MOULD: An object or container used to shape a material in or around it

OBSERVATION: Looking to draw, paint or make something as accurately as possible

ORGANIC: Based on or using living things like nature

PATTERN: A design that repeats shapes, lines, forms, or colours



PLASTER: A white powder that mixes with water to form a paste that hardens

PLINTH: A block used as a base for a sculpture

PROCESS: A series of actions that artists use to create their artwork

REALISTIC: True to life or nature

REPRESENTATIONAL: Art that represents something else

ROUGH: An uneven surface

SCALE: The size of something in comparison to something else, like the human body

SCULPTURE: The creation of 3D art objects

SHAPE: The outline of a body or form

SMOOTH: A continuous even surface

SOLID: A material or form that is not hollow

SURFACE: The outside of an object, a 2D area on a 3D form

SYMBOLISM: Using symbols to show meaning and feelings

TEXTURE: The structure, feel and appearance of something

TONE: A shade of colour

THREE-DIMENSIONAL: Something with three dimensions, length, width and height

TWO-DIMENSIONAL: Something with two dimensions, length and width



THE
HEPWORTH
WAKEFIELD

This resource was created by artist Harriet Fletcher, The Hepworth Wakefield and Yorkshire Sculpture Park in collaboration with local teachers and SPARK members.



SPARK
Wakefield's Cultural
Education Partnership



wakefieldcouncil