



# Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists

## Michelangelo

Language Arts / Social Studies / Art

Grade Level: 2-5

### Learning Objectives

- Describe how the individual experiences of an artist may influence the development of specific works of art.
- Use parts of a book, including illustrations and captions, to increase comprehension.
- Explain sequence of events.
- Exhibit artistic expression.

### Before Reading (15 minutes)

#### Summary

Who could turn a block of marble into an almost living person? Who could paint one of the most famous works of art in the world while lying on his back for four years? Michelangelo could! Learn all about this remarkable sculptor and painter and how he became one of the world's greatest artists.

#### Vocabulary

- **architecture** (AR-ki-tek-chur) designing buildings and other large structures, such as bridges, or the style in which buildings are designed. *Michelangelo was a master of architecture and painting, but his favorite art was sculpture.*
- **chisel** (CHIZ-uhl) a metal tool with a sharpened edge at one end that is used to chip, carve, or cut a solid material such as wood, stone, or metal. *The sculptor chipped away at the marble with a hammer and chisel.*
- **fresco** (FRESS-koh) a painting made on a wall or ceiling while the plaster is still wet. *Michelangelo created the beautiful fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.*
- **patrons** (PAY-truhns) people who give artists money to create works of art. *Among Michelangelo's patrons were many princes and popes.*
- **Renaissance** (ren-uh-SAHNSS) a period of revival of classical art, literature, architecture, and learning in Europe from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Michelangelo lived during the Renaissance period.*
- **sculptor** (SKUHLP-tur) an artist who makes figures or designs by carving wood, chiseling stone, or casting metal. *Michelangelo studied hard to become a good sculptor.*



## Parts of the Book

- Read the title aloud and show students the cover of the book. Read the cartoon together. Ask students what point the author is trying to make.
- Invite students to preview the book by paging through it. Encourage students to share their observations as they look at the pictures and other features. Discuss the captions beside each work of art, noting that they contain important information, such as the title of the work, the date it was created, its size, and where it is located.
- Tell students they will read a nonfiction book about Michelangelo, a famous Italian artist who lived long ago. Review that a nonfiction book contains facts, or information that can be proved. Read the blurb on the back cover with students. Ask students why they think the author/illustrator uses cartoons and humor. (*He used cartoons and humor to make learning about art fun.*)
- Discuss the key vocabulary words listed above. Tell students that they will encounter some Italian words in the text. You may wish to write these on the board before reading and go over their pronunciation and let students know that are there to provide more help if needed.

## Pre-Reading Discussion

Spend 5-10 minutes talking to students about Michelangelo. Ask:

- What do you already know about the life and work of Michelangelo?
- What do you think makes a painting really great? What makes a sculpture really great?
- Have you ever sculpted anything? If so, how did you do it?
- If you wanted to learn to be a great painter, how would you go about doing it?

## During Reading (Group or Silent)

- Read pages 3-4 aloud to students to introduce the text. Talk about the art of sculpture and discuss the unfinished statue pictured on page 5. Then divide the rest of the book into small sections, having students read 5 or 6 pages and then stop to reflect on their reading. If you wish, divide the text over three sessions: pages 6-15, pages 16-27, and pages 28-32.
- Have students stop reading as they encounter unfamiliar words. Encourage them to decipher new words by using context clues or other decoding strategies. Students may also use the Grolier Online dictionary or another dictionary as a resource.
- Ask students to take notes as they read, recording important dates, accomplishments, and events in Michelangelo's life.



## After Reading

- **Connect to Language Arts:** Copy the **Word Scramble** reproducible. Have students unscramble the vocabulary words to complete the puzzle.
- **Connect to Social Studies & Language Arts:** Have students use the notes they took during reading to create a time line. The time line should include important accomplishments and events of Michelangelo's life and the dates on which they occurred. Guide students to draw a line across a sheet of paper turned horizontally, and show them how to make small vertical marks above and below the line labeled with various events in Michelangelo's life and their dates. Encourage students to illustrate each event on the timeline. Allow time for students to share their work with the group.
- **Connect to Drama:** Have students work in small groups to role play an event from Michelangelo's life, such as walking through the streets of Florence as a youngster, learning from masters, creating famous statues, or painting the Sistine Chapel. Encourage students to use simple props or costumes to support their presentations.
- **Connect to Language Arts:** Copy the **Main Idea and Supporting Details** reproducible so there is one copy for each student. Before students begin, review that a main idea is a big, general, or important concept and that supporting details give more information about the main idea, answering questions like *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*.
- **Connect to Art:** Have students turn to pages 24-25 in the book and examine the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Ask students to imagine Michelangelo painting it by lying on his back on 50-foot tall scaffolding, arms raised up in the air, every day for four years. Explain to students that they are going to recreate the feeling of painting this way. For each student, tape a piece of paper to the underside of a desk or table. The students should then lie on the floor beneath their papers and use crayons, paints, or another medium to depict the sky, including clouds, birds, other flying animals, or whatever they would like. During the activity, invite students to discuss the difficulties of having to work this way. Put all of the finished pictures together to make a mural and hang it on the ceiling, if possible.
- **Connect to Art:** Use a bar of soap to help students understand the difference between chiseled and modeled sculpture. Explain to students that if they wanted to sculpt a small animal (for example, a turtle) out of clay, they would have to manipulate or add to the clay. If they wanted to sculpt that same animal from a bar of soap, they would need to chisel, or subtract, from the bar until only the shape of the animal remained. Give each student a small block of soap and a chisel or plastic knife and let them try it for themselves! Ask students to compare their experience to that of Michelangelo, working on a 10-foot high block of marble and knowing that there is no way to "add back" any piece of marble once it is chiseled away. Ask students if working on the soap gave them a greater appreciation for Michelangelo's skill.
- **Connect to Art:** Have students turn to page 14 to review how Michelangelo learned to paint frescoes. Then let students experience fresco painting for themselves! Provide plaster, water, plastic containers (such as margarine tubs), watercolor paints, and brushes. Prepare the plaster according to the package instructions and pour it into plastic containers to a half-



inch thickness. Let the plaster set for a few minutes (it should still be moist), then pop the plaster out of the plastic container. Students should paint a simple scene or design on the plaster. The watercolor paint will remoisten the plaster, creating a fresco effect. Allow the frescoes to dry and store them for a student art exhibit.

- **Connect to Art:** Stage an art show of students' works, including the sky mural, the frescoes, and any other art that students have completed. Invite other students or parents to attend. The artists should mingle in the crowd, answering any questions that the visitors have about their work. You may wish to ask volunteers to bring in snacks and beverages to enjoy at the show!
- **Online Activities:** If online resources are available, have students read more about Michelangelo and see some more of his magnificent work.

#### **Activity 1:**

Go to: <http://goafterschool.grolier.com>.

Click on the **Grolier Online Kids**.

In the "Find it fast!" box, type in a search for **Michelangelo**.

Click on any of the article titles displayed on the search results page. Encourage students to find at least one interesting fact not presented in the book.

#### **Activity 2:**

Go to: <http://goafterschool.grolier.com>.

Click on the **Grolier Online Kids**.

In the "Find it fast!" box, type in a search for **Renaissance**.

On the results page, click on **NBK: Renaissance Art and Architecture**.

Have them read "The Spirit of the Renaissance." Ask students what "renaissance" means.

Then have them scroll down to "The High Renaissance in Rome." Have them read about the artists listed. Finally, have them click on **More Pictures**. What conclusions can they draw about Renaissance art?

#### **Activity 3:**

Go to: <http://www.michelangelo.com/buon/bio-index2.html>. Explore the site to access a complete biography of Michelangelo and view his greatest works.

## **Assessing the Learning Experience (10 minutes)**

### **Activity Assessment Grid**

Use the grid to record how successfully students performed the After Reading activities.

### **Assessment Questions**

Ask children the following:

- Why do art historians say that Michelangelo was born in the right place at the right time?



- Why did Michelangelo believe that the human body was the most important subject of study?
- Michelangelo was not happy about painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, but he completed the job. What lesson can we learn from this?

### **ESL / ELL Tips:**

- Use pictures to build students' background knowledge about Michelangelo and the Renaissance period. Talk about students' experiences seeing Michelangelo's artwork in books, museums, or on television. Talk about the Renaissance period in Europe.
- Spend extra time looking at illustrations in the text with students. Read the cartoons and dialogue, captions, and other special features of the text. Tell students that it is important to take time to look at the illustrations and read all of the text.
- Limit new vocabulary and present new words in context.
- Support students' oral language. Ask students to describe the photographs using sentences that begin with "This is...", "Here is...", or "These are ...."
- Read aloud to students and read with students to scaffold support. Allow students time to practice rereading, taking turns with a partner or working in small groups to increase fluency.