

Comprehension Workbook 4

Making a Murti



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

Making a Murti



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

understand • key words • summarise • sequencing • AF2-3 • AF4-5 • AF6-7 • discuss • create

Hindu faith

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with the study of world religions. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our Hindu Faith, Mandir, Hindu art and writing and Hindu holy days books.)

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Unit 4: Making a Murti

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Making a Murti

A murti is an image or a statue used in Hindu worship. A murti can be made of anything, such as a metal or clay statue, a painting or even a homemade drawing. You will see these in the pages of this workbook. One traditional and ancient way of making bronze metal murtis is a method called lost wax casting.

The first step in lost wax casting is to make a clay sculpture in the size and shape that you want the finished murti. Once the sculpture is completed and dry, a relief copy of the statue is made by covering the clay in plaster or clay. The plaster or clay is brushed or patted onto the clay statue and then lifted off when it is dry to make a sort of hollow mould in the shape of the original clay statue. The plaster mould will be in two parts, each part covers half the statue.

The next step in the process is to brush the inside of the plaster moulds with oil and then brush layers of melted beeswax on top. Many layers of beeswax need to be applied to the mould. This will be replaced with metal later, so the wax cannot be too thin or too thick.

Once the wax is hard, it is carefully pulled out of the plaster moulds and joined together with more wax to make a single, wax statue. The wax statue is then covered in a mixture of clay and water. This is built up to a thick layer. A few holes are left in the top and bottom of the clay covering. This is where the melted wax will run out during casting. Once the clay covering is dry, the whole thing is placed in a brick oven and heated. The liquid wax melts and runs out.

The last step in the process is casting. A type of metal is melted. In India, a combination of gold, silver, copper, zinc and tin metals is traditionally used for making murtis. Statues that are made for use in temples may have a larger amount of gold and silver in them.

The liquid metal is poured into the clay covering through one of the holes. This is the most skilled part of the whole process. When the metal has cooled, the mould is broken open to reveal a metal statue. The statue is then polished until it is smooth. Unlike machine-made castings, each lost wax statue is unique. More copies can be made from the original clay sculpture, but the clay covering can never be used again.

After it is finished, the murti may be coated in a chemical that creates a coloured texture on the statue. Pupils are always either carved or painted onto the eyes of the statue. This is so the god can see worshippers during worship.

It may take two weeks or more to make a small lost wax statue, because each part of the process is done by hand. For this reason, murtis made in this way are considered to be more special than those made using machinery.





Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write a sentence in which you found the word 'texture'.

b From that sentence, write what you think 'texture' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'texture'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'texture'.

e What are some colours of 'texture'.



Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: coated	covered

3

Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence.
e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

- 1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.**
- 2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.**
- 3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.**
- 4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?**

**There is
nothing wrong
with rewriting; even
the best authors
rewrite their
work.**

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4

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Once the clay covering is dry, the whole thing is placed in a brick oven and heated.

Many layers of beeswax need to be applied to the mould.

Pupils are always either carved or painted onto the eyes of the statue.

Once the sculpture is completed and dry, a relief copy of the statue is made by covering the clay in plaster or clay.

The liquid metal is poured into the clay covering through one of the holes.

The wax statue is then covered in a mixture of clay and water.



Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



Write a sentence to answer each of these questions:

- (a) What is the first step in lost wax casting?
- (b) How is the relief copy made?
- (c) What is the wax statue covered with?
- (d) What metals are mixed together to make a traditional murti?
- (e) What type of wax is used?



Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.

1 Why are pupils always added to the eyes?

2 Why is each lost wax statue unique?

3 Why are holes left in the clay covering?

4 How many different steps are there in the lost wax process?



Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

- 1 Why do you think pouring the metal in is the most skilled part of making the statue?
- 2 Does this seem like a lot of work for one statue?
- 3 Why are different metals used in statues made for temples?
- 4 What other types of things do you think are made using the lost wax technique?
- 5 Does it take a lot of skill to make a lost wax statue?





Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.



Discussion topic: Making a Murti

Discuss some of the reasons why murtis made using the lost wax technique are considered more special and valuable than murtis made using machines?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



Making a Murti

Imagine that you are an artist who specialises in lost wax casting. Describe how you would make a lost wax statue. What are the different steps? How long does it take you? What part of the process do you like best and what do you find the hardest?

Making a Murti

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