

EXAM SKILLS

Name:

Class:

16 Read the passage and answer questions 1–9.

MODERN AND POST-MODERN SCULPTURE

A Modern sculpture has its origins in the work of Frenchman Auguste Rodin. Born into a modest family in 1840, Rodin began his creative journey in the 1860s, a journey that would lead to him being remembered as the 'bridge' between traditional and modern sculpture. Before Rodin, sculpture told stories about the past: religion, history, myth and literature. Sculptures typically left little to the imagination. Figures tended to be idealised in some way to avoid any imperfections of the model. Rodin can be considered a realist in that he refused to improve on what he saw in front of him. He considered all of nature beautiful and if a model was old and wrinkled, he would be portrayed as such. Moreover, like much of the art that he helped inspire for later generations, his work spoke to the emotions and imagination: both his and his viewers'. The stories he told were internal and conceptual and there was no right or wrong way to interpret them.

B Rodin was inspired by the fragments of Greek and Roman sculpture that were being discovered by archaeologists during his time. He was one of the first sculptors to treat fragments or parts of figures as complete works of art. One of his most famous works is *Large hand of a pianist*. In this piece he demonstrated one of the characteristics of Modern Art – to make visible things that are not, such as energy, sound and rhythm. He sculpted elongated fingers to make visible music being played effortlessly. Groundbreaking for its time, this concept has been taken forward by sculptors right up to the present day.



C Rodin worked mainly in bronze and was fascinated by the effect of light on irregular surfaces. In particular, he realised that light bouncing off textured bronze surfaces could create the illusion of movement. He pioneered two new techniques: *marcottage* and *assemblage*. *Marcottage* means creating a new work by putting together pieces from different existing works. *Assemblage*, which was further developed later by artists like Picasso, began with Rodin's technique of repeatedly casting the same figure and using multiple casts to create a new piece.

D The Late Modern Period (1900 to 1945), which saw the rise of extreme distortion* – and then abstraction** – in sculpture can be seen as a natural development from the pioneering work of Rodin. Romanian French sculptor Constantin Brancusi was one of the leading exponents of this style. He attempted to reduce the physical world to three basic forms: egg, pebble and grass blade. The development of Rodin's *assemblage* also continued and came to represent the *building* of sculptures rather than carving or moulding them. Picasso's sculptures were called 'Constructions' and used a range of different objects and materials. The rise of minimalism, a movement that reduces sculpture to its most essential features, comes very much from this tradition.

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E Thanks to the work of these 'forefathers', Modern sculpture embraces many forms and styles. It is increasingly common to see it created outdoors, often in view of the spectators. One form of outdoor sculpture is known as Earth Art, which is based on nature and makes use of rocks, branches, leaves, dirt, soil, water and other naturally occurring materials. Another offshoot is kinetic sculpture – sculpture that involves moving parts. Mobiles are one such example. Early examples had moving parts powered by wind or touch and later some were even powered by machines. Other pioneering forms of Modern sculpture include ice sculptures used in culinary art and sound sculptures – such as Aeolian harps 'played' by the wind.

F Art installations are another example of how sculpture has developed in the Modern and Post-modern eras. They can be defined as a work of art consisting of multiple components, often though not necessarily in mixed media, usually exhibited in an indoor gallery space in an arrangement specified by the artist. Installations are multi-sensory experiences built for a specific time and space. They are often highly imaginative and bring different materials together to create something original and unexpected. The audience is drawn to them because they are immersive, often allowing audience participation. One such installation was *Cloud City*, a huge construction created by Argentinian sculptor Tomás Saraceno. It consisted of 16 interconnected modules, 16.5 by 8.5 metres, displayed on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Visitors were able to walk up and inside the modules.

*distortion – *twisting out of shape*

**abstraction – *depicting ideas, not actual objects*

G In fact, these days sculpture increasingly involves the public. The use of digital technology has further increased the possibilities of creating art that reaches everyone. Digital installations allow artists to 'play' with the boundary between the real world and virtual reality and give new opportunities for active participation in the artwork by the spectator. Touch, physical participation and social interaction are now common features of the experience of going to see art. Modern sculpture has come a long way since Rodin got the ball rolling in the 1860s, and the future promises limitless possibilities.



Questions 1–6

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the reading passage above?

Write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

- 1 Before Rodin, sculpture was very realistic.
- 2 Rodin expected people to interpret his sculptures in their own way.
- 3 Rodin studied the sculpture techniques of the Greeks and Romans.
- 4 Rodin felt that incomplete figures were still artistic works.
- 5 His *Large Hand of a Pianist* tries to convey music being played.
- 6 Rodin believed the surfaces of sculptures should be smooth.

Questions 7–9

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

7 Assemblage

- A** was first used by Pablo Picasso.
- B** uses only three basic forms.
- C** involves several artists working on the same theme.
- D** creates a single composition from a number of versions of an individual.

8 What is the purpose of paragraph E?

- A** to explain the meaning of Earth Art
- B** to explain how kinetic sculpture has evolved
- C** to introduce the idea of outdoor sculpture
- D** to show examples of innovative forms of Modern sculpture

9 Art installations

- A** always use mixed media.
- B** are always outdoors.
- C** usually allow viewers to interact with them.
- D** typically last a long time.