

MONUMENT MAKER

Daniel Chester French
and the Lincoln Memorial



Educator Resource Guide

Developed by the Concord Museum.



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About the Book

“History shapes our lives. And what we do with our lives can shape history.”

When Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, fifteen-year-old Dan French had no way to know that one day his tribute to the great president would transform a plot of Washington, DC marshland into America’s gathering place. He did not even know that a sculptor was something to be. He only knew that he liked making things with his hands.

This is the story of how a farm boy became America’s foremost sculptor. Dan taught himself to sculpt and launched his career with the famous Minuteman Statue in his hometown of Concord, Massachusetts.

This is also the story of the Lincoln Memorial, French’s culminating masterpiece. Dan’s statue is no lifeless figure, but a powerful, vital touchstone of a nation’s ideals. Now Dan French has his tribute too, in this exquisite biography that brings history to life for young readers.

About the Resource

This resource is intended to inspire classroom teachers, parents, caregivers, and museum educators to use *Monument Maker* with their students, children, and visitors. Developed by the Concord Museum Education Department, this guide includes activities for close-looking, writing, art-making, community connections, and engineering. The culminating project brings together all of these important aspects of monument-making that were central to Daniel Chester French’s process of creating the compelling works of art highlighted in *Monument Maker*.

Grade Level: 2nd – 5th, and can be easily adapted for younger or older audiences.

Time: About 1 hour per activity. Add time for traveling to an Daniel Chester French sculpture in your community. Find a DCF sculpture near you with this [interactive map](#).

Essential Question: How do artists, like Daniel Chester French, shape history with monuments?

Learning Outcome: Students will use close-looking, writing, art-making, and engineering to understand the impact of Daniel Chester French’s work as a monument maker and find ways for them to impact their community today as contributors to history..

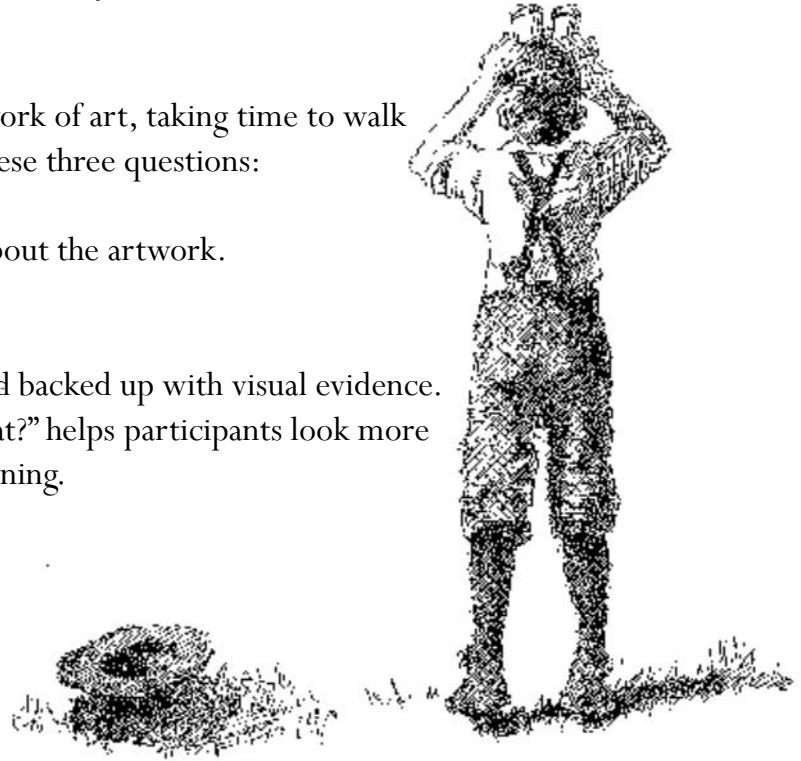
Assessment: Formative assessments will occur throughout each activity, building into the final lesson where students will use what they learned in previous activities to propose their own monument.

Close Looking with Daniel Chester French

Sculptures can tell you a lot about the artist and his or her subject. Plan a visit to a Daniel Chester French artwork near you using this [interactive map](#).

Start by spending 2-3 minutes looking silently at the work of art, taking time to walk around the statue, if possible. Ask your participants these three questions:

- **What's going on in this sculpture?**
 - Allow participants to make observations about the artwork.
- **What do you see that makes you say that?**
 - Make sure each observation is objective and backed up with visual evidence. Asking "What do you see that makes you say that?" helps participants look more closely and think more deeply about their reasoning.
- **What more can you find?**
 - There's always more to find!



Looking Closer: After making your initial observations, these will delve in further:

- Look at the location the sculpture is in. Is it outside or inside? How does the sculpture connect to its surroundings, if at all?
- After you've looked closely, step back and consider the entire statue. List three adjectives to describe the subject. Why did you choose those words?
- Consider all of the different aspects of the statue, including:
 - Face. Examine the subject's face closely. How would you describe his/her expression?
 - Body. How is the subject posed? Is it a full-length statue, or does it just show his/her head and shoulders? Try to imitate his/her pose. How does that pose make you feel?
 - Clothing. What is the subject wearing? What might his/her clothing say about their identity?
 - Objects. Is the subject depicted with any objects or props? Describe the objects. What might those props tell you about the subject?
 - Inscription. Is there any writing on the statue? Read it carefully. How does it relate to the person depicted, if at all?
- Return to your list of three adjectives. Are there any you would add or change? Why or why not?

After your visit:

Research the person depicted in the sculpture. Does the information you found change your original perceptions?

Daniel Chester French

Close Looking Activity Sheet

Sculpture Title:

Artist Name:

Year Made:

Three adjectives that describe the artwork:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Sketch the sculpture.

Sketch the sculpture from a different perspective. Try and sketch the sculpture's environment.

Take notes on your observations of the various details of the artwork.

Face:

Body:

Clothing:

Objects:

Inscriptions:

Other:

Writing about Sculpture

Works of art can inspire many different kinds of writing, both fiction and non-fiction. Here are a few ideas to start writing about a Daniel Chester French sculpture in your community:

- Imagine that this sculpture came to life! Write a story from his/her perspective. Where do they go? Who do they meet?
- Compose a journal entry from the perspective of the subject. Write about the events of your day, your thoughts and feelings, or what is currently on your mind.
- Write an ode to the person depicted in the statue. Describe what makes the subject of your poem special, and worthy of admiration.
- Create a calligram! Draw the sculpture's shape, then fill it in with words and phrases to describe it.
- You have been asked to write an inscription for the statue, but you only have space to write 50 words. What does your inscription say?
- Write a postcard to a friend who has never seen this sculpture before. Tell them about the details of the statue, and describe the sights and sounds of the place where it is located. Include a sketch of the sculpture on the front of your postcard.
- Find images of two different Daniel Chester French statues. (Or visit them in person and take photographs!) Put the images next to each other, and compare them. Write a paragraph that describes their similarities and differences.

Making A Sculpture

Creating sculptures gave Daniel Chester French direction, purpose, and inspiration in life. It all started on a spring morning in his family's barn when a turnip reminded him of something, and he carved a frog. Dan created many things he was fascinated by, including dogs, small birds, owls, and deer.



What fascinates you?

Create a sculpture of something you are fascinated by.

- Use images and real-life subjects to base your sculpture off of.
 - You should not try and make an exact replica of your subject. But look closely at it and think about why you are fascinated by it, and emphasize your favorite parts in your artwork.
- Consider how you represent your subject.
 - What is their pose or orientation? If your subject is a living creature, what is their expression? Are you including any additional props like a tree branch or toy that help the viewer understand your subject?
- Choose your medium. Dan worked in clay, bronze, marble, plaster, and even a turnip!
 - You may choose to use clay, paper, air-dry clay, wire, found materials, papier mâché, any combination of these materials, or any other materials you can think of.

When you're finished: What new things did you learn about your subject through the process of looking closely and representing it in a sculpture? Show your friends and family your completed work.

History, Community, and Art

Daniel Chester French's sculptures represent some of the most important figures and events in American history – as well as the values of the communities where they were located.



History in your community:

- Arrange a field trip to a statue or monument in your own community. Spend time looking closely at it from all angles. Use the *Close Looking Activity Sheet* to help guide your observations. After you spend time looking, use these questions to guide a discussion.
 - Who or what is depicted in the work of art?
 - What did they do in their life, or why was the event important enough to earn a monument?
 - Why did your community choose to commemorate this person or event?
 - When in history was the monument created? Was it the same time when the subject was alive, or was it later in history?
 - Does the subject continue to reflect the values of your community?

Witnessing History:

- Daniel Chester French was shaped by the events of his time. Just before his fifteenth birthday he learned that President Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated. Only a few days earlier, the people in his town were celebrating General Lee's surrender and the inevitable end of the Civil War. Now they cried in the streets. Dan, and the nation, were shaped by the loss of this great man who led the country through a terrible war.
 - If you were a kid at this moment in history, what would you be feeling, seeing, and thinking?
 - Now think of yourself today. What are some of the most important events that you've witnessed in your lifetime?
 - How do you respond?
 - How have these events shaped your life?
 - Dan's life and work helped shape history – how might you do the same?



Engineering a Monument

As Dan liked to say: “A sculptor is nine-tenths mechanic, and one-tenth poet.”

To become a world-famous artist, Daniel used his skills as a mechanic, builder, inventor, designer, and collaborator. He used math and engineering to enlarge his models to become bigger ones.

When he was designing the statue for the Lincoln Memorial, Dan originally planned to make the monument ten feet tall. However, upon seeing the size of the building that would hold the sculpture, he feared the great man would be dwarfed by the columnar structure surrounding him. Dan insisted on making President Lincoln’s sculpture larger, and Congress approved the construction of a nineteen foot sculpture.

Dan made a chart of all of the calculations needed for a 10-foot tall sculpture, but now it needs to be adjusted for a 19-foot sculpture.

- Calculate the height, length, width, volume, surface area, and mass of the 19-foot tall monument.
- Calculate the cost of the monument, now that we have to buy more marble for a larger sculpture.
 - Hint: First calculate the cost of 1 ton of marble then calculate the cost of the sculpture.
- Do the same calculations for a 7-foot model that the Piccirilli brother’s used to base their carvings on and a 3-foot model that Dan used as a working model.
- Round your calculations to the tenth decimal place.

Formulas

Mass = volume x density

Volume = height x length x width

Surface Area = 2(height x length + height x width + length x width)

Bonus Question: The final 19-foot tall sculpture was formed out of 28 cubes of marble. If Dan had made his originally proposed 10-foot tall sculpture, how many cubes of marble would he have used?

Resources used for scale of monument and density of marble and clay:

<https://www.nps.gov/linc/learn/historyculture/lincoln-memorial-building-statistics.htm>

https://www.engineeringtoolbox.com/density-solids-d_1265.html

Scales for the Lincoln Memorial

For a 10-foot tall monument:

Dimension	Measurement	Unit
Height	10	Feet
Length	9	Feet
Width	10	Feet
Volume	900	Feet ³
Surface Area	560	Feet ²
Density	0.02	Tons/Feet ³
Mass	18	Tons
Cost	13,260	US dollars in 1922

For a 19-foot tall monument:

Dimension	Measurement	Unit
Height	19	Feet
Length		Feet
Width		Feet
Volume		Feet ³
Surface Area		Feet ²
Density		Tons/Feet ³
Mass		Tons
Cost		US dollars in 1922

Scales for a Lincoln Memorial

For a 7-foot tall model for the Piccirilli brothers:

Dimension	Measurement	Unit
Height	7	Feet
Length		Feet
Width		Feet
Volume		Feet ³
Surface Area		Feet ²
Density		Tons/Feet ³
Mass		Tons
Cost		US dollars in 1922

For a 3-foot tall working model:

Dimension	Measurement	Unit
Height	3	Feet
Length		Feet
Width		Feet
Volume		Feet ³
Surface Area		Feet ²
Density		Tons/Feet ³
Mass		Tons
Cost		US dollars in 1922

Scales for a Monument Worksheet

Bonus Question: Do the same calculations for the 10 – inch tall “sketch” the Dan made out of clay. Note that your units have changed for this smaller sculpture, and the density of clay is different than the density of marble.

For a 10-inch tall clay “sketch”:

Dimension	Measurement	Unit
Height	10	Inches
Length		Inches
Width		Inches
Volume		Inches ³
Surface Area		Inches ²
Density		Lbs./Inches ³
Mass		Lbs.

Helpful Conversions

1 foot = 12 inches

1 US ton = 2000 lbs.

Density of clay = 0.08 lbs./Inches³

Proposing A Monument

Your state or town has asked for proposals for a new monument. You will research and propose a subject and monument to your governor or mayor.

1. Research online and in your library a person from history who you would like to represent in a sculpture. This person may have done something that made a positive impact on your school, community, or the nation. We can find inspiration and guidance from people who made large and small contributions.
2. Write a letter to your governor or mayor arguing why this person should be chosen as the subject of a monument. Your letter should answer:
 1. What did this person do in their life that should be commemorated?
 2. How can people in the present day learn from this historic person and their contributions? And does the monument address social, cultural, and community issues important to you and your site?
 3. Why is this person important to you? What is your personal connection that inspired you to propose a monument of them?
 4. Where will the sculpture will go? And what is the sculptures relationship to that site?
 1. Is there an open space in your community that needs a sculpture? Is there an existing monument in your community that should be replaced? Is there an area that is poorly maintained or harming your community that this monument refers to and reshapes?
 5. How will the viewer experience and perceive this sculpture?
3. Creating a monument requires knowledge as an engineer. Your proposal should include calculations on the size and mass of your monument as well as what it will cost the government to buy the material for your monument. You will also include the calculations for a smaller working model of your monument that you will make prior to the construction of your final sculpture. Use the activity from *Engineering a Monument* to model your calculations, and submit the completed attached worksheet with your final proposal.
4. Dan made dozens of small clay models of his ideas for the Minute Man sculpture. He settled on four that he showed to his family, and they helped pick the one that Dan presented to the monument committee. Plan and sketch ideas of what the monument will look like.
 1. What do you want your viewer to know about this person? Consider how each formal quality contributes to shape the overall effect of the piece.
 2. Be intentional choosing your subject's expression, pose, clothing, and props. They contribute to how the viewer perceives your subject and what is important about them.
 3. Include one final drawing, or a small, hand-sized model of your sculpture with your proposal.

Scales for the Proposed Monument

For the final monument:

Dimension	Measurement	Unit
Height		Feet
Length		Feet
Width		Feet
Volume		Feet ³
Surface Area		Feet ²
Density		Tons/Feet ³
Mass		Tons
Cost		US dollars

For the working model:

Dimension	Measurement	Unit
Height		Feet
Length		Feet
Width		Feet
Volume		Feet ³
Surface Area		Feet ²
Density		Tons/Feet ³
Mass		Tons
Cost		US dollars

Helpful Conversion

1 US dollar in 1922 = 15.3 US dollars in 2019