

Make a South Asian Statuette

A statuette is a small sculpture, sometimes so small that it could fit in the palm of your hand! Statuettes were used for worship as religious symbols in many South Asian cultures. Their size made them easy to carry with you, wherever you go. This activity is brought to you by Krishnapriya, a teaching artist with the [South Asia Center](#) at the University of Pennsylvania.



This [statuette of Jina](#) is worshipped in Jainism. It is made out of greenstone. Can you see the green color of the stone?



Take a look at this [head of a person](#). This statuette is made out of Red Sand stone. Can you see the texture of the stone?



This [statuette of Vishnu](#), depicts a Hindu God. It is made from brass, using a lost wax casting technique. How many arms does this Vishnu have?

Statuettes can be made with different materials like metal, wood, stone, ivory, clay or ceramic. The main techniques used for making statuettes are modeling, carving, and lost wax casting.

Modeling is a sculpting technique where an artist adds on material that is soft and flexible, like clay or wax.

Carving is the act of shaping a sculpture by scraping away portions of material. The best materials for carving are wood, stone or ivory.

Lost Wax Casting is a method of creating a metal sculpture. Molten (very hot) metal is poured into a mold, shaped like the statue you want to create. The mold is created by using a wax model that has been melted away. The oldest known example of this technique comes from a 6,000-year-old copper, wheel-shaped amulet found at Mehrgarh, Pakistan.



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Create your own statuette: Today we are going to focus on modeling. See if you can create a statuette model of a person, animal or mythical being from your imagination!

Start by drawing the plan for your Statuette here:

Things you will need:

1. Any kind of clay you have at home. If you do not have clay you can make homemade air dry clay by following [this recipe](#).
2. Wooden sculpting tool like sticks, teaspoons or chopsticks.
3. A small recycled cardboard box or a piece of wood.



Important words to remember:

Statue: a three dimensional sculptural representation usually of a person, animal or mythical being.

Statuette: a very small sculpture.

Sculpture: the action or art of making statues by carving or chiseling (as in wood or stone), by modeling (as in clay), or by casting (as in melted metal).

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STEP ONE: Once you have your clay ready, knead it and shape it.



STEP TWO: Use your tool to shape the details of your statuette.



STEP THREE: If you are using clay that has many colors, use different colors to define the details you need for your sculpture. Add the final details to your statuette. Place on a piece of wood or cardboard to dry.

