Ex. #3 - Object 01 Student Worksheet

Name: __________________________
Section: _________________________

DESCRIPTION
1. Look at and handle the object, then write a brief description of the object. What are its most important characteristics?

2. How would you describe this object’s state of preservation? Is it intact? Is the cavity in the figurine’s torso an original feature, or was it a later modification?

3a. Weigh this object: ________ grams. Then measure this object in centimeters.

Length: Thickness: Height: Cavity volume:

3b. Use your measurements and observations to quickly draw a similar side view or profile sketch of your object below.
PRODUCTION
4. From which material and how was this object made? Refer to the list of production methods at the end of this worksheet. Hint: Look carefully at the line that divides the figurine from front to back.

5. Do you think it was expensive or inexpensive? Who might have owned this object? How did they acquire it?

FUNCTION AND CONTEXT
6. How does context affect function? Brainstorm several interpretations of how this object was used, if archaeologists found it in a house, a shop, a tomb, or a temple.

7. Explain what’s happening in this scene, a relief from the Rassam Obelisk (883-859 BCE, near modern Nimrud, Iraq. What is the object at center? What are the people doing? Your figurine would have been used in a similar functional context, albeit with a much smaller version of the object at center.
SIGNIFICANCE

8. Apart from the United States and the United Kingdom, the entire world has gradually accepted the metric International System of Units since it was conceived in late eighteenth century France.

What are the benefits or possibilities entailed by the adoption of standardized systems of measurement? How do systems of measurement allow humans to relate to the world and to each other? The primary, intended function of your object depends upon these concepts. Brainstorm some ideas below.

9. If you took this object out of the museum and put it back in the ancient world, where and with whom would you put it, and why?
Zebu bull (*Bos primigenius indicus*)

Modern distribution of cattle species in the Old World
PRODUCTION METHODS

CERAMICS
a. **Wheel-made ceramic objects** were made on a potter’s wheel: this is a flat disk on which clay was placed that was spun at high speed. The potter used their hands or instruments to shape the clay as it turned. Afterwards hundreds to thousands of objects were placed in a kiln and fired until hard. Because these objects are turned on a potter’s wheel, they are circular on one axis and symmetrical about a center point (think of a plate or bowl). They usually have ridge lines from the vessel spinning in the potter’s hands.

b. **Mould-made ceramics** were created by first carving a mould in two pieces of stone (one for the top, one for the bottom). Clay was pressed into each half of the mould, the two halves were pressed together and the whole thing was fired in a kiln until hard. The result was an object of almost any shape (as opposed to the wheel-made ceramics, which must be circular on one axis), often with intricate “carved” designs. You can often see a line where the two mould halves came together.

METAL
c. **Casting** was a technique similar to mould-made ceramics (above), but whereas clay is pressed into a mould, molten metal or glass is poured into a cast.

d. **Lost-wax (or lost-mould) casting** was a technique for casting objects in which the artist created an object’s model from hard wax (or another material with a low melting-point temperature). Clay was then shaped around the wax model, forming a soft interior and a hard exterior. A hole was pierced through the hard exterior into the wax and the mould was fired until hard, thereby also melting and draining the wax. Molten metal was poured into the empty exterior mould and allowed to cool, before the mould was broken to reveal the now-hardened metal version of the wax model.

GLASS
e. **Cast glass**: see above under “casting”.

f. **Blown glass** was created using a technique in which molten glass was placed on the end of a tube that the glassblower would then blow through. The result was any roundish object that was hollow.

g. **Core-formed glass** vessels were created by first creating the shape of the intended object out of clay (the core) and then heating it and rolling it in powdered glass, which built up around the core. Bands of colored glass were then applied and pressed into the powdered glass. Designs were then made with tools and handles were attached (if the vessel had handles). The core was then removed, resulting in a glass vessel with geometric designs on the outside.

LOTS OF MATERIALS
h. **Carving** a negative process, whereby different instruments (blades, chisels, etc.) are used to remove material from a larger block in order to create a desired shape.