

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

BEFORE GIVING THE STUDENTS INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCULPTURE . . .

- ▶ Show the slides of *The Burghers of Calais* to your students and/or display the poster included in this resource.
- ▶ Ask your students to focus on one of the six figures.
- ▶ Have the students closely study the figure they have chosen and then imagine themselves as that figure. Ask them to write an account of their point of view, their thoughts and feelings, based on what they see in the sculpture. Their comments should be written in the first person, as though they were one of the men in Rodin's sculpture.
- ▶ Have the students read their comments aloud, then ask if the other students can guess which figure is being discussed.
- ▶ Compare the comments of students who chose the same figure. How are the observations similar? How are they different? Which emotions does Rodin convey? How has Rodin expressed these emotions?
- ▶ Compare the comments about different figures. Are there any similarities?

The purpose of this exercise is for students to accomplish the following:

- ▶ Articulate their reactions to the sculpture in writing
- ▶ Discover how each student may interpret the sculpture in his or her own way
- ▶ Understand the complexity and variety of the figures' expressions and poses
- ▶ Begin exploring the significance of the piece and, specifically, the relationships among the various figures and the message conveyed by the sculpture in its entirety

AFTER DISCUSSING THE STORY OF THE BURGHERS OF CALAIS . . .

- ▶ After you have discussed the sculpture with your students and told them the story of the burghers, ask them to do the exercise again, this time incorporating the knowledge they have acquired from the discussions.

The purpose of this exercise is for students to see how their responses to the sculpture remain the same or differ once they know the specifics of the narrative.