



Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel Ceiling



Reading to Writing Summary

EXAMPLE

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Teacher's Notes

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Instructions

Option 1 [Medium] *** ** [B2/C1]

1. Distribute the text a week /day before the test. Students read, check vocabulary & meanings.
2. Test day: distribute a **new copy of text** and the **summary question**.
3. Set 1 hour to read the text, take notes and write a one-paragraph summary of 200-250-words.
4. Feedback¹: take in and mark [\[use our correction code*\]](#).
5. Feedback²: distribute **completed outline & model answer**. Students compare with their own work.
6. Summary marking: **should contain at least 4 main ideas with support – see summary key points**.
7. Extra: critical thinking questions / group discussion (30 minutes).

Option 2 [More challenging] ***** [C1]

1. Set 1 hour to read the **text** and write a one-paragraph summary of 200-250-words.
3. Feedback¹: take in and mark [\[use our correction code*\]](#).
4. Feedback²: distribute **completed outline & model answer**. Students compare with their own work.
5. Summary marking: **should contain at least 4 main ideas with support – see summary key points**.
6. Extra: critical thinking questions / group discussion (30 minutes).

Link for Additional Material

Correction code	www.academic-englishuk/error-correction
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Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel Ceiling

By A. Watson (2025) **EXAMPLE**

The Sistine Chapel ceiling [REDACTED] Renaissance art. Commissioned by Pope Julius II in 1508, it was painted by Michelangelo Buonarroti over [REDACTED] as a sculptor, he accepted the commission under pressure, and the result transformed the history of Western painting. [REDACTED] and contains hundreds of figures. It continues to astonish visitors with its combination of scale, complexity and visual power (Forcellino, 2022).

Michelangelo's [REDACTED], and his [REDACTED] the project reflected both personal and technical concerns. The fresco technique required applying [REDACTED]. In addition, [REDACTED] construct scaffolding and work for years while standing and painting overhead. In letters to his friends, he described [REDACTED] and the paint dripping into his eyes (Wallace, 2013). Despite these challenges, the project demonstrated his [REDACTED].

At the heart of the ceiling are nine central panels illustrating stories from the Book of Genesis. [REDACTED] *Adam and Eve*, and scenes from the story of Noah. The most celebrated image is the [REDACTED] his hand to spark life into the reclining figure of Adam. This image has become one of the most [REDACTED]. Recent scholars [REDACTED] Michelangelo embedded imagery of the human brain within the design, symbolising the [REDACTED] (Ashford and Tatem, 2024).

Surrounding the central panels are monumental figures of twelve prophets and sibyls. [REDACTED], suggesting [REDACTED] universal. The inclusion of the sibyls, female seers from the ancient world, reflects Renaissance [REDACTED]. In the triangular lunettes above the windows, Michelangelo painted the ancestors of Christ, linking [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] history (Müller, 2022).

The ceiling is celebrated [REDACTED] his deep knowledge of classical sculpture, giving the figures muscular bodies and dynamic poses. The [REDACTED] use of [REDACTED] breaks open the flat surface of the ceiling. By combining complex narrative with dramatic physicality, [REDACTED], setting new standards for artistic ambition. This work marked a turning [REDACTED] both spiritual and emotional intensity (Wallace, 2013).

[REDACTED]. Contemporary accounts describe crowds entering the chapel and marvelling at the scale and beauty of the work. Its impact on later artists was immense, [REDACTED]. The ceiling's reputation has [REDACTED] study argues that a female figure in *The Flood* scene may depict signs of breast cancer, showing how [REDACTED] to the

representation [redacted] continued into modern times, though debates over [redacted] and 1990s.

Today the Sistine Chapel ceiling is considered one of the masterpieces of world culture. It [redacted] and [redacted] and the ideals of Renaissance humanism. Designated as part of the Vatican's UNESCO World Heritage [redacted]. The ceiling's enduring power lies in its ability to merge biblical narrative with human [redacted] but also a timeless celebration of artistic genius (Forcellino, 2022).

References

Ashford, J.W. and Tatem, S.B. (2024) 'Michelangelo's images on the chapel ceiling depicting Creation describe the course of vertebrate brain development', *Neurocase*. doi:10.1080/13554794.2020.1813477.

[redacted]: *History of a Masterpiece*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Müller, J. (2022) [redacted] Reflections on Michelangelo's design of the Sistine Chapel', *Theological Studies Journal*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368352552_An_exceeding_marvel (Accessed: 28 August 2025).

[redacted] 'Depictions of disease in art: Identifying breast cancer in the Sistine Chapel's "Flood" scene', *The Breast*, 74, pp. 158–163. doi:10.1016/j.breast.2024.04.008.

Wallace, W.E. (2013) [redacted]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Summary: Key Points

Task: Take notes on the key points of the text.

1. Main idea:
Support:
2. Main idea:
Support:
3. Main idea:
Support:
4. Main idea:
Support:
5. Main idea:
Support:
6. Main idea:
Support:
7. Main Idea:

Summary: Key Points (Suggested Answers)

Task: Take notes on the key points of the text.

1. Main idea: A major Renaissance achievement
Support: • [REDACTED] • Michelangelo primarily a sculptor → accepted commission under pressure. • [REDACTED] • Astonishes viewers with scale, complexity, power.
2. Main idea: Challenges & technique
Support: • [REDACTED] • Fresco: paint on wet plaster → speed + precision needed. • [REDACTED] • Letters: physical strain (bending back, paint in eyes) (Wallace, 2013). • [REDACTED]
3. Main idea: Central panels (Genesis stories)
Support: • [REDACTED] • <i>Creation of Adam</i> most celebrated; iconic + widely reproduced. • [REDACTED] brain → link divine creation + cognition (Ashford & Tatem, 2024).
4. Main idea: Prophets, sibyls & humanism
Support: • 12 prophets + sibyls → [REDACTED] • Sibyls = female seers; blending Christian/classical traditions. • [REDACTED] Testament (Müller, 2022).
5. Main idea: Artistic innovation
Support: • Figures muscular, dynamic; influenced by classical sculpture. • [REDACTED] on flat ceiling. • Combines complex narrative + dramatic physicality. • [REDACTED] + emotional effect (Wallace, 2013).
6. Main idea: Reception & interpretations
Support: • Unveiled 1512 → huge astonishment; crowds admired. • [REDACTED]. • Interpreted culturally/medically: breast cancer signs in <i>Flood</i> figure (Nerlich et al., 2024). • [REDACTED]
7. Main idea: Lasting significance
• Masterpiece of world culture. • [REDACTED] • Expresses grandeur of papacy + ideals of humanism. • [REDACTED] • Endures as religious + artistic statement (Forcellino, 2022).

Summary

Task: Write a 200–250-word summary on the key features of the text using your notes to help you.

Word Count: _____

Sample Summary for Comparison

EXAMPLE

The Sistine Chapel ceiling, painted by Michelangelo [REDACTED] of Renaissance art, remarkable for its vast scale, hundreds of figures, and enduring visual power (Forcellino, 2022). Although Michelangelo [REDACTED] undertook the project under pressure and overcame enormous technical and physical challenges, including the demands of fresco painting on wet plaster and the [REDACTED]). At [REDACTED] the *Creation of Adam*, now an iconic image often reproduced worldwide, with scholars even suggesting that Michelangelo embedded imagery of the human brain to [REDACTED] (Ashford & Tatem, 2024). Surrounding these scenes are twelve prophets and sibyls, figures that merge biblical [REDACTED] above the windows show Christ's ancestors, thus joining the Old and New Testaments (Müller, 2022). The work also demonstrates Michelangelo's artistic [REDACTED] illusionistic architecture introduced new ways of combining human anatomy, spirituality, and [REDACTED], the ceiling astonished the public, inspired artists such as Raphael, and has continued to generate cultural and medical interpretations, including studies of disease in the [REDACTED] as part of [REDACTED] represents the union of theology, philosophy, and artistry, affirming Michelangelo's genius and the timeless impact of [REDACTED]

Word count 249

⇒ How does your summary differ from the sample? Complete the table with the similarities and differences. Consider *coverage of main points, balance of ideas, conciseness, clarity and use of examples*.

	Summaries
Similarities	
Differences	

Critical Thinking Questions

i) What's the stance of the author? What is the evidence for this?

[2 points]

ii) Is this a

[2 points]

iii) Highlight four ideas in the text you would use for an essay titled: *'In what ways does the Renaissance and the cultural values of its time?'*

[4 points]

iv) Highlight two areas or lack evidence.

[2 points]

Critical Thinking Questions Suggested **Key** for Comparison

i) What's the stance of the author? What is the evidence for this?

The author presents the Sistine Chapel ceiling as a masterpiece of Renaissance culture and a symbol of artistic genius. Evidence includes:

- *Description of it as "one of the greatest achievements" of the period (Forcellino, 2022).*
- *Emphasis on Michelangelo's innovation: muscular anatomy...*

ALL ANSWERS INCLUDED IN PAID VERSION...