Greek Art Context

1. **Geography:** Isolation of Greek Poleis along a coast line and island self reliance, emphasis on the individual
2. **Religion:** Greeks conceptualized their gods as idealized humans, but with human passions and ambitions. The perfection of the human body was thought to be the manner in which they most resembled the gods.
3. **Humanism:** Greeks attempted to understand what it is to be a *human being* and to understand *an individual’s relationship* with the world around them through thought of their *introspective culture of ideas as well as action*. Sophocles.
4. **Idealism:** Plato believed that the world of visible forms/reality was just a reflection of perfect truth, beauty, and goodness, which exists in a world of ideas. This is why he insisted that art must be ideal and perfect.
5. **Rationalism:** The belief that the intellect is the highest human faculty. The belief that the universe was founded on rational/harmonic principles “ …all things are numbers..” and ratios. The belief that through knowledge/investigation one could unlock the logic of the universe. Pythagoras believed there was a rational/intellectual approach to art making and building.

**Possible functions of sculpture in the ancient world:**

1. Icon/image Idol for worship or veneration
2. Monument Propaganda to inspire or to be revered
3. Historical Record Narrative to record events for future generations
4. Decorative element Embellishment to architecture
5. Theoretical investigation Canon of an aesthetic ideal

**Possibilities of Analysis of sculpture: Formal elements of art:**

1. Stance/presentation
2. Proportion/scale
3. Anatomical detail/

correctness

1. Movement/gesture
2. Facial expression
3. Context
4. Function
5. Technique/material content
6. Form
7. Mass
8. Volume
9. Space
10. Texture
11. Balance
12. Repetition
13. rhythm

**Methods of Creating Sculpture:**

1. Subtractive Method: The form is created by removing (carving) from a block or mass.
2. Additive Method: the form is built up by modeling in clay, construction (joining) materials
3. Casting: Subtractive or additive methods of creating sculpture can then be cast in another material such as bronze by taking molds from the forms. Types of casting include Piece mold (Shang Dynasty) and Lost Wax process (Ancient Greeks

**Types of Sculptures:**

1. Free standing or sculpture in the round
2. Relief Sculpture sculptural forms which project from a surface or background
3. Low Relief: forms project only slightly from the background. Also known as Bas Relief
4. High Relief: forms project significantly from the back ground.
5. Negative Relief: images are incised into a flat surface with an emphasis on contours and outlines rather than forms.