



Conceived 1880; cast by 1926

Bronze

Height: 27 1/8 inches  
(68.9 cm)

**AUGUSTE RODIN**  
French, 1840–1917

### LET'S LOOK

What does this man's pose tell us about what he's thinking and feeling?

Is this man weak or strong?  
What do you see that tells you so?

Try to sit in this same position.  
What is difficult about it?

### LET'S LOOK AGAIN

What does the artist convey about the act of thinking?  
Is it easy or difficult?

Why do you think he chose to make this sculpture a solitary figure?

## THE THINKER

A man sits alone on a rock, absorbed in thought. He leans forward, with his elbow on his knee and hand supporting his chin. Clearly focused, he intently casts his eyes downward. Known as *The Thinker*, this bronze sculpture represents the creative mind at work. Although the figure is seated, he is not at rest. As Auguste Rodin (ah-GOOST roe-DEN), the French artist who created this sculpture, stated, "What makes my Thinker think is that he thinks not only with his brain, with his knitted brow, his distended nostrils, and compressed lips, but with every muscle of his arms, back, and legs, with his clenched fist and gripping toes." By choosing to depict *The Thinker* as a strong, athletic figure, Rodin conveyed that the act of thinking is a powerful exercise.

*The Thinker* was originally conceived as part of Rodin's design for a set of bronze doors for a museum in Paris. This figure represented Dante Alighieri, an early Italian Renaissance poet. Rodin depicted Dante reflecting on *The Divine Comedy*, his **epic poem** about heaven, hell, and the fate of all humankind. However, the sculpture ultimately came to **symbolize** everyone who utilizes their imagination to create: artists, writers, scientists, and many others. Rodin himself identified with *The Thinker*, and a version of the sculpture still overlooks his tomb today.

There are several versions of this sculpture in different sizes. This one is just over two feet tall and is the size of Rodin's handmade clay model, from which many bronze **casts** were made. Well-known around the world, *The Thinker* continues to celebrate humankind's creative accomplishments.

Rodin Museum, Philadelphia: Bequest of Jules E. Mastbaum, F1929-7-15