In my front yard I have some sculptures that I built for fun. Recently, a neighbor who works for the city where we live stopped by and suggested I submit a proposal for a sculpture to go in front of a new downtown building. Professional sculptors often make a small practice sculpture that they submit for consideration before making the full size version.

**Question:** What is such a model sculpture called?

**Goal:** I want to know what this kind of prototype sculpture is called, so that I can research it and figure out how to make one for this potential client.

**Options:**
1. Enter the idea into Google Search and see whether it triggers the word.
2. Try a reverse dictionary.
3. If that does not work, look for an art-specific glossary and use Control-F to find the right idea.
4. Ask on social networks.

**Steps:**
1. Is there a word for a practice model statue?
2. What examples can I look at for ideas on how to make one?
3. What should this model look like?

(At this point, I realize that I didn’t think my problem through sufficiently, and that I will need steps 2 & 3 only later in the process.)

**Actions:**
1. Try the following queries:
   b. **[practice model “statue”]:** This query makes Google Search stick to the words I want, but I still get a wide range of results, none of which seem relevant.
   c. **[model “statue”]:** I get results about the model for the Statue of Liberty in New York City.
   d. I try a bunch of other combinations of words, such as **[early version statue]** and **[statue prototype].** None of these return what I am looking for, and I feel like I need to try a new strategy.
e. This is when I realize that I have been searching for statue though I want to find information on the idea of sculpture. I decide to try sculpture.

f. [Model sculpture] returns a bunch of results about modeling and sculpting.

2. Try a reverse dictionary.
   a. I search for [reverse dictionary] and pick the top one.
   b. [Model statue] yields results that include a bunch of words that I do not know. The first one is maquette, which I click on. The reverse dictionary pulls up a whole list of online dictionary entries for maquette. I click through and read a few definitions. Maquette is the idea I am looking for!
   c. To verify, I enter [define: maquette] into Google Search and find that it means: “A sculptor’s small preliminary model or sketch.”

3. Now I know that what I want to make is called a maquette. This answers my first question, but I need to know more: How formal does my maquette need to be? What might it look like? How would I build it?
   a. Universities that teach art students might have guidelines online, so I try [maquette site:edu]. Most of the results are either scholarly investigations of the use of maquettes or course descriptions for college classes about creating maquettes.
   b. I try [maquette site:edu bibliography], but the results look more scholarly than practical. Maybe it’s time for a different strategy.
   c. Since the academic approach did not work, I wonder if I can take a more business-oriented approach and find information on what art-buyers are looking for in a maquette, or what artists actually create for the bidding process.
   d. I try [maquette proposal OR bid] and skim through the results. These include:
      i. Artists sharing examples of maquettes they have offered in a bid.
      ii. Museums and other institutions offering the public a view of proposed art installations.
      iii. YouTube videos about maquettes.
   e. Watching some of the YouTube videos might offer insights into how artists make decisions while creating their maquettes. The first video is titled “Early concept maquette” and gives a visual tour of an artist’s prototype.
   f. When I type [maquette] into the YouTube search box, I notice several autocomplete options, including:
      i. [maquette sculpting]
      ii. [maquette making]
      iii. [maquette tutorial]
   g. I start with [maquette tutorial] and discover that the term maquette is also used for clay figures in animation and special effects. I try [maquette tutorial - animation -“special effects”], but the results are messy. In the meantime, I am
starting to have a sense of what my own maquette might look like, so I am not sure I need to pursue this search path any further.

4. Instead, I now want to hear people talk about their professional experiences with maquettes.
   a. I post to my social networks to see if anyone can point me to a friend who is a professional sculptor willing to offer advice.
   b. I enter [maquette bid OR proposal] into Google Search and use the Discussion filter. Guess what I find? A discussion in the alt.sculpture group: discussions on the process for maquettes. I learn that:
      i. For large-scale bids, artists submit "bona fides, artist statement, and rough drawing" before making a maquette. (I wonder what those first two are. I should ask the city whether they want all those things.)
      ii. There are some sites/organizations that these sculptors consider authoritative—they discuss which are authoritative and why.
      iii. Searching [site:nationalsculpture.org maquette] and [site:sculpture.org maquette] I find a pages that give me a better idea of professional maquettes. One interview tells me that a preliminary sketch might be enough to win the city over. I also learn that it is apparently acceptable to put a maquette on my resume, not just completed commissions. Now I’m even more enthusiastic about creating one!

5. Although I still have a lot to learn, I have enough information to ask my neighbor what she needs me to submit with the application.

Wish me luck!

Sources used:
- OneLook Reverse Dictionary
- Google Search, [define:...]
- http://www.nationalsculpture.org/
- http://www.sculpture.org
- alt.sculpture discussion group
- Various videos discovered through YouTube
- A variety of images and blog posts

What I learned:
1. It was hard to find the right words for my query, but I found what I was looking for in the reverse dictionary.
2. Sketches might be sufficient for a bid of this kind.
3. I can put any maquette I submit on an artistic resume, whether or not I win a commission (confirm this with more research later).
Skills used:

- **Reverse dictionary** (find a reverse dictionary)
- **Judge sources** (is that source reliable for this type of information?)
- **Define**: (use [define:....] or drag word to search bar in Chrome browser to look up definitions)
- **Use social networks** (search for prior discussions and reach out through my own)
- **Use quotes around a single word** (to look for it exactly as I type it in)
- **Match the type of source to the information need** (images and videos were helpful)