

This lesson is a great supplement for teachers talking about various cultures that use masks. It aids in learning cultural awareness and provides some resources to get started.

Description

Objectives

1. To gain cultural awareness.
2. Show an understanding of facial characteristics from like symmetry or exaggeration.
3. Learn craftsmanship by creating a sculptural mask using paper mache.
4. Learn to be creative in their designs and choice of finishings.

Materials

- Blank Mask or Balloon
- Newspaper
- White Computer Paper
- Acrylic Paint & Brushes
- Various craft supplies like construction paper, sequins, pipe-cleaner, or anything that adds extra character to the mask.
- Elastic String
- School Glue
- Water
- Bowls for dipping
- Masking Tape
- Aluminum foil
- Scissors
- [Example Lesson](#)

Time Frame: 5, 50 min classes

Online Resources & Focus Art Ideas

Native American Masks

www.indians.org/articles/native-american-masks.html

Talks about the historical context of Native American Masks.

Mexican Masks

www.mexican-folk-art-guide.com/Mexican-masks.html

Talks about the historical context of Mexican masks, shows examples.

African Masks

www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-masks.html

Talks about the historical context of African masks, different types and shows examples.

Anticipatory Set

Present students with different masks from different cultures. Talk briefly about them— showing them at least one or two from each culture or if you're talking about one specific culture, show them 5 or 6 masks showcasing different facial expressions, animals or shapes. Show physical examples as well as digital ones.

Note

Depending on the technology available in your classroom, you may want to add a slideshow or bring physical examples of the paper-mâché masks. It's also a good idea to make one yourself before attempting this lesson to help the students have a visual aid.

Example Questions

- What expression do you think the mask is making?
- Do you think the mask is the same on both sides?
- Does this mask look real or is it an abstraction?

Lesson Procedure

Model

Show the students each step by doing your own.

Show

Write down or pass out the instructions after they have been modeled.

Participate

Help each student individually. Some may need more help than others.

Day 1 – Introduction

Discussion of masks in culture and planning stages of mask creation. Tie this mask into your cultural lesson. Model a mask you made.

Day 2 – Mask Creation

Use the mask creation steps and the 3 layers of paper mache. After the 3 layers, add any additional layers (eyebrows. Cheekbones, etc). Let it dry.

Day 3 – Creativity

Check the mask thickness, some students may need to modify their masks based on their designs. Paint and add designs.

Day 4 – Finish Process

Finish any details and let the mask dry. Provide students with a self-reflection.

Day 5 – Closure

Have them present, or talk about their masks to each other. Do a group reflection.

1. Plan the design—have paper and colored pencils available for the students to create their designs on paper before attempting to make their tribal or animal mask.
2. If using a balloon, blow it up to about the same size of the mask you'd like to make. Measure as best as you can, the distance between the nose for the eye holes, nose and mouth. Mark them with a black permanent marker so you can see and work around them. If you're using a blank mask, you're set for the next step.
3. Cut your newspaper into strips, with the grain of the print—the paper will tear easily. They should be roughly 6 inches long and 1 inch wide. You'll need enough newspaper to cover the mask 3 times plus any additional details you'll want to add.
4. Create the paste by mixing school glue and water in a large bowl. You'll want it to be thin and soupy consistency.
5. Next, you want to dip the strips of newsprint into the glue mixture and shake off the excess. If this does not work well, get the glue on your hands and place the strips on the mask. When you place the strips on the mask, flatten them down with your gluey hands. Remember to place the strips across the face horizontal or left to right. Take care of where the holes are and try to avoid them. You can always cut or reshape them later if they're not exactly right.
6. After they're placed across the face, let that layer dry before attempting the next layer. The next layer is done in the same way except vertical. Place the strips top to bottom.
7. Again, let the layer dry before doing the next layer which will be horizontal.
8. When you're 3 layers are dry, this is when you add details. Crumple up bits of paper to make different shapes, like eyebrows, ears or cheekbones. Then you use the masking tape to hold them in place on the mask. You can also use aluminum foil and extend the mask outward and make interesting shapes like ears or flower petals.
9. Once you've gotten the shape that you want, apply the white computer paper vertically across the mask. Let it dry. If you've used a balloon, this is when you get to pop it. Try the mask on and fix/cut the holes as needed for the eyes/nose/mouth. If you've used a mask, you can peel the mask out of the paper mache and fix any edges with masking tape and more paper mache.
10. Next step, paint and decorate the mask. Use different color paint and craft supplies to get the mask just right.

Tip for saving money: use recycled art supplies from older projects.

Vocabulary

Symmetry - mirroring or making two sides of an object or image the same.

Relief - three-dimensional object is raised from a flat base.

Sculpture - three-dimensional art made by one of four basic processes: carving, modeling, casting, constructing.

Abstraction - art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead use shapes, colors, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect.

Distortion - any change made by an artist to the size, shape or visual character of a form in order to express an idea, convey a feeling, or enhance visual impact.

Adornment - the adding of objects or ornaments to stylize an artwork.

Ritual - a performance that often has religious or spiritual meaning.

Exaggeration - to make something stand out to create emphasis or effect.

Realism - the accurate, detailed, unembellished depiction of nature or of contemporary life.

Assessments

Criteria for Assessment

Were Students:

- Able to follow directions?
- Able to create a representation of what they wanted to make?
- Able to create a unique design using elements provided to them?
- Able to share their mask with their peers?
- Able to convey why they created the mask (cultural awareness)?

Methods for Assessment

- Instructor checks for understanding and asks questions during the instruction.
- Instructor checks for understanding during the creation of the mask.
- Grades artwork based on the rubric provided.

California Visual Arts Standards

Creative Expression

Artistic Perception

Rubric	4	3	2	1
Creative Expression	Excellent: Added details and put careful thought into the design.	Good: Added details and put thought into the design.	Fair: Added a few simple details but put in minimal thought into the design.	Poor: Didn't think about the design at all. Had no creative expression.
Execution	Excellent: Followed the directions and the execution went well.	Good: Followed the directions but execution had minor problems.	Fair: Followed some directions but not all of them. Execution had problems.	Poor: Did not follow directions.
Artistic Reasoning	Understood all vocabulary and the assignment.	Learned most vocabulary words. Was mostly able to understand the assignment.	Learned a few vocabulary words. Had trouble understanding the assignment.	Did not use any artistic reasoning. Did not understand the assignment.