



SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

ART IMAGE 1-6 GRADE 4

Teacher's Guide by
M. Brière

Activity four: MASKS AND MAKE-UP

ARTWORKS :

AFRICAN ART, Initiation Mask (Catalog #4.1)

AMERINDIAN ART, Ceremonial Headdress (Catalog #4.2)

AMERINDIAN ART, Frontal of Headdress (Catalog #4.3)

MELANESIAN ART, Helmet Mask (Catalog #4.16)

SEEING ART ACTIVITY

CLASSROOM SCENARIO

Teacher's Presentation of Artists and Works

Halloween is coming soon and many children, including you, I'm sure, will be dressing up to go trick-or-treating from door to door. The disguises that most children wear on Halloween night are made up of two parts. The first part is a mask or make-up and/or headdress; the second part is a costume. Now, does anyone here know what the function of a mask is? To hide your face, yes, Gina. Why would you hide your face? So that you're not recognized, correct! You see, in the distant past, masks were worn for protection. Nowadays, masks are worn in order to make oneself unrecognizable; people wear masks and make-up on their faces in order to transform themselves into a different person – someone who is very different from who they really are. Why do people not want to be recognized, especially at times like Halloween? In most cases, it's because they want to become someone who is allowed to do things that they could not or would not do ordinarily, like begging, for instance.

The use of elaborate make-up and masks is a very ancient tradition, one that is found in all countries and among all peoples. What made people from other times, or from other countries, where Halloween is not celebrated, wear masks and make-up? For example why would a native of Central Africa or Japan wear a mask? Why would a Maori from New Zealand tattoo his face? Why would a Mexican or an Iroquois Indian wear a mask? Do they all want to become different

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people? In most cases, the answer is yes. That is, they want to become a special, sometimes holy, person one who can perform acts that an ordinary person is not able to perform or even understand. In most cases, native people who wear masks, make-up, and elaborate headdresses are acting as sorcerers or magicians. They are trying to become someone who is much more powerful than the average human being. The individuals who disguise themselves during rites and sacred ceremonies do not wear masks merely to have fun or entertain the other members of the tribe. Their main goal in putting on a particular disguise is to show their supernatural powers and inspire awe in the onlookers.

Today, we're going to look at four reproductions, each of which illustrates a full face mask. The person who wore such a mask, therefore, had two faces or identities: his own, and the one represented and created by the mask. Let's take the plainest mask; it was probably made by the Tsimshians, an Amerindian tribe that lived on Canada's northwest coast, right near the Pacific Ocean. The mask was found in 1932 but no one knows for sure when it was actually made. It is sculpted in wood, and painted; an inlay of colorful seashells decorates the entire circumference of the mask.

Q: Is there anything about this mask that you find especially interesting and intriguing? Ray, you like the inlay work that surrounds the mask? Harry, you like the simplicity of the face represented by the mask? You think the eyes are fascinating, Carol? Oh, they frighten you! Kenneth, you like the color of the seashells that form the teeth and surround the mask? Is this a scary mask, as Carol believes? You're not alone in thinking this, Carol. Do others think it is a funny mask? Is it a boring mask? Does it make you worried or upset? Etc.

Let's talk about this hairy mask (the African one): it is an initiation mask. It was worn by the priests, sorcerer, or shaman of a tribe in Central Africa on the day when the young boys of the tribe were initiated into manhood. These initiation rites were very demanding. The young initiates were expected to undergo all sorts of physical trials to prove their strength, endurance, and submission to the mystical teachings of their tribe, without shedding a single tear. In order for the priest to assume his sacred role on the day of the initiation ceremony, he wore a mask which everyone believed would give him very special supernatural powers. This particular mask comes from Zaire, a very large country in the center of Africa. Let's find Zaire on the globe; that's right Juanita, there it is!

Who would like to describe this mask? Is it very different from the first one we've just seen? Yes, in fact this one is much more complex than the previous one. Yes, Laurie, the face area is painted and it is quite small in relation to the whole mask. Yes, Kit, it is completely surrounded by simulated hair: in this case, by natural fibers that look like rugged ropes. That's right, Roger, it looks like a lion's mane; in fact, the natives of Zaire are very familiar with lions and they admire these animals for their strength. Believing that the lion's power is in his mane, they have duplicated it all around this mask in order to indicate that the individual who wears this mask is endowed with the lion's strength and power.

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That's right, Francine, above this face mask there is another mask-like form with several horns sticking out from it. Which African animals have horns on their heads? Yes, all the members of the deer family have horns; rhinoceros have two horns on their nose, one bigger than the other. Some members of the bovine or cow family, such as wild oxen, also have horns. Name some differences between the deer and the bovine types. Bernie? Nadia? What is the purpose of horns? Do animals who have them have an advantage over those who don't? That's right, they use them to defend themselves or their young against predators. In fact, horns have traditionally been the symbol of **defensive** and **offensive** weapons, because animals who have horns can use them either to defend themselves or to attack other animals.

This mask, therefore, symbolizes the transfer of the lion's strength and ferocity, as well as its ability to attack and defend itself, to whoever wears it. Can you describe some of the **decorative motifs** that appear on this mask? The colors? Etc.

Let's look at a third mask, the one with a bird and a fish. Like the first mask we've observed today, it comes from Canada's northwest coast along the Pacific, and was sculpted by the **Haida** Indians about one hundred and fifty years ago. It is the type of ceremonial headdress that the high priest or shaman of the tribe wore on top of his head; this mask covered only the upper part of the shaman's face.

Q: Who would like to describe this mask? Jim? Lorraine? Describe the fish; the bird. It is a crow, in fact. North American Indians have always regarded the crow as a sacred animal. In their legends, the crow is known as the creator of the world. Is this a **simple** or **elaborate** mask? Yes, it's much simpler than the African one, and it is more **ornate** than the other Amerindian mask we saw earlier. Do you find this mask scary? Surprising? Happy? Sad? Funny? Mysterious? Etc.

Q: Name some of the colors on this mask. Do you find these colors visually pleasing? Why? What do you think about the decorative motifs on the mask? Do you think that this mask has too much or too little decoration on it? Would you like to own it?

This is the fourth and last mask we're going to look at today; it comes from a very distant place. Have you ever heard of an island known as New Ireland? You've heard about Ireland, of course! But New Ireland is an altogether different place on the other side of the earth. It's in the South Pacific, near New Guinea. Let's find it on the globe.

This mask was used by the New Ireland natives during a ceremony known as the **Malanggan**. This particular ceremony was celebrated regularly, for two main reasons: to honor the members of the tribe who had recently died, and to initiate the young male members of the tribe.

It was a tribal tradition for each family to sculpt its own individual Malanggan mask in such a way that its form would represent and embody the ideals of the family members. However, all Malanggan masks had to be made in the shape of a helmet, which would completely cover the head and face of the person wearing it, much like the helmets worn by knights in the Middle Ages.

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Q: Who would like to describe this helmet-type mask? Yes, Kay, there seems to be an eye over here. What might these seashells represent? No one knows? Well, let's use our imagination and make up a use for them. Yes, Robert, they could represent teeth. Sophia, what does this strange shape over here suggest? That's possible; does anyone else have a different idea?

Q: Do you like this mask more than the other three we've seen today? Yes? No? Why do you prefer this mask, David? You think that it is more interesting and unusual than the other ones. That's a good reason. What don't you like about this mask, Sam? Which one do you prefer? The Haida mask? Why? Who else prefers the Haida mask? The African one? This seems to be a favorite! Why do you prefer the African mask, Chris? Valerie? Jerry?

MAKING ART ACTIVITY

Getting Started

Today, you are going to create a mask, either out of paper or directly on your face. We've seen four different types of masks in class, and I'm sure you must have seen many others during Halloween, as well as on television. I don't want you to do masks I've already seen, I'd like you to invent one: either a scary mask, or a funny one, or a mysterious one, or an ugly one. It would be a good idea to make a rough **sketch** of your mask before you start so that you can have some basic guidelines to follow. Not with a lead pencil, Nellie, with wax crayons or oil pastels! Your sketches are guidelines for your colors too, you know.

The mask you decide to make can cover your entire head, like a helmet, or it can cover only part of your face. The more unusual and exotic you can make your mask, the better! You may, if you wish, combine a paper mask with a make-up mask. Any questions? All right, you may begin.

Suggested Techniques and Materials

- drawing: water-soluble make-up sticks in assorted colors; small handmirrors.
- sculpture: assorted colored cardboard and papers; string and cord; oil pastels; glue; liquid tempera; etc.

SEEING Art Activity: The Child's Image

The teacher questions the students about the choice of motifs that appear on their masks. The children are asked to explain why they chose the colors, the forms, and the decorative motifs that they used, and to tell what their masks express and the impression they are meant to create.

If time permits, it would be a good idea to have the children visit several other classes wearing their masks. Later, the teacher could ask the students to explain how they felt when they had their masks on. Did they feel more or less shy than usual? More bold? More secure? Etc.

In any case, the teacher should definitely have a camera on hand to record this special event.

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Objectives

The students will:

- be sensitized to a non-realistic but figurative art form (art history, criticism, aesthetic appreciation);
- describe and identify the various forms and colors observed in the works of art presented in this activity (analysis, criticism, visual art vocabulary);
- be exposed to the sacred or supernatural aspect of masks and mask-making (social studies, symbolism);
- become familiar with the geographical locations in which the masks originate: Zaire, New Ireland and Canada's Pacific coast (geography);
- be sensitized to the various aspects of the mask theme through discussion and actively making and wearing their own masks (aesthetic appreciation, judgment, criticism, social studies);
- be encouraged to make subjective decisions regarding the symbolic meaning of the masks in the reproductions (affective development, aesthetic appreciation, criticism, judgment);
- be encouraged to choose their favorite art work (aesthetic appreciation, judgment);
- learn the meaning of **decorative motifs, ornate, sketch, simple** vs. **elaborate** (visual art vocabulary, verbal proficiency, criticism);
- learn about the Haidas, the Malanggan ceremony, initiation, etc. (social studies)

QUESTIONS ?

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