



Scrap Paper Mache – Han Dynasty & Greco-Roman Masks

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6th grade

Unit: Comparative Classical Civilizations in the Eastern Hemisphere

Essential Question: What can masks tell us about the civilizations that created them?

Instructional Outcome: Students will understand the culture of Chinese Han Dynasty by comparing and contrasting their masks to those of the Greco-Roman civilizations.

Materials:

Informational documents on the history, purpose, symbolism, & design of masks of the Chinese Han Dynasty, Athens, Sparta, & Roman Empire.

Images of Masks from the Chinese Han Dynasty, Athens, Sparta, & the Roman Empire.

Han: www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/61084

Athens: <http://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?ft=greek+masks&x=0&y=0>

Sparta: <http://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?ft=greek+masks&x=0&y=0>

Roman: <http://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?ft=roman+masks>

Glue, milk jugs (can be reused), newspaper, paint, any design elements that are available (ex: feathers, beads, etc.)

CCLS:

6.5c A period of peace, prosperity, and **cultural achievements** may be indicative of a golden age.

RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.6.2 Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

W.6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry where appropriate.

Academic and Content Vocabulary: culture, disguise, contrast, symbolic, primitive

Activity:

- Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with pictures of masks from three cultures, but do not tell students where they are from. All groups can work on the same three masks, or you can vary the assortment.
- Have the groups produce a brief catalog description for each mask, including a description of its appearance and hypotheses about its use and where it comes from. Students can imagine themselves museum curators or appraisers like those on the popular public television program, *Antiques Road Show*.

Share: Have a representative from each group present their favorite mask to the class. Encourage discussion by raising questions about the kinds of information students gathered through observation and the bases for their hypotheses. For example: How can you tell the difference between a smiling mask and one that is snarling or threatening to bite? Can the meaning of facial expressions differ from culture to culture?

Discussion (extended):

- Why might it be important to record things like the number of feathers or horns on a mask? What could such details symbolize? How can we tell if they are symbolic?



materials for the arts

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- How should we interpret the coloring of a mask? How can we tell if it is symbolic, a reflection of the skin color of the people who made the mask, or just a result of the material they used?
- What part might stereotyping play in our conclusions about where a mask was made and what it is used for? Should we think of masks as part of "primitive" culture? Should we look at them as portraits of the people who wear them? What can the style and material of a mask suggest about its origins and purpose?

Cooperative group activity: In their groups, students read the document about their assigned cultures masks and complete the graphic organizer questions.

Closure question: What influenced the design of your mask?

Do Now (day 2): Students watch the “how to make a Paper Mache mask” video clip.

<http://www.howcast.com/videos/180137-how-to-make-a-papier-mache-mask/> (skipping the white computer paper step.)

Activity (day 2):

- Using the completed graphic organizer and images of masks from the MET, students design a mask from their assigned civilization.
- Using the steps they learned from the online video clip, students begin creating their paper Mache mask.
- While they wait for their masks to dry students write a 3-paragraph essay describing their mask citing evidence from their document to explain the cultural significance behind their design for their mask.

Activity (day 3):

- Students complete the design portion of their masks.
- After their masks are complete students can peer-edit each other’s 3 paragraph essays.

Activity (day 4):

- Students share what they have learned in their graphic organizers and complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the civilizations of their classmates to their assigned civilization.

Assessment: Students display their work at their tables and circulate the room using the peer-evaluation sheet to offer feedback to their classmates.

Closure question: Compare and contrast how the masks of classical civilizations influenced by culture and environment?