



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume III: Art and Artifacts: the Cultural Meaning of Objects

Common Ground: Masks From a Cultural Perspective

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.03.06
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COMMON GROUND: MASKS FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE has been developed to stir young minds to experience the interconnectedness of art and the human experience, and to help children recognize that by examining other cultures, we learn about ourselves. The unit is also intended to encourage teachers to bring the celebration of diversity and the philosophy of respecting the beauty of all cultures to life by exploring cultures outside of their own.

In general, students will take a look at Native American and African culture. These two groups have been selected because they are suited for the Social Studies framework established in our school for primary grade levels. Targeted at students in Grades 1 and 2, but modifiable to include Grades 3 to 5, COMMON GROUND takes a general look at Native American and African culture, a close-up look at the use and creation of masks by these cultures, and concludes with two exciting hands on mask-making activities and a creative writing effort to accompany student mask creations.

This curriculum unit serves as a perfect complement for seasonal holidays that occur from October through February, bringing in a new perspective to the use of masks and costumes and a new respect for the cultures that create them.

Overall, it is the author's hope that COMMON GROUND will serve as a springboard to foster enthusiastic learning, and a climate where diversity is welcomed, embraced, and celebrated!

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