



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

Masks and the Stories behind Them

Curriculum Unit 98.03.07
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This unit will look at the stories that go with masks from two cultures. We will learn about I. Native American masks used by tribes that lived in the Northeastern United States.. These include these Algonquian-speaking: Micmac, Pequot, Delaware, Chippewa, and Masochist. We will include the Iroquois-speaking: Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Seneca and Onondaga. Also we will look to the Pacific Northeast embracing: Haida, Tlingit, Chinook, and Kwakiutl.

A comparison will be made with II. African masks, mostly from Central and East Africa, including Uganda, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania.

Masks can be made of clay, leather, raffia, metal, leather, fur, beads, wood and various other materials. They are made for various reasons including protection, disguise from real or imaginary dangers and foes, to honor ancestors, gods, animals and spirits; or for a ceremony. Particularly in a ceremony, as soon as we put on a mask, we change into someone else, perhaps the spirit represented by the mask. To assist in successful hunting, animal masks may be worn. Masks were also worn for entertainment and storytelling, to cure the sick or to protect the wearer from diseases. Ancestors might be depicted and venerated in exchanged for safe hunting and well being. Masks were part of a full costume and used with music and dance in ritual performances. There was a symbolic and religious significance to these ceremonies. The creativity shown by mask creators and wearers of masks inspires student to learn about the cultures.

Attaching magical powers to masks is a perspective we can still see in modern times. Consider the movie, "THE MASK" which was rated one of the top ten movies of 1995. In this movie, the main character changes into the person he wants to be, when he finds and puts on an unusual looking mask.

We will also look at masks of today. The reasons masks are used in present times will be discussed and compared with the reasons masks were used in earlier times. Some masks of today are protective, used when playing various sports, such as hockey, baseball or scuba diving. Medical personnel, dentists, nurses and doctors usually wear a mask when doing their job. Costumes and uniforms can be considered a form of body masks, and cosmetics are a form of mask for the face.

According to C. J. Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist who founded analytical psychology, people possess three parts to their personality. There is the inner "I," also known as the ego; a hidden persona, usually unrevealed, known as the shadow; and a mask or persona which forms the outer personality as seen by the world. A child at a beginning stage of growth develops a mask of suitable behavior as a defense mechanism. This can occur

when unruly behavior results in punishment and having to have a “time out” until a child says that he or she is sorry. Although not really sorry at all, claiming to be means release from punishment. Thus that unacceptable part of a child’s personality might be masked. Jung believed that the parts of our personality that we wish to repress are in the shadow. One of the meanings of shadow, from “The Oxford English Dictionary” is a reflected image. A person may want to be considered honest and kind and thus suppress his or her dishonest and nasty side. It is said that by defining what we dislike in another person, we can see our own shadow and gain some understanding into a part of our own personality that we keep masked. Jung felt that it was necessary to confront all aspects of our own personality.

Shadows and masks are often met as themes in children’s literature as they are essential elements of personality. Some people are considered to be insincere when the mask that they wear is artificial. But in fact, we all wear a mask in public, the mask of how we want others to see and judge us. Everyone’s mask is different. One person wants to be seen as confident, another as knowledgeable, another as helpful. These are all positive masks, however our hidden persona can also be positive.

I will talk with my fourth and fifth grade classes about this fascinating subject. We all have inner selves, whether we know them or not. Do you know your inner self? Is it a happy playful self or a dark and brooding self? There will be an opportunity for all to share their thoughts.

We will discuss other shadows in literature, such as Peter Pan’s shadow, and the shadow poem by Robert Louis Stevenson. A writing component will follow with an option for students to either write about or draw their inner self, or to do both. Selected papers will be showcased on a bulletin board. The students and I will then discuss the significance of the following poem by Rachel Fields.

MY INSIDE-SELF by Rachel Field

My Inside-Self and my Outside-Self
Are as different as can be.
My Outside-Self wears gingham smocks,
And very round is she,
With freckles sprinkled on her nose,
And smoothly parted hair,
And clumsy feet that cannot dance
In heavy shoes and square.

But, oh, my little Inside-Self-

In gowns of misty rose
She dances lighter than a leaf
On blithe and twinkling toes;
Her hair is blowing gold, and if
You chanced her face to see,
You would not think she could belong
To staid and sober me!

We will discuss the vocabulary, including these words: gingham, misty, blithe, twinkling, staid and sober. Students will create their own poems about their "Inside-Selves."

Just as in reality, in literature a mask may be worn to protect, to disguise the wearer and to give one a substitute identity. Ancient cultures often had a belief that masks would protect the wearer from the spirits that might do them harm. Conversely, masks were believed to safeguard the wearer through association with a spirit depicted by wearing that spirit's mask.

I will share a church-going story about dressing in our best clothes and being on our best behavior. One of the books that I will read aloud is *Sunday* by Synthia Saint James. The dynamic and strong illustrations feature an African American family spending a Sunday together. They are "dressing in our Sunday best." Does how we are dressed affect how we behave? Do the students feel different according to how they are dressed? How about wearing school uniforms? Do they feel more cooperative and eager to learn when they dress the part? Is dressing up for church a way of honoring God and our parents?

Working as a School Library Media Specialist at Davis Street Magnet School, a kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school, my interaction with students has been to use stories to enhance and facilitate their learning. With this unit I will employ another approach, to start with an object and then hear the story of this object. We will, in effect, assign a voice to this wordless relic as we tell its story through the clues we detect. My objective will be to have my students utilize the three-stage methodology of object analysis as used by art historians.

Since I work with all the students in our school and collaborate with their teachers to provide learning experiences at each grade level, I will be planning and presenting some aspects of this unit to all of our students, kindergarten through fifth grade. With the Library Power Grant, Library Media time is expected to be a collaboration with the classroom teacher and the Library Media Specialist. This collaboration is very beneficial to the students, as their classroom teacher knows how better to interact with and what can be expected of each child. Presenting with a second adult often gives an extra dimension to the learning experience.

The portion of my unit that encompasses I. Native Americans and their masks was incorporated into a unit planned this summer at our yearly Library Power Summer Institute. The planning was done with teachers from two New Haven Elementary Schools: Davis Street School and Beecher School. It was a superlative collaborative venture because this collaboration is not just planned to take place between a School Library Media Specialist (L.M.S.) and classroom teachers, it is also between two separate schools. Involved are a Special Education Primary (second grade) teacher, Mrs. Patricia Shultz, and myself from Davis School and two fifth grade teachers, Mrs. Lisa Pietrosimone and Mrs. Zoila Brown, along with their L.M.S., Mrs. Jean Gallogly from Beecher School. Another second grade will be included from Davis and I will include my fifth graders from the Library Media Center Assistant Club, L.M.C.A.C. We planned our unit using certain tools that were provided for us. These included a role planning sheet and evaluation sheets to rate both our efforts at that workshop and those of our students. Using the evaluation sheet, or rubric, each student can grade his or her own work.

Using a planning sheet ensures that the roles of teachers and Library Media Specialists are planned and recorded. The two Library Media Specialists have the job of setting up "key pals" between our two schools. Each student, utilizing computer technology can send email to a teacher selected "key pal" and share information. This is incorporating the philosophy that a good method for learning information is to teach that information to another. Using our computers is an enjoyable and exciting learning experience that holds the interest of the students that are involved.

Another job handled by the school L. M. S. is showing samples of available resources and technology on the Internet and on CD-ROMs. Storytelling about Native American masks would also be handled by the L. M. S. at each school.

The Library Club fifth graders at Davis assist with technology projects and research done by younger students. The updating of our school web page, where we will feature the progress of this unit along with other collaborative units that we wish to showcase, will also be one of their responsibilities.

The teachers in the planned unit have the assignment of working with their students to explain and create the project. Supervising students with an assignment of a tribe to research in small groups in the L.M.C. is a teacher duty. The teachers will plan for members of the two schools to take a field trip together, and will plan a visit from an authentic Native American speaker. Teaching students about Native American Pow-wows will introduce our students to the culture. We plan to publicize these activities to our parents and to the community

A Field Trip possibility is a visit to the newly opened Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center opening in August of 1998. Admission for student groups is \$5.00 per child. Information is displayed through interactive computer programs, exhibits and life size dioramas and art and crafts by Native Americans.

The two Library Media Specialists will be available to assist in any of these activities and will help with the planning of the Pow-wow. Our Pow-wow, involving the coming together of our two schools for food and festivities will serve as a culminating activity.

Also, our special teachers will join in the unit to benefit the students even more. The mask-making project is to be a collaboration with the art teachers. Our music teacher can share some Native American music. Native American games can be learned during gym and taught to our key pals during our Pow-wow.

We will be mindful of the sacredness of some masks. Through research on the Internet,

(<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/NativeTech/cornhusk/maskpoli.html>) I came across a policy statement from the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee, the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, concerning all medicine masks of the Haudenosaunee. "Wooden and corn husk masks of the Haudenosaunee are sacred and only to be used for sacred purposes. Public exhibition of these masks is forbidden. The masks are supposed to remain hidden." Respecting this policy, we are only to mention these masks to students. These masks are not allowed to be crafted.

Story telling of Native American tales will be featured in the L.M.C. with displays and bulletin boards advertising our unit. Interesting facts about various tribes will be shared by the Library Media Specialists. I will now share some of those facts and anecdotes.

Did you know that Iroquois medicine men made false face masks from living trees to mystify and drive away the evil spirits that caused sickness? Their belief is that if a mask is carved into a living tree, it keeps the spirit of the tree within the mask and it contains very powerful medicine. To baffle the evil spirits, which only had gruesome faces without bodies, and to cure sickness, the masks were carved with horrifying expressions. As the medicine men danced while wearing the masks, the spirits became confused and frightened. They ran away and took the sickness with them. A cured patient becomes a medicine man and carves his own mask.

A Native American tribe, the Kwakiutl (pronounced KWAH-kee-eu-tul) were hunters, fishermen and craftsmen. They are known for their elaborate rituals and masks, including the legend of the spirit Echo. The Kwakiutl belief was that the spirit world controlled many things around them. Echo was a spirit who mimicked everything. Their art portrays Echo as represented by a figure with raised hands framing the mouth.

The mask made for Echo has different mouths that are attached and removed as different sounds are mimicked. Large clenched teeth could portray a scary creature and a beak would depict a bird creature, such as Raven, who, some Northwestern tribes believed, created the world.

We will discuss what an echo is and share a story about Echo. Then an Echo spirit mask can be made with cardboard cut into a face shape. We would use masking tape, Velcro, raffia, glue, paint, newspaper and papier-mâché materials.

Here are the steps to make your own Echo mask:

Form the forehead, nose and eyebrows from crumpled newspaper.

Fold paper to form rings for the eyes.

Ears can be cut from cardboard and taped onto the head.

The creation can be covered with papier-mâché strips as directed below. This medium is easy to work with and does not stain clothing. It is easier to clean up before it dries so keep a wet sponge nearby.

Mix flour and water together to achieve a paste like consistency.

Put strips of newspaper in the paste and squeeze them together. (The paper should become soft and sticky.)

Apply the strips to the mask.

When the strips dry, paint the mask, and add raffia hair.

Form different mouth shapes with paper mache and newspaper. They can be attached with Velcro.

Totem poles originated with the Kwakiutl people. The totem showed the animals that a family felt kinship with, and which became a symbol for that clan. Some believed that the family was descended from that animal. A totem, which might contain an eagle, bear, raven or killer whale, is similar in idea to a family coat of arms.

A supplementary activity that would illustrate that idea to students is for each to design his or her own family crest. Either on the computer or by hand, with fancy lettering, students will write and decorate their last name. They will include a drawing of an animal that they admire and wish to emulate. This animal might be the bear for its strength, the salmon for its swiftness or the fox for its cleverness.

The Haida, who are known as a creative people, lived along the Canadian coast into Northwest United States, an area with an abundance of natural resources. Along with the Kwakiutl, they are known for their woodcarvings, particularly totem poles, and the ceremony called the potlatch. This ritual was a party where the host and his kin would explain how prosperous and fortunate their family was. They would then give away many gifts, such as furs, blankets, and copper plates to their guests. This gave tremendous status to the host.

The Chinook were a tribe of traders, artists and fishermen. The word Chinook meaning the strong winds blowing from the western Pacific and Chinook salmon are associated with these Native Americans.

Another tribe associated with salmon is the Tlingit. (klink it) Totem pole carvers, woodworkers, weavers and fishermen, they live in Southern Alaska and the Coastal islands of British Columbia. They would first soak the fibers of grasses and roots, then weave them very skillfully and tightly. This resulted in cooking baskets so tightly woven that they are waterproof.

In the Northeast, the Micmac people are known for their craftsmanship and for being fisherman and hunter-gathers. Hearing the Micmac tribe's story, "Little Burnt-Face," students will be reminded of the story of Cinderella. We will use a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences between the two stories. If other versions, such as Little Cinderella, Yah-Shen: A Chinese Cinderella and an African American one can be located, they will be included.

The Algonquain (Al gon ke an), also Algonquin and Algonkin, includes a great many tribes that use a similar language. The Eastern Algonquian people were believed to be the first Native Americans to meet the explorers from Europe. Many of these tribes lived in the Great Lakes area and the eastern woodlands. The Chippewa (called Ojibway in Canada) were Algonquain speaking and lived in the Great Lakes area. They were a powerful tribe, famed for the Midewiwin, (the Grand Medicine Society). They were known as healers, artists, farmers and fishermen.

The Mohawk are "the people of the flint country." Involved in 1886 with the very first bridge constructed across the St. Lawrence River, their fearlessness with heights is put to good use today. They often work as steelworkers who can work at great heights on bridges and skyscrapers.

The "people of the standing stone," the Oneida tribe, lived in longhouses and villages. Presently they live in Canada, New York and Wisconsin. In the past and continuing now in the present, each Oneida belongs to a clan, which is like a large family. One can be a member of the bear clan, the wolf clan and the turtle clan. A totem pole of that animal is displayed in the longhouse. All clans are named after animals.

The Delaware call themselves the Lenni Lenape which means "true men". They are known as the "grandfather people" to many eastern tribes.

Cayuga (Ki yoo ga) were known as the “people of the marsh”. They called their tribe, Gueugwehono (goo way oh no) which means, “People of the Mucky Land.” They lived in marshy wetlands around Lake Cayuga, New York. Their belief is that dreams are important and always should be considered. There is a tradition that if an individual has a wish during a dream, the whole tribe attempts to grant that wish. Original members of the Five Tribes of the Iroquois League, the Cayuga now reside in New York and Canada.

The Onondaga tribe are “people of the hills,” “keepers of the wampum” and “keepers of the council fire” for the Iroquois League. As semi nomads, they had portable hide-covered tents or bark-covered wigwams.

The “fox people” or “the destroyers” was the name for the Pequot. They were powerful in war, although almost wiped out in early Colonial times. They recovered and now operate successful tribal enterprises. Tribal headquarters are the Paucatuck Pequot Reservation in North Stonington, CT and the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation in Ledyard, CT.

The Senecas are called “people of the great hill.” They have three reservations in western New York. Hunters, medicine people and farmers, they had an oral tradition of handing down laws and traditions through the generations. Using wampum - beads arranged into significant patterns, often worn as belts - they could tell their stories.

We will want to convey to our students that many people today have a Native American heritage even if they have blond hair and blue eyes. Native Americans today work in many varied fields. They can be teachers, doctors, writers, actors, musicians and have a host of other occupations.

Research on the cultures that produced certain masks will be conducted according to the Big Six skills. This research method is endorsed by our Comprehensive School Plan and by our Library Power Initiative. We will begin this unit in October and have our students begin researching various Native American tribes using each of the Big Six skills which are described on the following pages.

Task Definition. Students first need to know the question that they are assigned to answer. Their question will be, “What Native American tribe will I join?” Stated in another way: “What must I do to be a member of a certain tribe.” We will give the students a magical opportunity to travel back in time and be a member of a Native American tribe for a special day, our Pow-wow. An evaluation sheet, also known as a rubric, will be given to the students for at least three of the student activities: the mask project, the oral presentation and the key pal project.

What is different about the various tribes? Students decide as they research in small groups in the Library Media Center. Each research group will explain what they liked about their tribe as they present a short oral report. Each student will send email to a key pal to share the information that they learned about their tribe. A mask will then be made by each student that represents the tribe he or she has chosen.

If possible, actual masks will be examined by the students. I will also have posters and pictures of masks decorating the Library Media Center. A map showing the Northeast tribes will hang on the wall. Books containing masks will be available. Books containing legends in which masks are worn will be included.

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian web page (<http://www.si.edu/nmai>) has many examples of Native American masks. Via the Internet, we can view collections of masks, participating in a virtual field trip.

After viewing and learning about them, students will make the mask that represents their chosen tribe. It will be possible for students to wear their mask on our annual harvest walk, held at the end of October. At our elementary school, the entire school community traditionally takes this harvest walk. Kindergartens through fifth grades participate, either on Halloween or, should the holiday fall on a weekend, on the nearest possible day.

Information Seeking Strategies. Students, teachers and L.M.S. will brainstorm about the range of possible sources and evaluate the sources. We will decide what the students will use to find the information that they need.

Time will be scheduled for small groups to be supervised in the Library Media Center. The difference between a primary source and a secondary source will be explained. Our artifact masks are a primary source, and although silent can tell us a lot about a culture.

Many secondary sources will be examined, both print and nonprint, including nonfiction books; encyclopedias both in book form and on CD-ROMs; CD-ROMS other than the encyclopedias, Atlases; Globes; Video Tapes; and Internet website bookmarked for the students' research.

@Text:Location and Access. After students decide where to look for information, they will pursue facts in the sources that answer their essential question. We will decide what has the best information and evaluate whether students need to be taught skills in order to use each source. For example, does the student understand that an encyclopedia is in alphabetical order, as is an index? Students using the Internet will be taught about key word searches, using a student search engine such as Yahoo!igans. Helpful sites found ahead by teachers, the L.M.S., and helpers and will be bookmarked for safe and easy access. At all times we will follow our Internet policy requiring that students be supervised while surfing the world wide web.

Information Use requires the student to read the information and pick out what is important and relevant to his or her report. A session on note taking, skimming for information and using guide words will be conducted. As important points are recorded by individual students or a group recorder, students learn to give credit and cite their sources.

Synthesis and analysis directs each student to organize his or her information. This may be done in outline form, with color-coded notes, a chart, web or with a Venn diagram comparing two tribes.

An oral report will be prepared and given on what was learned. These presentations will be five minutes in length. Visual aids will be required. Each member of a group will give his or her own five-minute report.

Planned into each day is a session for students to send email to their key pals to share what they have learned. During computer use and various activities, pictures will be taken to put on our web site.

For Student self evaluation each student is to decide if he or she found a tribe that they wanted to join. Was enough information found? Did he or she convince others when presenting the report orally?

The students will also do a self-rating on how well he or she worked on their project. Did they tell their key pal about their tribe? Just as in real life, it will be possible to go back and improve their work if necessary. Did they have enough time? Was the level of difficulty appropriate? Was appropriate assistance available?

Evaluation tools called rubrics will be arranged for the oral presentation and email project. Students will assist in the preparation of these rubrics. Using the rubrics, students will evaluate themselves.

A rubric follows that is provided for the mask that each student will create. We used the rubric that was originally created for a diorama and adapted it to fit our mask project. This rubric is part of a collection that will be available on the Internet from the New Haven Public School home page. It is based on K. Michael Hibbard's materials from Pomperaug Regional School District 15. This school district includes Woodbury and Southbury and is known for displaying consistently high CT Mastery Test Scores each year.

Classroom Assessment List: A Rubric for Making a Mask

Elementary School

1. Plan Drawing

Terrific: I drew a clear plan to show what my mask would look like.

O.K.: I drew a somewhat clear plan to show what my mask would look like.

Needs Work: I didn't draw a plan or it was not clear

. 2. Mask Description

Terrific: My written description is detailed.

O.K.: My written description lacks some details.

Needs Work: I didn't write a description

3. Materials List

Terrific: I made a complete list of materials used to make my mask.

O.K.: I made a partial list of materials used to make my mask.

Needs Work: I did not make a materials list.

4. Detailed Model of Mask

Terrific: My mask has details and looks like the real thing.

O.K.: My mask has some details and looks a little like the real thing.

Needs Work: My mask has little detail or doesn't look realistic.

5. Accuracy

Terrific: My mask shows accurate use of information and facts for the subject.

O.K.: My mask shows accurate use of information.

Needs Work: My mask is not accurate.

6. Creativity

Terrific: My mask is original and shows creativity.

O.K.: My mask is similar to others but shows some creativity.

Needs Work: My mask is a copy of another mask.

7. Color and labels

Terrific: I used color and labels so that my mask is accurate and easy to understand.

O.K.: I used color and labels so that my mask is somewhat accurate and easy to understand.

Needs Work: I did not use color or labels, or they are not clear and accurate.

8. Presentation

Terrific: My mask is very sturdy, neat and presentable.

O.K.: My mask is somewhat sturdy, neat and presentable.

Needs Work: My mask is not sturdy, neat or presentable.

Did I do my best work?

II. African masks will be examined with a different group of students. This unit will begin in September. An extraordinary exhibit of African art, including masks is featured online at <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/dic/exhib/93.ray.aa/About.html> in the Electronic Exhibition Catalog. On other web sites, students from various schools have exhibits of masks and other art on the web. As we surf and view these student created masks, we will be inspired to create our own masks and put pictures of them on our own school web page.

A trip will be planned to take two classes to view the mask collection at the New York City Museum of Natural History. This culminating activity will be engineered through a collaboration with a teacher and friend at Davis, Mrs. Waltrina Mullins, who is also a Yale New Haven Teachers Institute Fellow.

For a beginning activity and introduction to this unit, students will meet with me to create our own storybook masks and write our own stories about them. We will use favorite stories as an inspiration. Students will discuss stories that they heard and have taken to heart. Each child will be inspired to decorate a mask for a character in a remembered tale.

Our creations will be in the form of a decorated false face, cut from a paper plate and decorated with a variety of different materials including paint, glitter, yarn, feathers, or raffia. Along with each classroom teacher, the art teacher will also assist with suggestions and materials.

A stick like center or side handle will give us an easy way of wearing and holding our masks. I will be able to laminate the finished products to give sturdiness and longevity to the creations.

This activity will be offered in the fall as the holiday that we associate with the masquerade approaches. Students can wear their masks as we celebrate Halloween on our schoolwide Harvest walk.

Additional activities will include creating masks in an African style in a small pendant size which can be laminated and worn on a leather strap. We can also make large poster sized masks. Students will be encouraged to draw a masked face on the computer, utilizing the different colors available on the color printer. Each creation is to be accompanied by a writing component, either describing the mask or telling the story that the mask represents. For third, fourth and fifth graders, time will be scheduled for the students to use the L.M.C. computers to type their mask stories, which they must write out first in longhand. This activity is a perfect lead in to a word processing lesson utilizing the Student Writing Center Word Processing software.

Beginning with a brief introduction of how to open a new file, students will learn the basics. This includes how to keyboard, how to save a file and how to print. More accomplished students will be asked to assist those that are just learning their way around the keyboard.

The finished stories will be displayed in a bulletin board, showcasing the student created masks. With Hyperstudio software, more computer savvy students will have an opportunity to create multi media presentations.

When describing the masks of long ago and of today, we will utilize the methodology advocated by Yale Professor, Jules David Prown, in his article entitled: "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method."

With students, an artifact mask will be displayed and the students will be asked to give a physical description

of the article. A ruler, tape measure and a scale will be provided, and we will measure and weigh the mask. With second or third grades and up, recording our observations on a large sheet of chart paper can involve the entire class. Students can come up to the paper and record our answers. With the younger students, I will have the teacher or teacher assistant do the writing. I will ask, "What materials were used in our mask?" We will list those materials. As we examine the articulation of the mask, I will ask, "How are these materials joined together?" To put this examination activity in library words, we are cataloguing our mask.

Next we examine the iconography of the mask. "Is there any writing on the object?" I will ask. The students are to describe any and all markings present. "Is there engraving, carving, or painting?" Many of these words will need to be explained to the students. As we describe the mask, we continue to write down the words we use. We discuss how the mask feels in our hands. Is it rough? Has it been sanded smooth? Does it fit well in our hands?

The second step will be to foster and then examine a relationship between the object, the students and myself. Students have a chance to handle the mask. They can wear it and look at themselves in a mirror as they decide if they feel as differently as they look while wearing the mask. I know that the children that I will be working with may find the masks comical, repulsive, terrifying or nonsensical. They will not have a frame of reference in the beginning of this unit in order to judge the masks. However, as they are shown other masks and hear the fascinating tales that accompany the masks, they will have a more mature and educated outlook.

The third step, speculation, will again involve many questions. We will discuss whether an adult or a child wore this mask. When was this mask worn? Where was the wearer of this mask living, what did they think about and hope for as they looked through these eyeholes? Was the wearer of the mask afraid? Very confident? Respected? Despised? Important? Nameless? What results did they get when wearing this mask? What results did they want?

I will ask, "How do you feel about this mask, do you like it? If you owned it, would you hang it on the wall in your bedroom or would you hide it away where no one would see it?" After my students express themselves orally in our session, we will have a writing component. Each student will describe the mask and write a story about how the mask was used. They will get the chance to keyboard their prose. Using the computer's built-in microphone feature, students will have an opportunity to read aloud their mask story into the computer and incorporate a picture showing each student with the mask.

A story with an African mask and characters with African heritage will be presented. *Celie and the Harvest Fiddler* by Vanessa and Valerie Flourney, illustrated with paintings by James E. Ransome, takes place in the 1870's on the bewitching evening of All Hallow's Eve. A mysterious and magical fiddler appears to a young girl. He offers to let her wear an African mask that has mystical and mystifying powers. Is it true that the mask grants wishes? Each student will then design and write a story about a mask that grants wishes. These will decorate a bulletin board and be featured on our school web page.

We will look at *An African Mother Goose: Jaha and Jamil Went Down the Hill* by Virginia Kroll and illustrated by Katherine Roundtree. A mask is pictured on the page right next to a poem. I will read the rhyme to my classes. It is fun to say, easy to learn and we will all learn it.

"MASK, MASK"

Mask, mask, what a task
To carve an expression dread,
Scaring, delighting,
Bewaring, exciting,
With feathers on its head.

With the younger students, we will write a poem about masks together, such as the following:

Mask, mask
Instead of buying,
I made you myself.
Now you'll stay on the shelf,
Because you are so
terrifying.

I will encourage older students to write their own. The poems can be included on our school web page.

Africa, the second largest continent, has many diverse and fascinating people and cultures. A large percentage of our New Haven communities have their heritage there. To learn about their heritage, student created multi-media projects will be produced and housed in the L.M.C. for all to view.

Fifth grade students will research an African country for extra credit and will use Hyperstudio software to produce a multi-media show of their own. Their report will be shown during a PTO parent night and on other occasions.

A map will be displayed of the continent of Africa. Names of the countries in Central and East Africa will be written on slips of paper. The student will draw a slip from a container, (perhaps a mask inverted to be a bowl like object.) These eight countries will be researched: Uganda, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, home of the Masai tribe. Each student will decide on five questions that they want to answer about their country.

Suggestions for questions include: What do people eat in your chosen country? Tell about recipes found. What kinds of animals are seen in your chosen country? If you lived in that country, what job might you have? What is the history of your country? How is your chosen country similar to a region in the United States? How is it

different? What is the currency of the country? What places of interest can I visit in your country? To demonstrate, using Yahoo! as a search engine, I will go to a web site and like magic we will climb Mt. Kilimanjaro and watch the animals on the Serengeti.

Teacher Bibliography

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Eisenberg, Mike and Berkowitz, Bob. *The Big Six Skills to Information Problem-Solving*. Flounoy, Valerie and Vanessa. *Celie and the Harvest Fiddler Tambourine Books*, 1995. Haslem, Andrew. *North American Indians: A Hands on Approach to History*. Scholastic, 1995. Herold, Erich. *Tribal Masks from the Naprstek Museum, Prague*. Hamlyn, 1967. Hunt, Ben. *Complete Book of Indian Crafts and Lore* Golden Press, 1954. Kavasch, E. *Barrie Earth Maker's Lodge: Native American Folklife Activities and Foods*. Cobblestone Publishing, 1994 Kroll, Virginia *An African Mother Goose: Jaha and Jamil Went Down the Hill*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 1995 Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Way of the Masks* University of Washington Press, 1982. Murdoch, David *North American Indians* Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. *Papier-Mache A Whitman Creative Art Book* Western Publishing Company, 1967. Paterek, Josephine, *Encyclopedia of American Indian Costume* W.W.Norton & Company, 1993. Prown, Jules David "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 1982), 1-19. Saint James, Synthia Sunday *Albert Whitman & Company*, 1996. Smith, A. G. *Cut and Make African Masks in Full Color* Dover Publications, 1991

Internet URLs

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian web page (<http://www.si.edu/nmai>)
<http://www.jan.brett.com/activities> <http://www.lib.uconn.edu/NativeTech/cornhusk.html>
<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/dic/exhib/93.ray.aa/African.html> <http://www.odsnet.com/blackmambahomepage/welcome.html>
<http://199.179.28.2/dms> <http://204.98.1.2/isu/nativeam/respect.html>

List of Materials Needed

paper in various sizes, thickness, and colors

masking tape, Velcro, feathers, raffia, glue, paint, beads, newspaper and Papier-mache materials.
(flour and water)

Student Bibliography

Bacon, Ron. Masks Shortland Publications Limited, 1990. A Coloring Book of American Indians Bellerophon Books, 1997
Copeland, Peter F. Indians Tribes of North America Coloring Book Dover Publications, 1990. "Crafts' Corner Continued: Mini-Mask Necklaces". Viverretta, Tracy. Kid's Press / A Bimonthly Magazine for Kids and Their Parents Volume 3, No. 2, 1998. Duvall, Jill D. A New True Book: The Cayuga Children's Press, 1991. Duvall, Jill D. A New True Book: The Oneida Children's Press, 1992. Duvall, Jill D. A New True Book: The Seneca Children's Press, 1991. Force, Roland, The American Indians Chelsea House Publishers, 1991. Fox, Frank, North American Indians: Color and Story Album Troubador Press, 1995. Gorsline, Douglas. North American Indians Random House, 1977 Greene, Jacqueline Dembar, The Chippewa Franklin Watt, 1993 Miller, Jay, The Delaware Children's Press, 1994. Miller, Jay, Native Americans Children's Press, 1993. Osinski, Alice, A New True Book: The Tlingit Children's Press, 1992. <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/dic/exhib/93.ray.aa/About.html> this web site shows an exhibit of African art, including masks and other artifacts

World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1997 by KILL Reference Corporation

<http://199.179.28.2/dms>

<http://www.odsnet.com/blackmambahomepage/welcome.html>

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