

Inuit Masks



Artistic Emphasis

Masks have been created since nearly the beginning of recorded history by nearly every culture in the world. They play different roles in different cultures, and have been used throughout the centuries for spiritual reasons, entertainment and personal decoration. They are made in a style that is representative of the art of their particular culture, out of locally available materials. Masks and their creation have much to tell us about the culture they belong to. The Inuit, in the northernmost regions of North America, use the symbolic language of their masks as a way to pass down the stories and lessons of their culture.

Project Description

This is a two part project. On the first day students make a papier mache mask over a milk-jug form. About a week later they decorate their mask with paint and feathers.

Advance Preparation (part one)

- Schedule **two** dates with your teacher, about **a week apart**, so the paper mache has time to dry thoroughly. Remember to check the on-line calendar for conflicts first.

- Ask your teacher about a place to leave the completed masks to dry. Make sure they understand that it will take at least a couple of days.
- One week prior to your date, check the Fine Arts supply room to make sure all the supplies are in the cabinet.
- Cut or tear the equivalent of two Sunday newspapers into approximately 3x12 strips
- The volunteer making the presentation should read through the handbook, located in the Fine Arts supply room, and become familiar with the project narrative and visuals.
- Arrive 20 minutes early (or even a day before) to mix the paper mache paste according to directions in the cabinet. There might be some left over from a previous class, but don't count on it.

Advance Preparation (part two)

- Pick up the "messy project" notice from the Fine Arts supply room and give your teacher copies to send home the night before the project. Any earlier and some parents will forget about it. You can also send out an e-mail of the notice the day before the project.
- Recommended number of volunteers, both parts: 5