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Behind the Mask



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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A mask has historically been a symbol to both represent and disguise a particular culture, individual, or even a corpse. We associate them with tribal and social celebrations or representations of those who have passed on. Students will create their own masks to represent their external and public persona, but they will also enclose a poem on the back that reveals what lies underneath. Students will also enhance their cultural development, research skills, writing skills and attitudinal adjustments on how they respect the cultures and background of their peers. The combination of exploring their inner and outer perspectives by utilizing hands-on and writing creativity expands their higher order and global thinking.



OUTCOMES

- Students will research other cultures and compare them with their own.
- Students will explore and express their external and internal selves creatively in written and visual formats.
- Students will display their written and fine arts work to peers.



FLORIDA CORE STANDARDS

Students will:

• [LAFS.910.RI.3.7](#): Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

• [VA.912.H.1](#) Through study in the arts, learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live[d].

• [VA.912.H.10](#): Describe and analyze the characteristics of a culture and its people to create personal art reflecting daily life and/or the specified environment.

• [SS.912.P.10.1](#) Define culture and diversity.

• [SS.912.P.10.3](#) Discuss the relationship between culture and conceptions of self and identity.



• [WL.K12.AH.8.3](#) Research cultural traditions and celebrations that exist in the target cultures and other cultures and evaluate the viewpoints behind them.

• [WL.K12.AH.5.7](#) Write creative pieces (poetry, narratives, and plays) using effective imagery and the appropriate literary devices to genre.



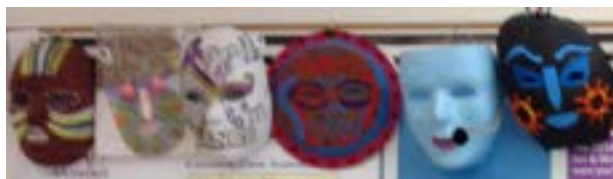
COURSE OUTLINE

After reading the African novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe with its many allusions to tribal masks, tenth grade English students researched traditional African masks, and designed their own to reflect their particular outer personality and interests and then wrote a poem that described their inner selves, hidden from others.

For students this project was a significant bridge between literature and real life, in addition to exploring a previously unfamiliar culture to compare to their own. However, the greatest significance came when students were asked to explore themselves as they thought they were viewed by others externally in a visual manner and then revealing in written form their inner self that others may have never seen. Ironically, before this project, some of the students had not really thought about their internal self as compared to their external persona, and this was a significant journey for them.

Utilizing computers and tablets for researching traditional African masks, students were also able to identify flags and their colors, physical attributes, and geographical locations of countries and cultures associated with particular ethnic backgrounds. They looked up and printed out emblems and logos of their favorite activities and sports teams and gathered as many images

as possible that expressed their personal interests and associations. When it came to constructing the actual mask that would display their chosen images, students were instructed to use any materials of their choice to create it. This resulted in some interesting creativity as masks were made from such items as stag horn ferns, gutted baseballs, covered liter bottles, paper plates, small cardboard boxes, and clay forms. Many students purchased pre-made mask shells and then decorated them. I emphasized that no money needed to be spent on this project and regular household items that may be headed for the trash often resulted in the most interesting masks. I also gave instructions on how to make paper maché using flour paste or watered down Elmer's glue and newspapers either over a form or a blown-up balloon. For those who wanted to make form-fitting masks, I gave handouts and verbal instructions on how to use plaster bandages to makes masks, a project I used to do with an entire class when I taught drama.



Most of the students worked on their masks at home, but I did provide construction paper, pipe cleaners, foam sheets, feathers, paint, markers, glue, and a host of other materials that I keep in a crate for possible class projects and for those who may not have access to crafty items at home.

When it came to writing the poem for the inside of the mask, I just told the students that it had to be at least six lines, rhymed or free verse. Since this was high school, the students were comfortable with the freedom, but for younger grades I would consider giving them a Bio-Poem format or some more specific guide for students to follow.

Because of the personal nature of the poems inside the mask, the students were very apprehensive about giving a class presentation of their work, but did not mind displaying them in a gallery for the whole class to view. I attached them to paper clamps on a push-pin, so students could lift them and look at the inner poem if they wished. They made a beautiful display and after a few days, some students were even willing to read their poems, while the others chose not to read, but did not mind others looking at them on their own. Another teacher wishing to adapt this project had her class walk through the display, and clearly, the students were proud that their work was being viewed and appreciated.



PowerPoint Overview




Behind the Mask
Dr. Sandy Helle
Perquimans Beach High School

Project Goals and Objectives



- A mask has historically been a symbol to both represent and disguise a particular culture, individual, or even a corpse. We associate them with tribal and social celebrations or representations of those who have passed on. Students will create their own masks to represent their external and public persona, but they will also enclose a poem on the back that reveals what lies underneath.

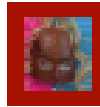
Goals and Objectives



- Students will also enhance their cultural development, research skills, writing skills and attitudinal adjustments on how they respect the cultures and background of their peers. The combination of exploring their inner and outer perspectives by utilizing hands-on and writing creativity expands their higher order and global thinking.

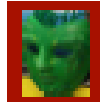
Outcomes

- Students will research other cultures and compare them with their own.
- Students will explore and express their external and internal selves creatively in written and visual formats.
- Students will display their written and fine arts work to peers.



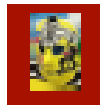
Florida Core Standards

- **LAFS.P.1.1.2** Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- **VA.P.12.A.1** Through study in the arts, learn about and honor others and the world in which they live(s).
- **VA.P.12.B.10** Describe and analyze the characteristics of a culture and its people to create personal art reflecting daily life and/or the specified environment.
- **SS.P.12.C.1** Define culture and diversity.
- **SS.P.12.C.2** Discuss the relationship between culture and conceptions of self and identity.
- **SS.P.12.A.3** Research cultural traditions and celebrations that exist in the larger culture and other cultures and evaluate the viewpoints behind them.
- **W.P.12.A.7** Write creative pieces (poetry, narratives, and plays) using descriptive imagery and the appropriate literary devices to genre.

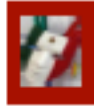


Process

- Although not required, reading a novel, story or article about the African tribes, Greek myths, or any other culture involving the use of masks is a good idea.
- Conduct a class discussion about individual and personal culture.
- Using computers or tablets, allow students to explore their ethnic, geographical, and cultural background.
- Using a color printer, allow students to print out small flags or representations of their culture.
- Allow students to research and print out small logos or visual representations of their particular interests.
- Introduce instructions for mask-making project, including possibilities for variations of materials or utilizing specific methods ready-made mask, paper mache or papier mache. (See attachments)
- Explain how suitable of mask will display each student's outer persona.



Process

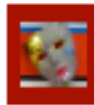


- Discuss written element of project of a poem that will go on the inside of the mask representing the "inner self" of the student.
- Either have students write an original poem of at least 4 lines, rhymed or free verse, or fill out a format such as a haiku-poem.
- Instruct students to either create masks of home or provide materials for class construction.
- When masks are due, be prepared with push-pins and paper clamps to display them on all possible bulletin boards.
- Using the rubric, grade masks and put them up for display.
- Allow those who wish to present their mask and poem to the class. Allow whole class to walk around and view each other's work.
- Take pictures for school or teacher website to share with others.

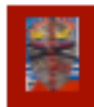
Assessment Rubric

Project Mask and Poem Rubric

Project Elements	Excellent 4.0-4.5	Good 3.0-3.5	Below expectations 1.0-2.5
Content	Student demonstrates a strong understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a good understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a weak understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is poorly written and does not clearly communicate the student's understanding of the poem.
Creativity/Content	Student demonstrates a strong understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a good understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a weak understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is poorly written and does not clearly communicate the student's understanding of the poem.
Form/Content/Quality	Student demonstrates a strong understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a good understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a weak understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is poorly written and does not clearly communicate the student's understanding of the poem.
Overall	Student demonstrates a strong understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a good understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is well-written and clearly communicates the student's understanding of the poem.	Student demonstrates a weak understanding of the poem and its meaning. The student's poem is poorly written and does not clearly communicate the student's understanding of the poem.
YOTS			



Equipment



Resources



- [African Masks](#)
 - <http://www.artyfactory.com/africanmasks/>
 - <http://www.artyfactory.com/africanmasks/design/design.htm>
 - <http://masks.novica.com/>
 - <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/04/african-masks/galembo-photography>
 - [Bio Poems](#)
 - <http://cuip.net/~adarice/cwsite/poems/poembio.htm>
 - <http://www.lauracandler.com/filecabinet/literacy/PDFPoetry/BioPoemLesson.pdf?q=biopoem>
 - [Free YouTube downloader and converter](#)
 - <http://www.fastestvideodownloader.com/>
-

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Things Fall Apart Mask Project Rubric

Project Elements	Exemplary 4.5-5	Meets qualifications 3-4	Below expectations 1-2.5
Content	The mask displays several elements of the creator's culture, presented in an attractive and easily understood manner.	The mask displays elements of the creator's culture that is generally presented in an attractive and easily understood manner.	The mask displays little effort in conveying elements of the creator's culture.
Creativity/Content	The mask displays creativity in design and application. It is unique in its presentation of the personality and culture of the designer.	The mask displays some creativity in design and application. It attempts a presentation of the personality and culture of the designer.	The mask lacks creativity and reveals little about the creator's culture.
Poem Content/Quality	The poem clearly reveals how the mask represents its maker. While rhyme is not necessary the poem utilizes poetic elements such as imagery, figures of speech, and visual diction.	The poem reveals how the mask represents its maker. While rhyme is not necessary the poem may utilize poetic elements such as imagery, figures of speech, and visual diction, but not in great detail.	The poem shows little effort in conveying how the mask represents the maker.
Overall	The mask and poem represent a clear effort in tying the representation of the creator's culture with a unique and creative visual image and written expression.	The mask and poem generally represent an effort in tying the representation of the creator's culture with visual images and written expression.	The mask and poem show little thought or effort.
TOTAL	18-20 A 16-17 B 14-15 C 12-13 D		

LESSON PLAN

Title: Behind the Mask

Curriculum Area: Language Arts, Visual Arts

FLORIDA CORE STANDARDS

Students will:

• [LAFS.910.RI.3.7](#): Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

• [VA.912.H.1](#): Through study in the arts, learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live[d].

• [VA.912.H.10](#): Describe and analyze the characteristics of a culture and its people to create personal art reflecting daily life and/or the specified environment.

• [SS.912.P.10.1](#) Define culture and diversity.

• [SS.912.P.10.3](#) Discuss the relationship between culture and conceptions of self and identity.



Subject Area: English, Creative Writing, Art, Cultural Studies

Materials/Equipment: Mask molds, paper maché, glue, paint, plaster bandages, foam sheets, pipe cleaners, balloons, plastic bottles, construction paper, etc.

Technology Computers with internet access
Color Scanner/Printer with ink and paper
Digital camera



Learning Outcomes:

- Students will research other cultures and compare them with their own.
- Students will express their external and internal selves creatively in written and visual formats.
- Students will display their written and fine arts work to peers.

Evaluation/Assessments:

- Instructor and peers will evaluate work using rubrics.

Adaptations: (For students with exceptionalities)

- B14 Demonstrations
- C7 Cooperative Learning (Peer Evaluation)

Process:

1. Although not required, reading a novel, story or article about the African tribes, Greek theatre, or any other culture involving the use of masks is a good tie-in.

2. Conduct a class discussion about individual and personal culture.
3. Using computers or tablets, allow students to explore their ethnic, geographical, and cultural background.
4. Using a color printer, allow students to print out small flags or representations of their culture.
5. Allow students to research and print out small logos or visual representations of their particular interests.
6. Introduce instructions for mask making project, including possibilities for variations of materials or utilizing specific methods ready-made mask, paper maché or plaster bandages (see attachments).
7. Explain how outside of mask will display each student's outer persona.
8. Discuss written element of project of a poem that will go on the inside of the mask representing the "inner self" of the student.
9. Either have students write an original poem of at least 6 lines, rhymed or free verse, or fill out a format such as a Bio-Poem.
10. Instruct students to either create masks at home or provide materials for class construction.
11. When masks are due, be prepared with pushpins and paper clamps to display them on all possible bulletin boards.
12. Using the rubric, grade masks and put them up for display.
13. Allow those who wish to present their mask and poem to the class. Allow whole class to walk around and view each other's work.
14. Take pictures for school or teacher website to share with others.

MODIFICATIONS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

MODIFICATIONS

Grades K-8



Front

I began as a runt
But with Charlotte's great stunt
Fern could show me with pride
I was "some pig" outside
A spider's great love
Is what put me above.

Back

This project is adaptable to all grade levels because writing and art are always included in the curriculum. While all grades could certainly adapt this project very closely to the original, with students exploring their culture and interests and then including a Bio-poem on the inside, the project could also be adapted as a reading tool. Students could make masks that represent characters in stories or novels and write poems about the characters such as one for Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web* represented above.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Math



front



back

Students of all levels could create masks mounted on extra large popsicle sticks that show a number on one side and all the possible formulas that could represent that number on the other, so that it goes beyond just a simple flashcard.

Social Studies



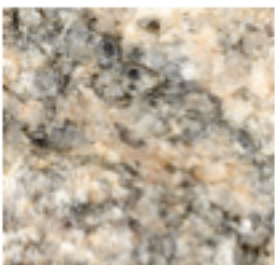
Front

Statesman, philosopher
Personality electric
Inventor, printer
Interests eclectic
Stove and bifocals
Declaration signer
Poor Richard's almanac
No advice finer.

Back

Social studies offers a large range of possible applications with the most basic creating masks of historical figures and writing a poem identifying key characteristics of that person. An interesting twist for psychology class would be creating a student's interpretation of a person with a particular condition such as a two-sided face for schizophrenia and writing a poem about the characteristics of that condition.

Science



Front

Biotite, feldspar
The crystals are quartz
I top counters, make walls
The granite reports.

Back

Students could use an adaptation of this project to identify rocks, cloud formations, elements, plants, and a host of other scientific items associated with chemistry, physics, biology, and geology.

Technology

All of these adaptations could also be created as an electronic presentation such as PowerPoint slides with pictures and riddling poems that could serve as a review for a particular lesson.



SAMPLE BUDGET

- Refurbished Laptop \$136-\$250 or
- Tablet with keyboard \$69



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- Scanner/Printer \$56.97



Enlarge

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 Customer Rating: ★★★★★ 4.2 (746 customer reviews)

New from
\$56.97

Refurbished from
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- Ink \$9.43 black \$17.81 Color

The screenshot shows the InkJet superstore.com website. The main navigation bar includes a search box, a live chat indicator, and a shopping cart showing \$0.00. A promotional banner for 'Weekend 5% Off All Ink' is visible. The main content area is titled 'Ink, Toner & Accessories for Deskjet 3520 Printers, Copiers & Faxes'. It features a 'Shop by Department' sidebar with categories like 'INK AND TONER', 'OFFICE SUPPLIES', and 'MICR TONER'. The main product list includes two remanufactured ink cartridges: a black one for \$9.43 and a color one for \$17.81. Each product listing includes details like condition, page yield, and OEM part numbers. A 'NEED TO RETURN SOMETHING?' banner and a 'RECYCLE' button are also present.

- Mask Forms 25@ \$1.13 ea. \$28.25
- Craft materials \$25
- \$250 range

Possible additions

\$70 digital camera

\$69 tablet with keyboard

\$16 Office Pro application ea. tablet

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mask Making

- <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Plaster-Mask>
- <http://www.artlex.com/ed/Maskmaking.html>
- <http://public.wsu.edu/~converse/theat461/masks.html>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4Zu56M8_Qk

Paper maché mask with mold

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8aVXyUBYks>

Paper maché African mask

African Masks

- <http://www.artyfactory.com/africanmasks/>
- <http://www.artyfactory.com/africanmasks/design/design.htm>
- <http://masks.novica.com/>
- <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/04/african-masks/galembo-photography>

Bio-Poems

- <http://cuip.net/~adarice/cwsite/poems/poembio.htm>
- <http://www.lauracandler.com/filecabinet/literacy/PDFPoetry/BioPoemLesson.pdf?q=biopoem>

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