

African Masks



Lesson adapted from *Art Makes U Smart*

Grade Level

4th Grade

Key Vocabulary

- Line Symmetry
- Rituals
- Ceremonies
- Symbolism

Materials

- Ticonderoga® Yellow #2 Pencil, X13882
- Tru-Ray® Smart Stack™ Construction Paper, P6586
- Tru-Ray® 9" x 12" Black Construction Paper, P103061
- Creativity Street® Wood Shapes, PAC3699-01
- Creativity Street® Mini Craft Sticks, PAC3894-01
- Creativity Street® Mini Clothespins, PAC3672-02
- Prang® Glue Stick, X15371
- Tape
- Scissors

Objective

Students will design a large African-inspired mask while learning about the uses and cultural significance of masks. Students will create their own mask shape and apply their knowledge of symmetry to their mask design.

Standards

4.G.A.3

Recognize a line of symmetry for a two-dimensional figure as a line across the figure such that the figure can be folded along the line into matching parts. Identify line-symmetric figures and draw lines of symmetry.

Engagement

1. Begin by sharing information about African masks, or by having students do their own research. Some things to research are: How are African masks used? Do masking ceremonies exist today? How many times is a mask usually used? Do masks contain a certain form of symmetry? What materials are masks made out of? What are the different ways African masks are worn (covering face, helmet-like, crest/crown-like)? What kind of symbols are included in tribal designs of masks, and what do the symbols mean?
2. Make sure to also share images of African masks, and point out how line symmetry is used in many of the masks.



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Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



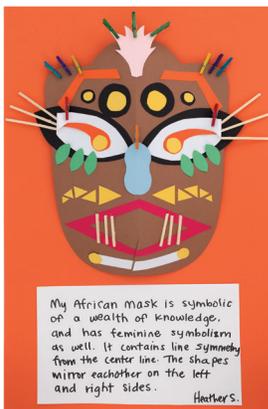
Step 4



Step 5



Step 6



Activity

1. Hand out a sheet of 9" x 12" construction papers to students. Have students fold this paper in half length-wise. Explain that by folding the paper in half, they only have to draw one side of the mask shape because of line symmetry. Have students draw one side of their mask.
2. Cut out the mask shape from the paper, while keeping it folded in half.
3. To create patterns and designs for the mask, use smaller pieces of colored papers. Fold all of the papers in half and draw your designs on one side of the paper. Use the mirror symmetry technique, cutting away from the fold, to create shapes that are perfectly matched to mirror each other on the mask.
4. Plan out where you'd like to use the cut pieces. To add interest, glue smaller pieces onto bigger pieces before you glue them to the mask face.
5. Next, add wooden embellishments such as wood sticks or mini clothes pins. Get creative and glue multiple sticks in a group, and use clothespins to hold paper in a bent or folded position.
6. To add dimension to the mask, cut a one inch line at the center of the bottom of the mask. Overlap the two pieces and tape them on the backside of the mask. Glue together the overlapping pieces on the front side of the mask. Depending on the mask shape, similar cuts can be made to the top or sides to add dimension.
7. Mount the mask on a piece of 12" x 18" construction paper when it is finished, and have students write about their mask, and the design decisions they made.

Assessment

Assess students' masks for line symmetry. Students should be able to point out which design elements mirror each other. Ask students to make observations about their masks: Would a mask like this be appropriate for any ceremonies they participate in? Does their mask represent something other than a person (such as an animal or mythical creature). Do their designs represent any qualities such as strength, energy, harmony, freedom, or peace?