

LEARNING RESOURCE

Mask Making

This resource is an exciting and simple way to explore identity and personality with your students. Using very basic materials you can create an engaging lesson that will fit in with a number of themes.

Masks have been made for thousands of years by different cultures to explore a person's unique culture. When working with masks get your students to create masks that express their own personal cultural identity, uniqueness and personality.



Important:

Often mask making is used in an educational context to explore the historic cultures of people of colour, for example African tribal masks or Native American headdresses. While it is hugely important to explore these cultural artifacts I would warn against having your class create an African tribal mask (for example) if they are not black or a child of the specific culture you are exploring. This kind of cultural appropriation, where we as arts educators can end up picking and choosing from different cultures' histories to make decorative objects is very problematic, and reinforces stereotypes that the cultures of people of colour are just for taking from without context. Also for a white student to make and wear a black face (for example) is not an act we want to encourage.

To make this exercise non-racist and more exciting to your education context, have the students express their own personal histories and contexts through the exploration of cultural masks. This will uphold the cultures you are exploring and how amazing different masks from ethnic cultures are in their meaning and power, and will connect much deeper with your students. This will be particularly important for your students of colour, as they will see that ethnic history is not being explored as a way to make decorative objects, but as a way to really understand the cultures that these masks come from.

LEARNING RESOURCE

Materials:

This activity is very low budget and can be made with many things you may already have to hand.

You will need:

- Scissors
- Pencil
- Cardboard
- Magazines/printed images/drawings
- Glue
- String / elastic (for head band)



Instructions:

- Fold your cardboard in half
- Mark and cut eye and nose holes
- Decide on your mask shape
- Add holes for string/elastic
- Design with drawings and cut outs!
- If you want to make your mask bigger use cardboard to add structure

