



SENEGAL-AMERICA PROJECT LESSON PLAN

AUTHOR: Kristy Mangos	GRADE LEVEL: Elementary School
SUBJECT: Art	DATE: December 11, 2005
TOPIC: African Masks	
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is a mask and what is it used for? Who wears masks? Where do we see masks in our culture today? When and where are masks worn? How have you seen masks used before? What story can a mask tell?	
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: Students will design and create an African Mask using imagination in correlation with the elements of color, shape, balance and symmetry.	
THINKING SKILL: CR-1 Generate many diverse solutions to presented and found problems.	
LESSON CONTENT: Cognitive —1. Students will identify African mask making and its relation to the culture and history of Africa. 2. Students will define the meanings of balance and symmetry in relation to the masks of African culture. Psychomotor —3. Students will draw a sketch or color a worksheet template to determine what their African mask will look like. 4. Students will cut paper shapes and affix them to their masks to express character. 5. Students will select and form mixed media to attach to their masks. Affective —6. Students will express their creativity through the use of color and shape. 7. Students will communicate feelings about their figure through imagination and design.	
NATIONAL VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS: 1.B. Students will intentionally take advantage of the qualities, characteristics, techniques, and processes of African Mask design by effectively communicating their ideas through use of form, balance, symmetry and repetition. 2.C. Students will select and use qualities such as color, shape and material to express and communicate their creativity and imagination. 4.A. Students will know and compare the characteristics of African Masks in relation to the history and culture of Africa. 4.C. Students will analyze how factors of time, place, and resources influenced the visual characteristics that give meaning and value to African masks.	

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:

Teacher will begin class with this introduction about Africa:

Africa is one of the most incredible places in the world. It is the birthplace of ancient empires ruled by great kings and queens and home to the largest mammals known to man. It is so unique that just one of its islands alone, Madagascar—the fourth largest island in the world—has over 150,000 plants and animals that can be found no place else on this planet. Africa is a place of discovery. Nowhere else can you find ancient pyramids, remains of the first human beings, or huge animal reserves without ever leaving the continent. Whether you like artifacts of the past, studying animals or drawing pictures, Africa holds a world of adventure.

Teacher will continue by reading through The Geography of Africa handout with students while using the map of Africa as a guide. Teacher can explain to students that the vast lands of Africa have influenced its populations into coming together and forming tribes. Within these tribes, their art has been evident through their many customs and rituals. One of the most predominant ritual-based examples of African art is revealed through their masks. Teacher will prompt a class discussion by asking students questions such as: What is a mask? What is a mask used for? Who wears masks? Where do we see masks in our culture today? When and where are masks worn? How have you seen masks used before? What story can a mask tell? Teacher and class will recall some of the contexts in which masks are worn in the United States, for example, Halloween, Mardi Gras, the circus, parades, theater, costume parties, superheroes, etc., and the meaning of such masks. Students will identify how masks can be used to mask identity, change an appearance or represent a character such as in a story.

Teacher will then explain to the class the meaning of African masks and describe how they are used in the African culture such as in tribal rituals passed on from ancestors. Teacher will show visual samples of masks from all parts of Africa including authentic representations (if available). Teacher will distribute examples to each table and ask students to compare and analyze the similarities and differences they seen in the masks viewed and what kind of meaning their mask may have by using an activity sheet. Teacher will ask class to offer their findings and identify the meanings of such vocabulary as color, design, shape, balance, symmetry, unity, and repetition, and how they are seen within the designs of the masks that are shown. Teacher will also point out how many of the masks' abstract features are intentionally distorted and exaggerated.

Teacher will read a traditional African folktale to class to reinforce the idea of characters in a story and ask class to think about a character they could create for their own story. Students will be asked to create this character in the form of a mask followed by writing a short story about their character.

Directions:

1. Teacher will perform a brief demonstration of the mask project and use of materials.
2. Teacher will play music of Africa to inspire the imaginations of the students while they sketch ideas of possible mask designs in sketchbooks or using template.
3. Students will then create the basic shape of their masks using poster board or construction paper by folding the material in half and tracing a shape.
4. Students will then cut out shape, keeping the paper folded while they cut.
5. After the basic shape of the mask is cut out, students will decide where the eyes, mouth, and nose will be and cut holes if desired. (Students may also choose paste eyes, etc., onto mask.)
6. Students will then select their choice of mixed media provided by teacher and/or create cutout shapes from multicolored construction paper to adhere to mask and construct a 3-dimensional design.
7. Students will keep in mind balance and symmetry when deciding where to glue their objects.
8. When masks are completed, students will set masks aside to let glue dry.
9. Students will be asked to clean up all materials and safely put scissors and glue back to desired home.
10. While masks are drying, students will be asked to write a short story about their mask character.
11. After masks are ready to be handled, students may attach a stick to bottom of mask to hold or attach elastic string so that their masks can be worn.
12. When all masks and short stories are completed, class will gather and discuss the African mask making experience.
13. Students will share finished masks with class in a critique describing their unique African masks and why they chose their specific designs, materials, and colors in relation to representation.
14. Teacher will ask for volunteers to share their short stories by reading them to the class.
15. As an extra activity, students could visit some of the younger classes within the school and read their stories to the children while wearing their masks.

CRITIQUE/EVALUATION:

An in-class critique will take place after all masks are completed. Students will discuss what materials they used and their decisions in creating their own unique African mask. Students will describe their mask character and in what kind of story their character appears. Students will also be encouraged to share constructive thoughts and opinions towards peer work. Volunteers will read their stories to the rest of the class.

MATERIALS AND AIDS:

- Pencils, colored pencils or markers, sketchbooks, multicolored construction paper, poster board, scissors, glue, pipe cleaners, any extra mixed media teacher deems appropriate.
- Images of authentic African masks throughout history.
- Original samples of masks (if available).
- Sample(s) of original African folktales. (See Why the Cheetah's Cheeks Are Stained, below)
- Completed teacher sample as well as a partial sample of an African mask.
- Map or globe to show geographic location of Africa and its countries.
- CD or tape of African tribal music.

Why the Cheetah's Cheeks Are Stained (A Traditional Zulu Story)

Long ago a wicked and lazy hunter was sitting under a tree. He was thinking that it was too hot to be bothered with the arduous task of stalking prey through the bushes. Below him in the clearing on the grassy veldt there were fat springbok grazing. But this hunter couldn't be bothered, so lazy was he! He gazed at the herd, wishing that he could have the meat without the work, when suddenly he noticed a movement off to the left of the buck. It was a female cheetah seeking food. Keeping downwind of the herd, she moved closer and closer to them. She singled out a springbok who had foolishly wandered away from the rest. Suddenly she gathered her long legs under her and sprang forward. With great speed she came upon the springbok and brought it down. Startled, the rest of the herd raced away as the cheetah quickly killed her prey.

The hunter watched as the cheetah dragged her prize to some shade on the edge of the clearing. There three beautiful cheetah cubs were waiting there for her. The lazy hunter was filled with envy for the cubs and wished that he could have such a good hunter provide for him. Imagine dining on delicious meat every day without having to do the actual hunting! Then he had a wicked idea. He decided that he would steal one of the cheetah cubs and train it to hunt for him. He decided to wait until the mother cheetah went to the waterhole late in the afternoon to make his move. He smiled to himself.

When the sun began to set, the cheetah left her cubs concealed in a bush and set off to the waterhole. Quickly the hunter grabbed his spear and trotted down to the bushes where the cubs were hidden. There he found the three cubs, still too young to be frightened of him or to run away. He first chose one, then decided upon another, and then changed his mind again. Finally he stole them all, thinking to himself that three cheetahs would undoubtedly be better than one.

When their mother returned half-an-hour later and found her babies gone, she was broken-hearted. The poor mother cheetah cried and cried until her tears made dark stains down her cheeks. She wept all night and into the next day. She cried so loudly that she was heard by an old man who came to see what the noise was all about.

Now this old man was wise and knew the ways of the animals. When he discovered what the wicked hunter had done, he became very angry. The lazy hunter was not only a thief; he had broken the traditions of the tribe. Everyone knew that a hunter must use only his own strength and skill. Any other way of hunting was surely a dishonor.

The old man returned to the village and told the elders what has happened. The villagers became angry. They found the lazy hunter and drove him away from the village. The old man took the three cheetah cubs back to their grateful mother. But the long weeping of the mother cheetah stained her face forever. Today the cheetah wears the tearstains on its face as a reminder to the hunters that it is not honorable to hunt in any other way than that which is traditional.