

Masks

Levels



Grades K-4

Overview:

Yup'ik masks have been used in ceremonies for many generations. The masks depict animals, humans, and spirits and represent the relationships between these three elements. Several masks depict elements of weather, such as the north and east wind. In this activity, students create their own masks to represent various aspects of weather.

Objectives:

The student will:

- understand how weather masks have been used in the past; and
- create their own weather mask.

Materials:

- STUDENT WORKSHEET: "Sketch a Weather Mask"
- OVERHEADS 1-3
- Colored pencils and pens
- Pipe cleaners
- Paints
- Paint brushes
- Scraps of cloth or string
- Glue
- Blank mask (1 per student)

Activity Procedure:

1. Show students examples of masks using OVERHEADS 1-3. Ask if they can identify the masks. Mask 1 is a wind maker; Mask 2 is the east wind; Mask 3 is the cold weather spirit.
2. Ask students how these masks are used. Explain that weather masks were often used in dances to pray for good weather for hunting. For example, it explains in "*The Living Tradition of Yup'ik Masks*" by Ann Fienup-Riordan, that if an ice mask was paired with a seal mask it might represent good ice so that there will be many seals.
3. Show students a blank mask. Explain that today they will make their own weather masks. Weather masks often have similar features, but can vary widely. Often times white represents winter and black summer. Dots on a mask can represent snowflakes, stars, or rain. Sometimes items are placed on a mask that will make noise to represent thunder or to give a voice to the spirit world when the mask is used in a dance.
4. Hand out the STUDENT WORKSHEET: "Sketch a Weather Mask" and colored pencils. Instruct students to pick an element of the weather, such as ice, snow, or clouds, to represent on their masks. Once they have picked an element of weather, ask them to plan their mask on their sheet of paper with colored pencils.
5. When a student has sketched a design, provide them with a mask and instruct them to write their name on the back of the mask so that they can retrieve it later.
6. Allow students to use any materials available to make their mask. Let the masks dry.
7. Ask students to share their masks with the class and try to guess what each mask represents.

Teacher Note: The masks featured in this activity are Yup'ik. If another native culture is prevalent in your area, ask a local artist to share any local masks or other works of art that pertain to weather.

Answers:

Answers will vary.

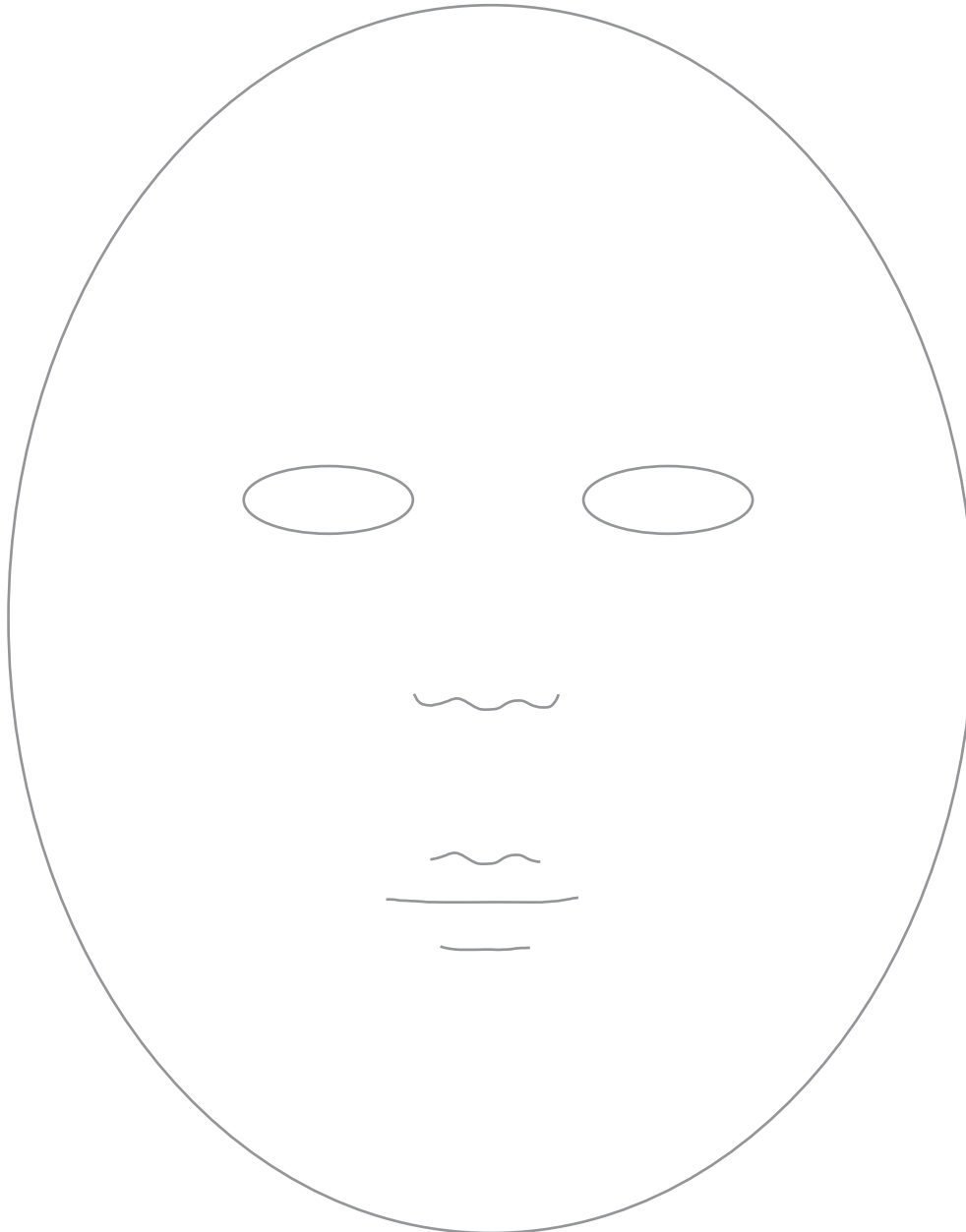
Name: _____

Sketch a Weather Mask

Level I-II Student Worksheet

Using the template below, sketch a design for a mask that represents one or more elements of weather (rain, snow, ice, summer, winter, etc.).

Levels



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Overhead 3

Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (09/3429). Photo by NMAI Photo Services staff.



Masks

Overhead 2

Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (09/3394). Photo by NMAI Photo Services staff, cropped to fit the page.



Masks

Overhead 1

Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (09/3429). Photo by NMAI Photo Services staff.

