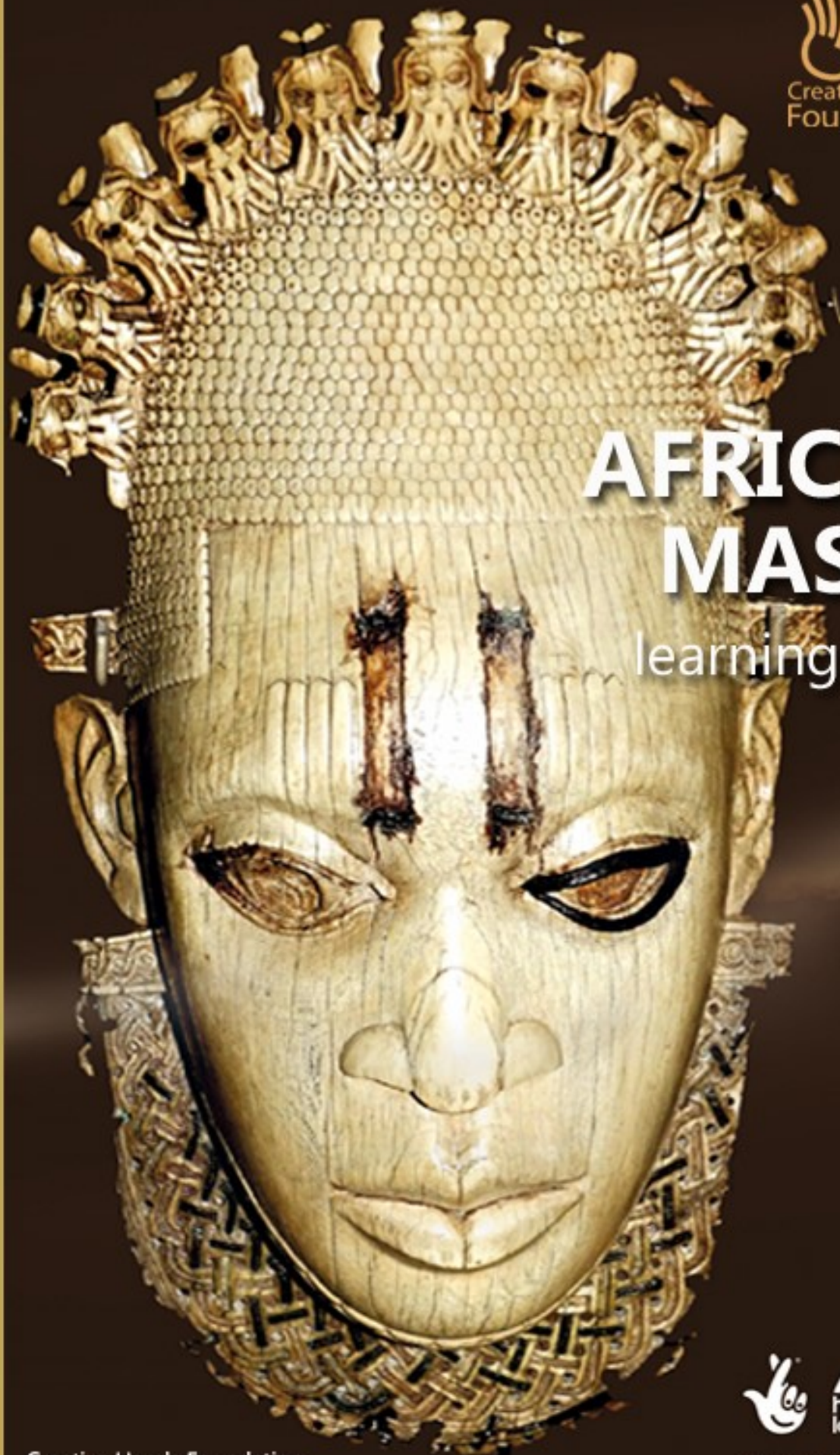




Creative Hands
Foundation



AFRICAN MASKS

learning pack

Creative Hands Foundation
Publication 2018



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lottery fund

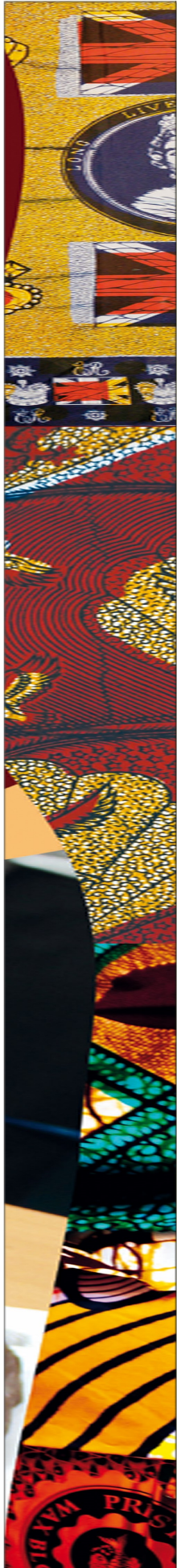
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AFRICAN MASKS

learning pack

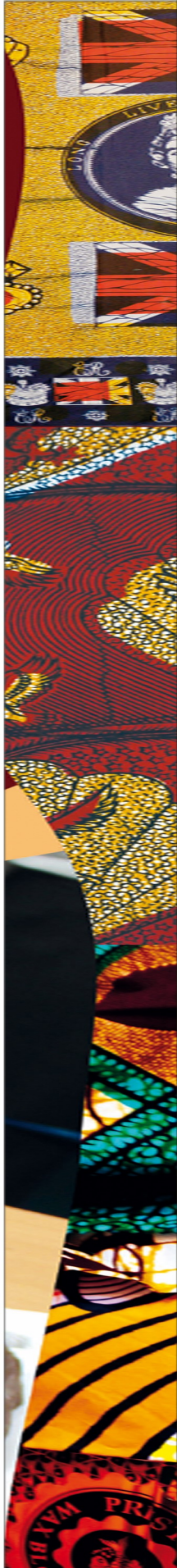
Ehinomen Oboh
Joseph Ayavoro



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About us

Creative Hands Foundation

Creative Hands Foundation is a Manchester-based charity organisation.

The charity is set up to empower and equip underprivileged young people and adults with visual arts, craft, and music and dance skills through practical workshops and volunteering opportunities.

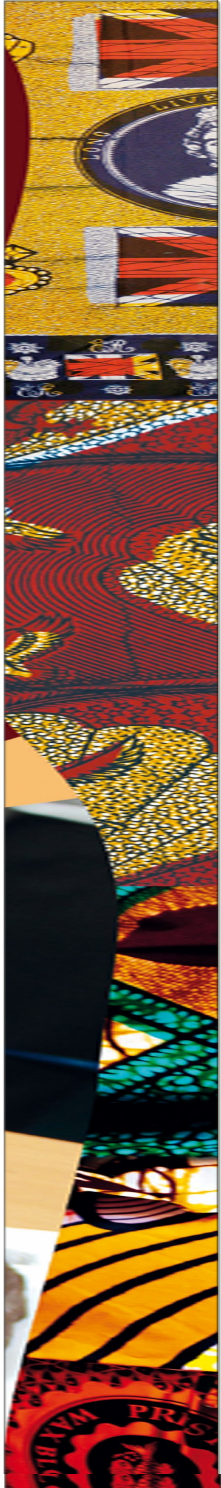
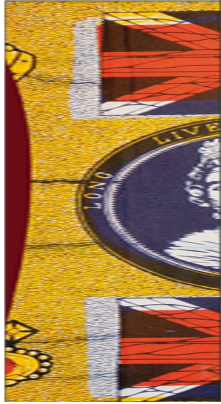
Our projects are helping people in becoming self-employed as well as raise the goals and aspirations within the community and beyond.

Cultural Arts, Crafts, Music & Dance
Learn indigenous Skills

Volunteering Opportunities
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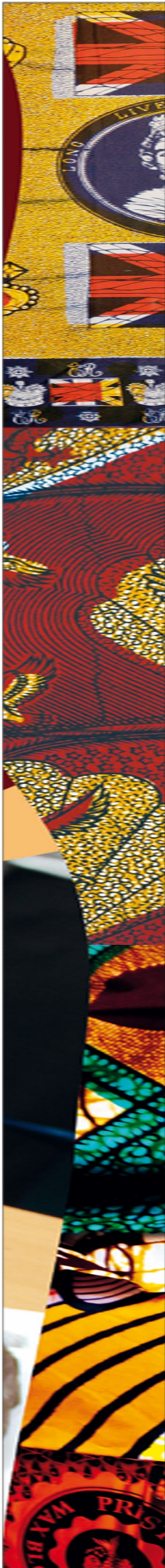
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Introduction

About this book:

This education pack provides teachers with ideas and activities to help develop and introduce pupils to a range of African mask and the people who use them. The activities in the book will compliment classroom work across the curriculum to enhance pupil's knowledge and understanding of African gtraditional masks and its significance. It also includes background information about African masks which will help you to understand where the masks came from; what they were used for; and how they are made.

Activities Sheets:

The activities provide opportunities for children to be confident in their creativity; support their creative thinking and appreciation of other people's culture and tradition.

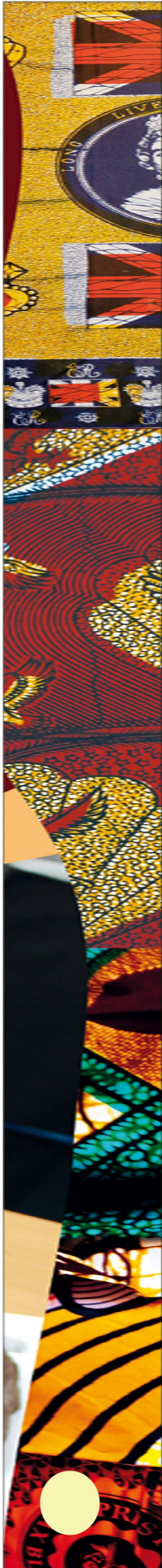
Each section has a follow-up activities as well materials to support the worksheets on African masks, its making, display and use for your class.

Suggestions:

The activities sheets can be photocopied as necessary. It requires little or no preparation and can be used with existing lesson plans.

Cross-Curricular Study:

The way masks are used depend on the culture and region and as such need to be examined within them. This pack can support studies in KS2 and KS3: Art and Design and KS2 and KS3: Design and Technology including Citizenship, English, History, Religious studies and Geography National Curriculum.



African Mask

In most African cultures and traditions, mask are important to the ceremonial life of African people. Masking ceremonies in African have great cultural and traditional significance.

The craft

The craft of mask making is passed down within the family from generation to generation.

Usages

African masks are worn as part of the ceremonial costume in religious and social festivals and serve many functions: as initiations of youth into adulthood, intercessor with the spirit during religious ceremonies and sometimes worn for public performances and or for entertainment.

Celebrations

In celebrations such as wedding and funerals, African masks are used for entertainment. Mask used as ceremonial costumes for entertainment differ greatly from masks used for tribal dance rituals.

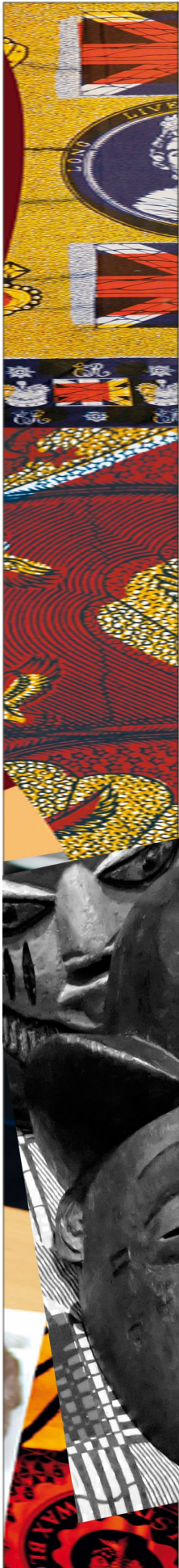
Rituals ceremonies

Some of the religious and tribal ceremonies performed for include:

- Initiation into manhood/ womanhood/ adulthood;
- Circumscision;
- Fertility and
- War preparation for bravery in battle.

Some mask perform in celebrations during;

- Crop harvesting;
- Market day festivals;
- Burials and
- Commemorative occasions.



Materials

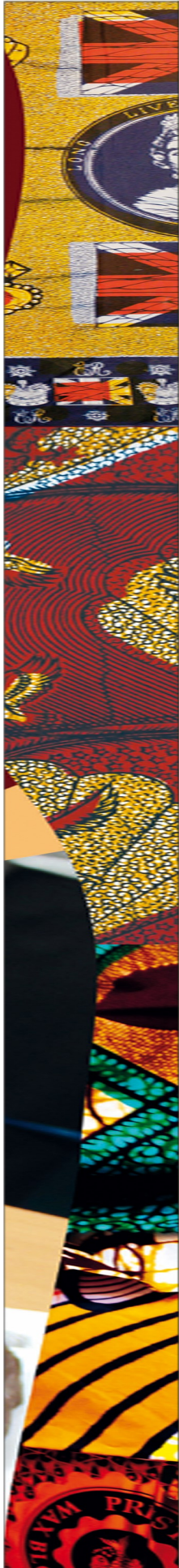
African masks are made from different materials: wood, bronze, brass, copper, ivory, terracotta and pottery, raffia, glass and textiles and even gourds. However, the majority of African mask is carved from wood because trees are in plentiful supply in the forest.

Decorations

African mask is often decorated with cowries shells, coloured beads, bone, animal skins and vegetable fibre. Wooden masks are often coloured with natural dyes and pigments created from vegetables, plants, seeds, tree bark, soil and insects. Zigzag, straight, curved or spirals lines are common patterns used to decorate mask faces.

Shape

African masks comes in diverse shape, sizes and expressiveness. The shape can be oval, circular, rectangular, elongated, and heart-shaped. It is usually modelled after a human face or animal or a combination of both. The overall structure of African mask can be very detailed and accurate or can be extremely abstract emphasizing elements that users considered important to highlight. Parallel, zigzag, curved or spiral lines are common patterns used to decorate mask faces. The shape of the mask can denote the social identity of the mask origin. Different patterns are sometimes used to distinguish between male and female masks. For example: braided hairstyles are used to decorate female mask head.



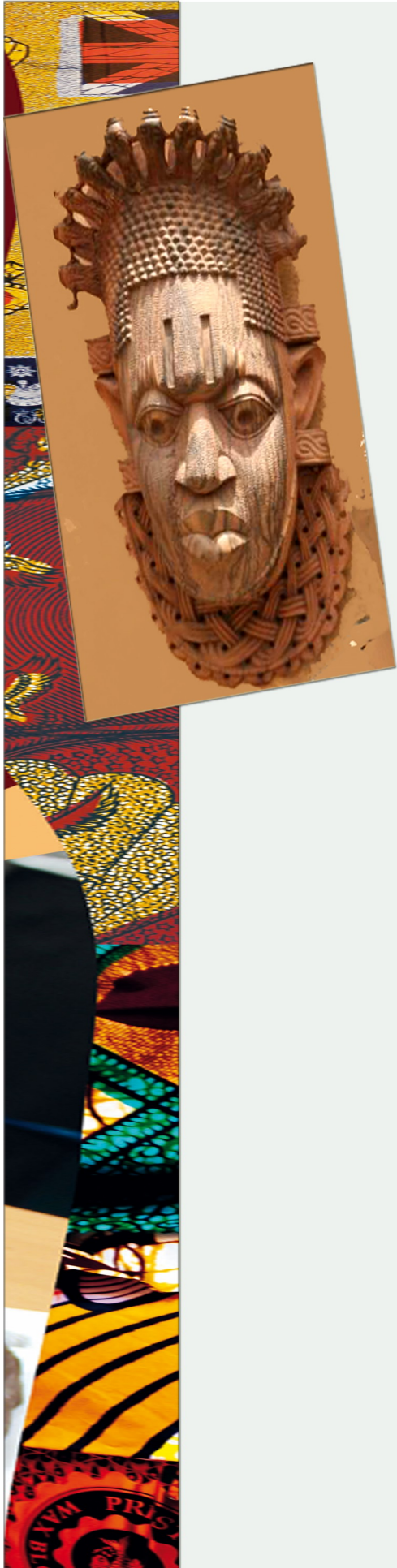
In some tribes, mask owes much of its significance to the materials and accessories.

For example:

1. Mask of human shape have traits representing moral values in many African cultures.
2. Mask representing calmness and patience has half-closed eyes.
3. Mask having small mouth and eyes represents humility.
4. Mask with wide bulging forehead represents wisdom.
5. Mask with a large chin represents power and strenght.
6. Mask made in the form of animals represent the virtues of such animals. For example, masks made to have antelope horns or crocodile teeth and or fangs of a warthog represent power.

Pa Roland Ogiame
Benin Wood Carver





Type of African Masks

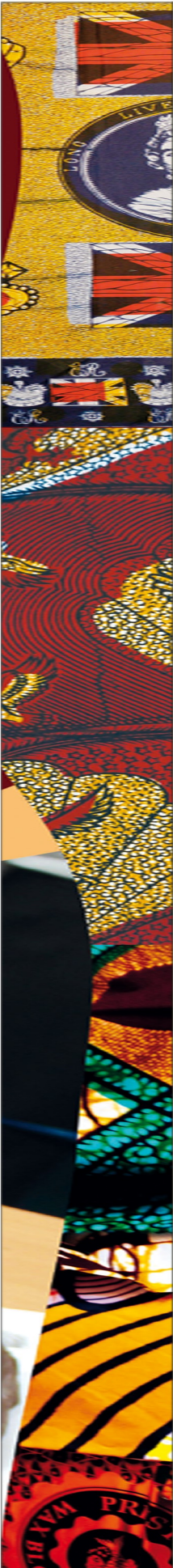
There is a huge variety of mask types in Africa and can be classified by how they are worn or secured to the wearer.

The most common types of African mask are:

- Facemask;
- Helmet mask and
- Cap crest (forehead) mask

Others mask types include:

- Helmet crest masks;
- Headdress mask;
- Shoulder masks and
- Pendant mask.



Fact file

face mask

Facemask is the most common type of mask. They are used vertically covering the face, and can be secured to the face with a band or string put through holes on each side of the mask, held on by a wig, or secured by a scarf.

Name: Walu mask of the Awa society

Where is it from: Dragon people of Mali.

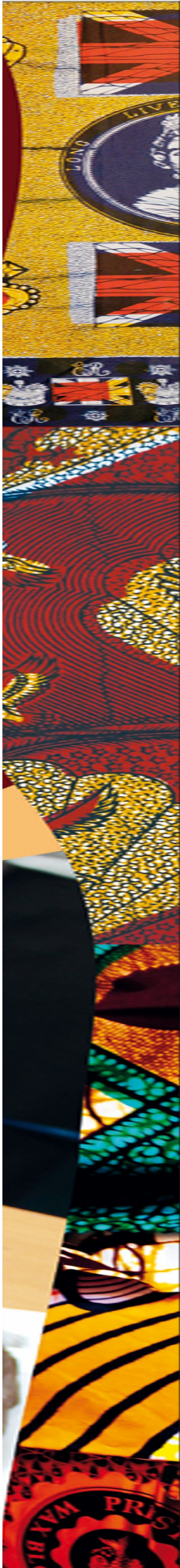
What is it made of: Wood.

Features: It is intended to resemble an antelope and represents strenghten and masculinity.

What is it used for: Funeral rites.



Walu mask:
World Museum
Liverpool



Fact file

Face Mask

Name of the mask: Chokwei/Lunda Mwana Pwo mask

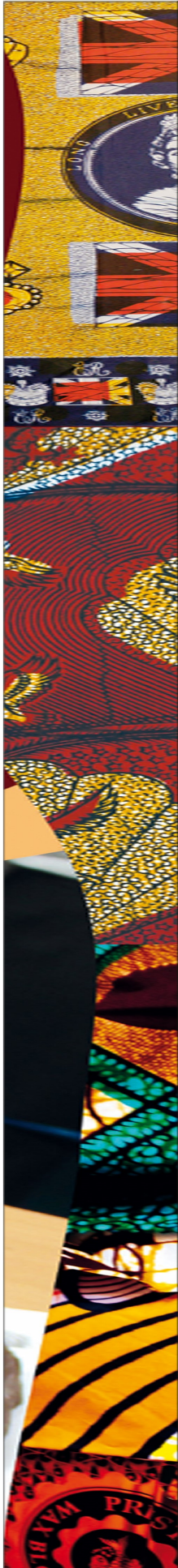
Where it is from? Democratic Republic of Congo or Angola

What is it made from? Wood, leather, bamboo straw and raffia.

What is the mask used for? The mask is used during initiation ceremonies for young men, and portrays Mwana Pwo, an ancient female ancestor portrayed as a beautiful young woman, with high forehead. The beaded hairstyle and lines of scarification on the face enhances its beauty.



Mwana Pwo mask
World Museum,
Liverpool



Fact file

Face Mask

Name of mask: Nduga mask of Bankoga

Where it is from? Congo

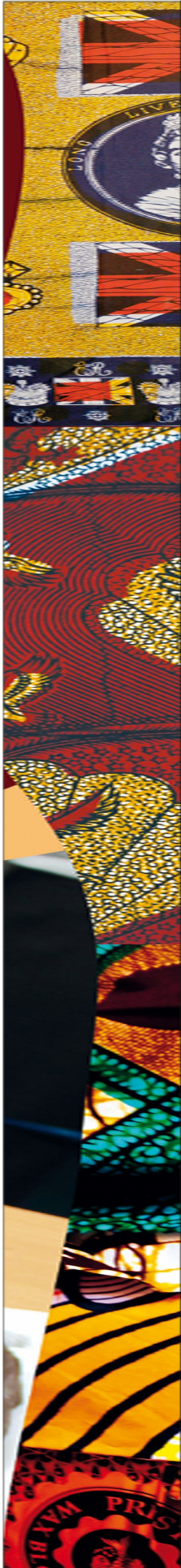
What is the mask used for? It is used at the funerals of important people and during ritual celebrations. The mask is always worn with a costume of feathers and banana leaves.

What is it made from? Clay and Monkey fur.

Features: The entire mask is painted red, black and white.



Nduga mask:
World Museum
Liverpool



fact file

Face Mask

Name of the mask: Senufo mask.

Where it is from? Poro society, Ivory Coast

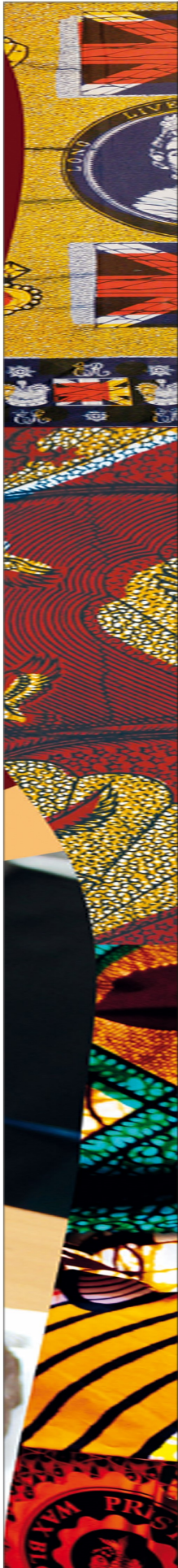
What is it made from? Wood

What is it used for? Senufo masks are used in the rites of the Poro society during celebrating the initiation and coming of age of young men.

Features: Senufo masks combine features of human and animals in a single image.



Senufo mask:
Horniman Museum
London



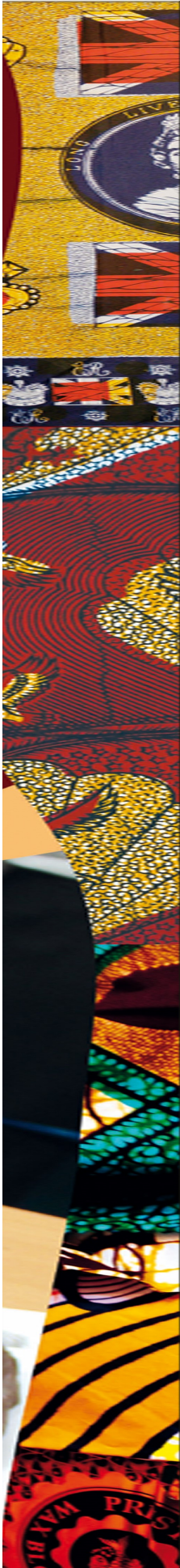
Fact file:

Helmet Mask

Helmet masks are made from hollow tree stumps. It is carved hollowed to be worn like helmets covering both the head and face. and with carved out openings for the eyes, mouth, and nose. This type of mask is common among the Sande - Liberia and the Mende - Sierra Leone people. An example of this mask is association with the Sande society and are one of a few African masks that are managed and performed by women.



Sande Society
Helmet mask:
Liverpool World
Museum



Fact file

Helmet Mask

Name of mask: Sowe Mende mask.

Where it is from? Sierra Leone, and Liberia West Africa

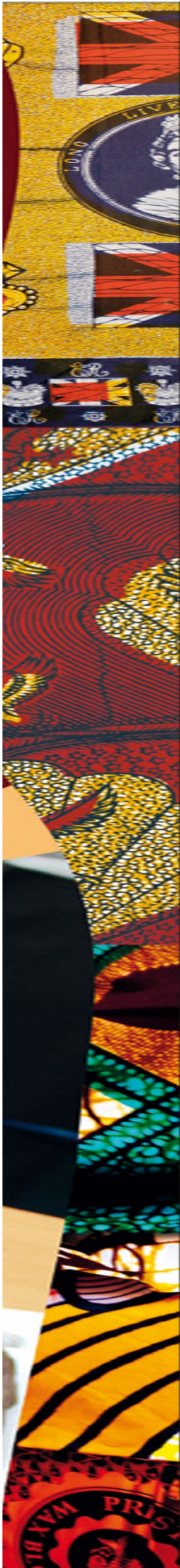
What is it made from? Wood, but the rest of the costume include palm fibre and fabric worn underneath to completely disguise the wearer.

Features: The features of Mende mask are very distinctive and idealise female beauty. Mende mask has small delicate facial features and elaborately styled hairs and rings around the neck representing good health. These are the feminine characteristics Mende people find beautiful in a woman.

What is it used for? Women elders of the Sande society wear Sowe mask, and they appear a few times during the process of initiation of girls into adulthood. "The Sowe mask belongs to a cult within the Mende society called Sande". (Zachary Kingdon 2018, World Museum Liverpool).



Mende mask:
World Museum
Liverpool.



Fact file

Helmet Mask

Name of mask: Epa mask

Where it is from? Yoruba, Ekiti Nigeria

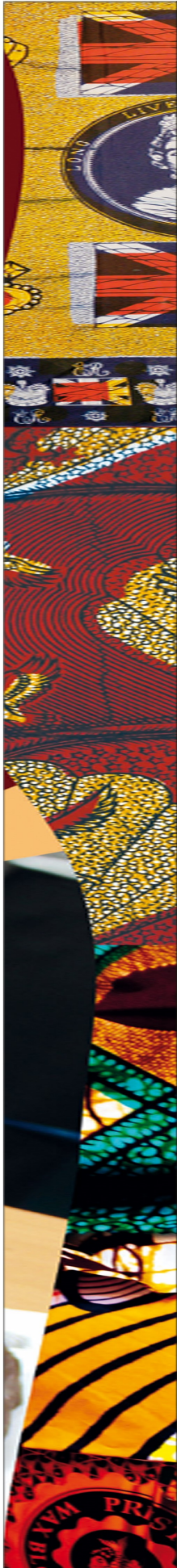
What is it made from? Wood.

What is the mask used for? Epa mask is ceremonial mask worn by the Yoruba people of Nigeria during the Epa masquerade dance to honour Yoruba ancestors and to promote fertility and a plentiful harvest.

Features: The main structure is hollow with large almond shaped eyes, square-shaped ears and large square-shaped mouths. The entire mask is painted red, black and white.

Epa Helmet mask:
Smithsonian
Museum
of African Art





Fact file

Cap Crests (forehead Mask)

Cap crest mask also known as forehead mask is worn on the forehead leaving the wearer's face exposed or covered with net and fabrics with rest of the body.

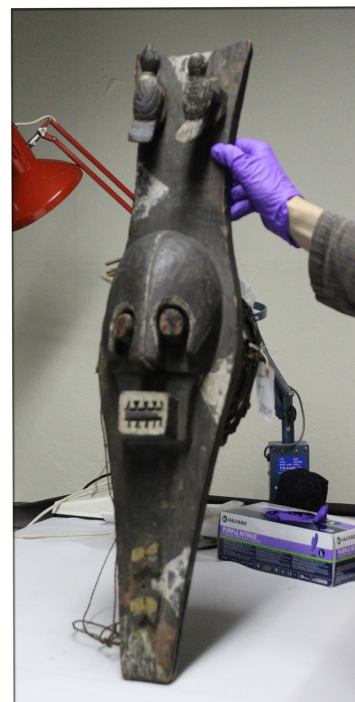
Name: Umale mask of the Ilaje and Itsekiri people

Where it is from? Itsekiri / Ilaje Nigeria

What is it made from? Wood.

What is the mask used for? The itsekiri and Ilaje people it is used during ceremonies ranging from entertainment to funerals. harvest.

Features: The main structure carries two water bird representing water spirits.



Umale mask:
World Museum
Liverpool



Fact file

Forehead Mask

Name: Crocodile mask

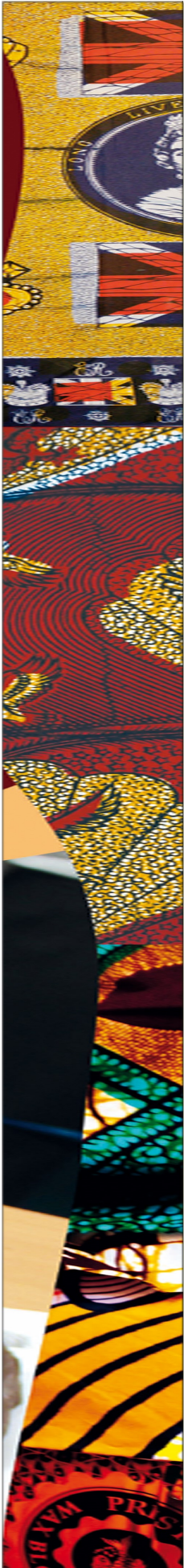
Where it is from? Oban, Cross River, Nigeria

What is it made from? Carved from wood and covered with animal skin, palm fibre, bamboo, metal, pigment.

Features: It depicts a long, tapering crocodile head covered with animal skin and bearing representations of horns or crowns. When in use, they are attached to a woven basket cap, sits on the masquerade's forehead. The face and rest of the body are covered with fabric.



Crocodile mask:
Smithsonian Museum
of African art



Fact file

Helmet Crests Mask

Unlike the helmet masks, these masks do not fit over the wearer's entire head but rather are worn like a hat resting on the head. Gelede mask is an example of this style and comes with many variations.

Name: Mask of the Gelede brotherhood

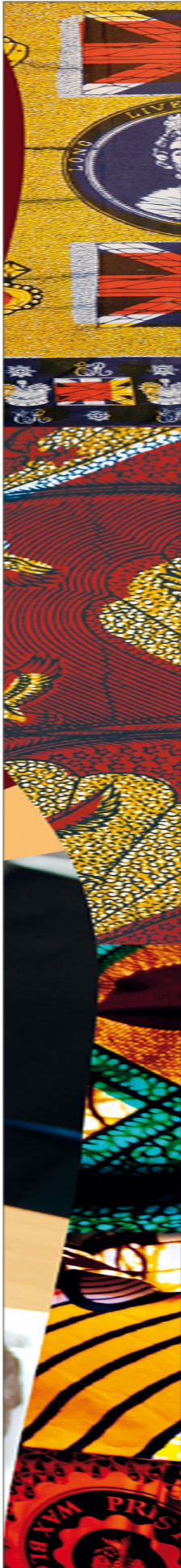
Where it is from? Western Yoruba Abeokuta, Nigeria

What is it made from? Clay

What is the mask used for? Gelede mask is worn during the process of initiation of boys of puberty age into adulthood.



Gelede mask:
World Museum
Liverpool



Fact file

Helmet Crest Mask

Name: Egugun mask

Where it is from? Yoruba, Nigeria

What is it made from? Wood

What is it used for? This Egugun mask is used in annual ceremonies by Yoruba people to worship their ancestors.

Features: It is a big mask. The wearer of the mask is always a man.



Egugun mask:
Horniman Museum
London



Fact file

Headdress Mask

There are varying styles of headdress mask. The headdress masks usually is set on a base, which sits on top of the wearers head.

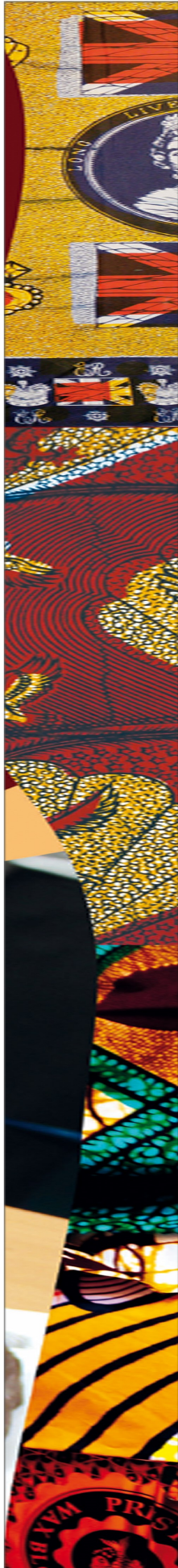
Name: Yaka Mask

Where it is from? Yaka, Congo

What is it made from? This headdress mask is carved in soft wood and painted in red and black. The beard is made of twigs and long plant fibres.



Yaka mask:
World Museum
Liverpool



Fact file

Seaddress Mask

Name: Ikenga Mask

Where it is from? Ibo tribe, Eastern Nigeria

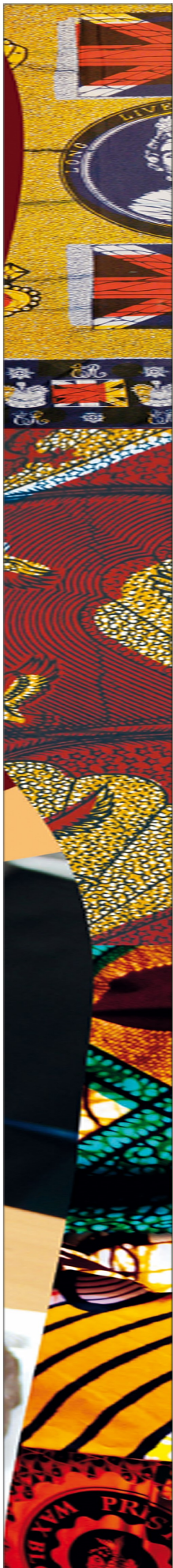
What is it made from? Cane, bamboo, fabric, sequins, foam.

Features: Men make and wear these masks in special enclosures in the woods, which cannot be observed by outsiders or women. The mask is decorated with the fabric of different colours and raffia.

What is it used for? The Ikenga masquerade dances during festivals and special ceremonies. Igbo people believe strongly in their traditions and culture; one of which is that the masquerade symbolised life.



Ikengam masquerade performing at CHF Festac '77 0th anniversary in Manchester



Fact file

Headdress Mask

Name: Kuba Mask

Where it is from? Zaire, Congo

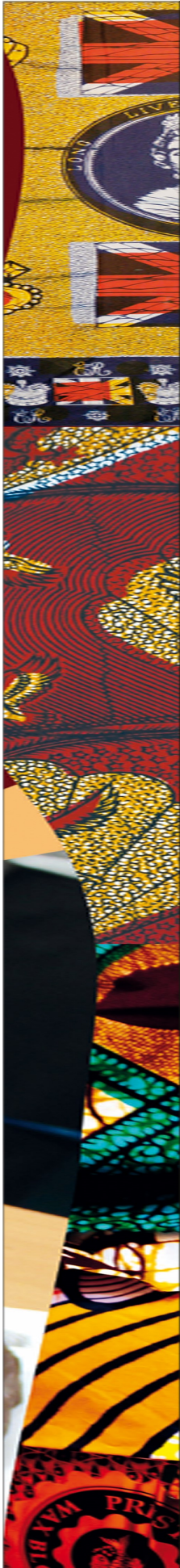
What is it made from? The headdress mask is made from woven raffia textiles, and mats, plaited with courie shell and beads decorations.

What is the mask used for? These masks are usually worn by Kuba kings.

Features: Originally, this masks was made by women but has been taken over by men and now used for initiation ceremonies.

Kuba mask:
World Museum,
Liverpool.





Fact file

Shoulder Mask

These are usually large and heavy and are designed to rest on the wearer's shoulder.

Name: Nimba (d'mba) mask.

Where it is from? Baga people of Guinea.

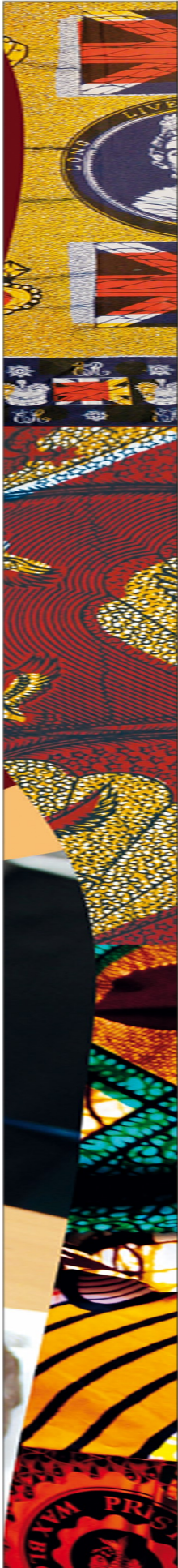
What is it made from? Wood and raffia fibre.

What is the mask used for? The mask is worn on the dancer's shoulders and appears at planting and harvest festivals, births, weddings and ceremonies to invoke fertility.

Features: Generally, Nimba mask have legs or posts (for placement on the shoulders) and exaggerated, hanging which represent motherhood and femininity. The Sterile women in the Simo society invoked it as a goddess of fertility.



<https://www.justcollecting.com/antiques/baga-nimba-dmba-mask>.



Fact file

Shoulder mask

These are usually large and heavy and are designed to rest on the shoulders.

Name: Wurkun mask

Where it is from? Zaire, Congo

What is the mask from? Mumuye people of Benue, Eastern Nigeria.

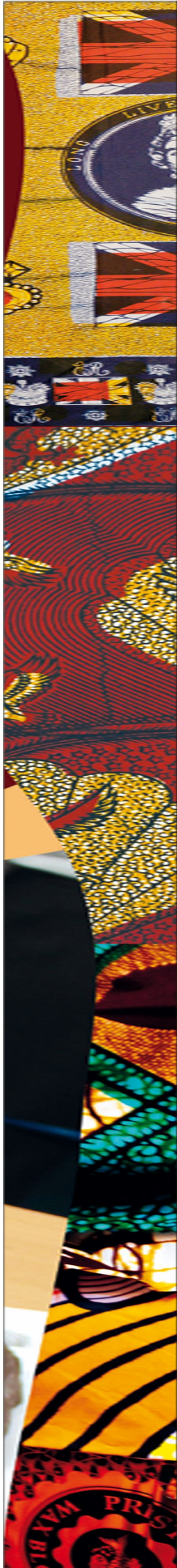
What is the mask made from? Wood and brass.

What is the mask used for? Traditionally, Wurkun mask was used during pre-war ceremonies, but nowadays they are used to celebrate the birth, marriages, harvest and other occasions.

Features: Wurkun mask from Mumuye people of Nigeria is composed of a head on an elongated neck.



Wurkun mask:
Hamill gallery



Fact file

Pendant Mask

Name of the mask: Queen Idia mask of Benin.

Where it is from? Benin, Nigeria

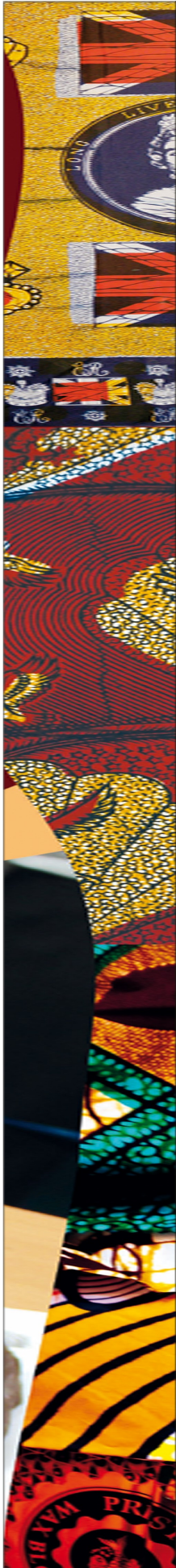
What is it made from? Ivory, coral beads and inlay of metal.

Features: The Queen Idia ivory pendant mask depicts the lyoba (king's mother). It became very prominent after it became the symbol of the second World Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977.

What is the mask used for? The Oba of Benin wore the mask on his hip during special ceremonies as part of the regalia.



Queen Idia mask of the Benin Kingdom:
The British Museum
London



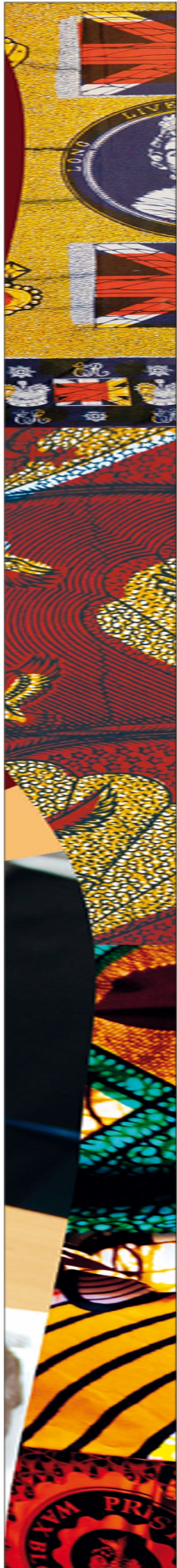
Activity Sheets

These activity sheets encourage close observation of a chosen mask, looking in detail at the mask and where it comes from.

Activity 1

1. Many African mask are made of _____, but and _____ are also used.
2. African mask are categorises by how it is _____.





Activity 2

Activity Sheets

Mark each of the statements with an image that corresponds with it. Some may have more than one answer.

Face mask

Sowei mask

Worn exclusively by women

Egungun mask

Initiation of boys

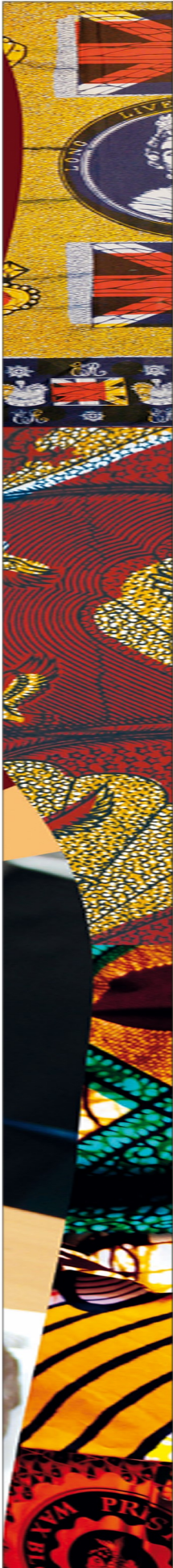
Gelede mask

Covers the whole head

Queen Idia mask

It is always worn by men

Senufo mask



Activity 3

Activity Sheet

Name the mask.

Look at the mask below and try to figure out the the character and type of the mask.



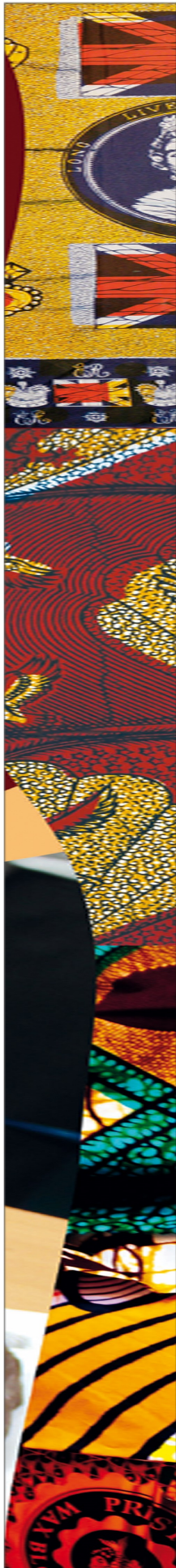
This _____ mask has small _____ braided _____ and three _____ around the neck.

1. Once you have written about each character, answer the questions below by filling in the blanks on the crossword with the answers.
2. The _____ mask is worn during girls' initiation in _____ by the Mende people of Sierra Leone and sande society of Liberia.
3. It is made from _____ tree stumps.

Sierra
Leone

Hollow

Sowei



Activity Sheet

Activity 4

Where in Africa?

Looking at where masks originate, locating them on a map trail gets students thinking about masks are their origin.

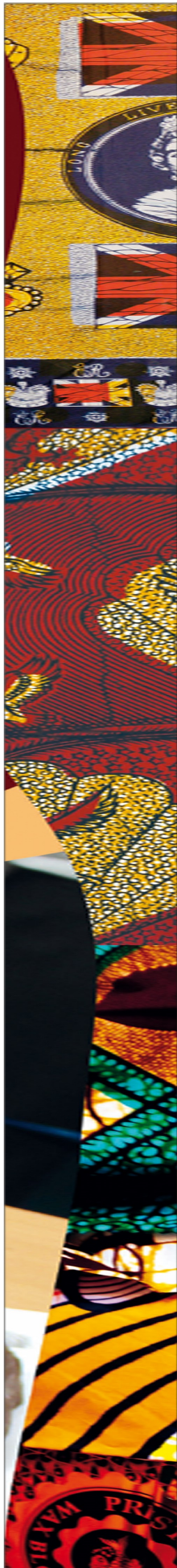
Suggestions:

Give students the fact file section of the information sheet and ask them to place each masks on the Africa map. You could give the information behind the masks orally or ask the student to place the mask to the country of origin or culture to which they belong.

Map of Africa



Map: Maphill



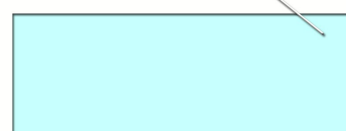
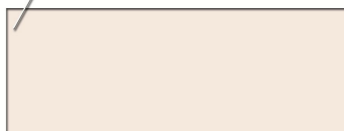
Activity 5

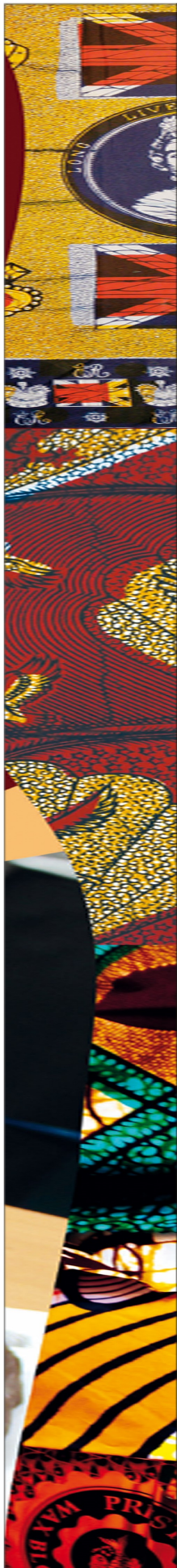
Activity Sheet

What is it made from?

This activity gets students thinking about the materials used in the production of masks.

Students will work best if divided into small groups to complete the worksheets.





Activity Sheet

Activity 6

Match the photos to the name and how it is worn.

Vertically covering
the face.

Helmet mask.



Encasing the
entire head.

Cap Crest
mask.



As crest
resting on
on the head.

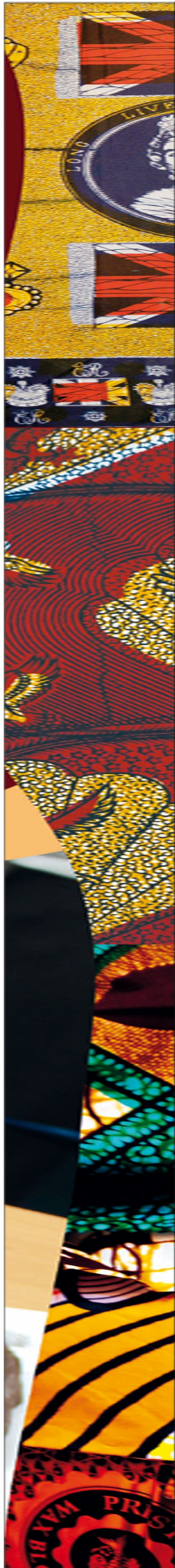
Face mask.



Sits on
the forehead.

Helmet mask.





Activity 7

Activity Sheet

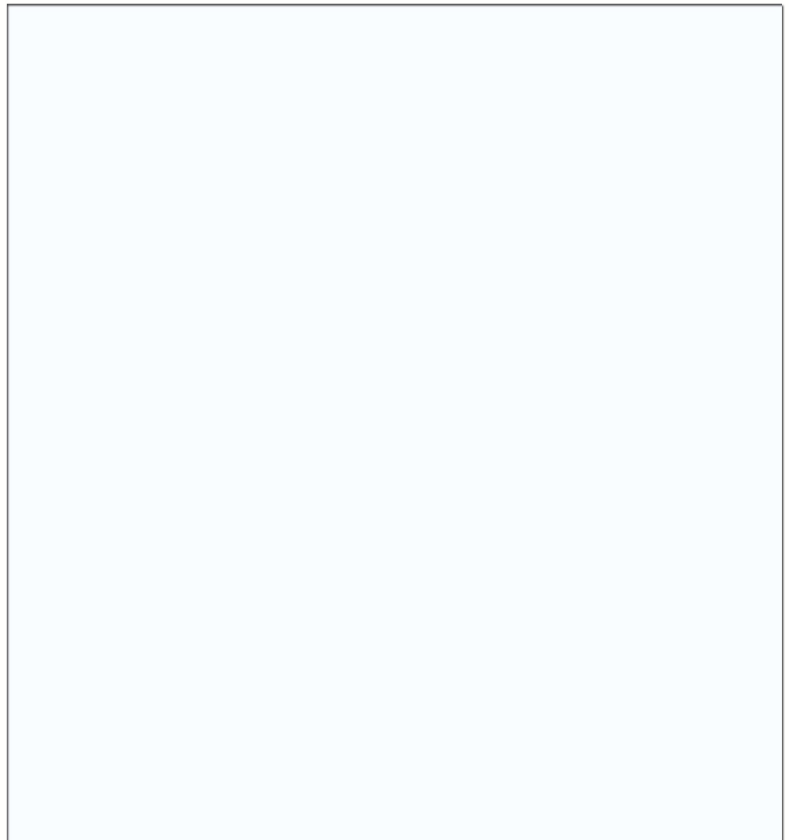
Draw and create a mask.

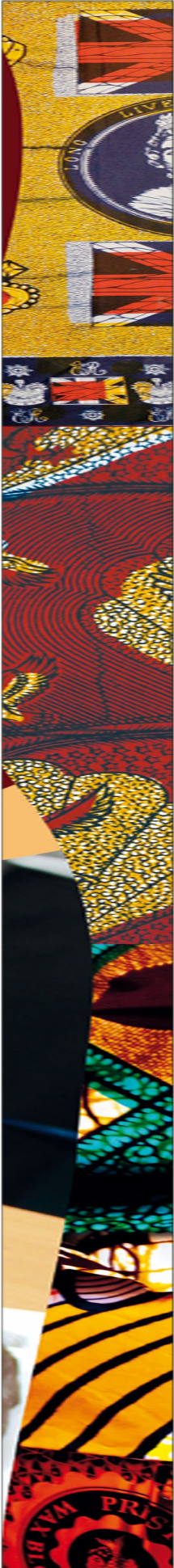
Work with a partner for this activity. Describe your favourite mask to our partner while they draw it in the frame below from your description. Include lots of details and think about the features of your mask.

Add some information about the masks you have drawn, like where it is from and what it is used for.

Draw a shape of a face.

The shape can be oval, circular, rectangular or elongated.





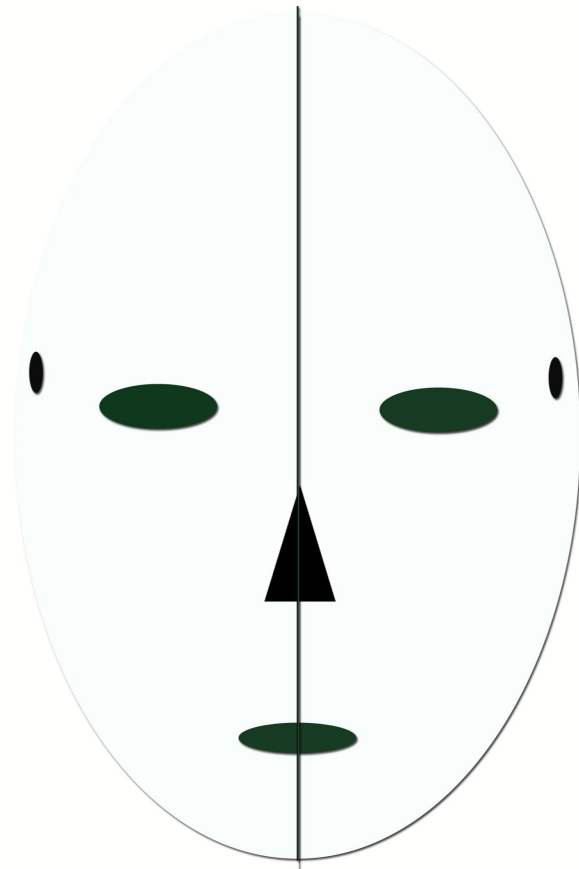
Activity 8

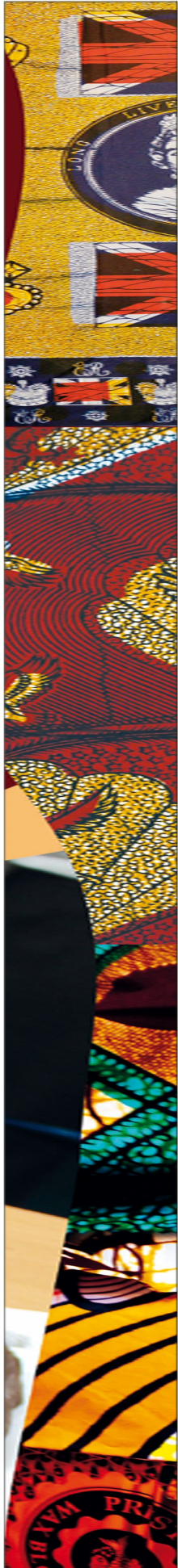
Activity Sheet

Mask making.

This session will teach you how to draw and make your own African masks.

- Freehand draw an oval shape on a large piece of cardboard.
- Cut it out.
- Cut out eyeholes nose and mouth.





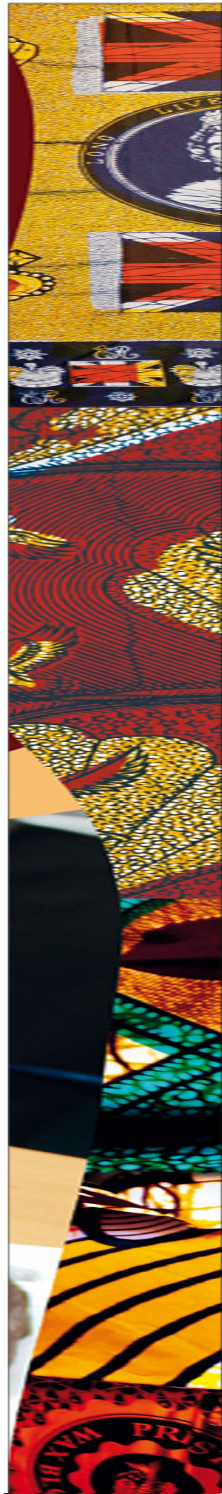
Activity 9

Activity Sheet

Follow up activities ideas

Make your own paper mask.

1. Take a sheet of foil and ask a friend to help you mould it to your face. Press it gently into the features of your mouth, eyes and nose.
2. Scrunch up some newspaper sheets to rest your face mould on and lay it gently on the table.
3. Cover each strip of newspaper with the paste and lay it gently in one layer over your foil mould. Make sure you don't squash your features.
4. Let it dry and then and make another layer. You might need to repeat this a few times to get a solid facemask.
5. When the mask is completely dry, you can decorate it.



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