

SYMMETRY MASKS

This lesson is adapted from Foreman's *Maskwork* (pp. 67-73).

Introduction

Symmetry masks are another simple way to introduce your students to maskmaking while reinforcing geometric concepts like symmetry and shape. Here students will create half-masks. These could be a great way to create costumes for class plays or other activities.

Materials

Construction paper or card stock pre-cut into half sheets (ready for students to fold and cut)

Various types of paper for embellishments, additional parts of mask

Felt

Elastic or string

Masking tape

Yarn

Paint, markers, and/or crayons

Embellishments and decorations

Procedure

1. **How to make a symmetrical mask:** Here you have the option of allowing students to experiment or play, first trying to figure out how to create a symmetrical mask. If you are short on time, skip the experimentation, and begin to guide students through the process. Be sure to explain how and why the process here creates a symmetrical shape.
 - a. **Process:** Instruct students to fold the half sheet of paper in half. Then, they sketch out the side view of the face down to the upper lip. Include a space for the nose and draw an eye shape shown. Cat or butterfly masks can be very striking. Birds, rats and mice can also be fun for students to make.
2. **Cut out the face shape:** Keep the mask folded and cut out the mask shape. Remind students not to cut on the fold.
3. **Draw the eyes and cut them out:** If the eyes aren't drawn in yet, have students do that now. Remind them that the eyes can't be on the fold or too close to the opposite edge. Young students may need help with this step.
4. **Construct the features:** Students now have the base of their mask, and can add on features like a nose, whiskers, ears, eyes, eyebrows, feathers, fur and hair. All of these things can be constructed out of extra paper or other materials. Encourage students to experiment with folding, twisting, curling and shaping the paper into three-dimensional shapes. Use masking tape to join the created features to the mask.
5. **Supports for the mask:** Decide how the mask will be worn? Tied on to the head with elastic or string or held up using a stick. If a stick is going to be used, it should be glued onto the mask before the surface of the mask is finished. If you are going to use elastic to hold the mask on,

you can create loops that will go around the ears or create one band to go around the back of the head.

6. **Test the mask:** Have the students try on their mask. Does it fit? Can they see through the eyes? Does it fit around their nose comfortably? Does it stay in place?
7. **Finishing:** Students can add symmetrical patterns with markers or other materials like sequins, feathers, buttons, etc.

Examples of Symmetrical Masks



All images taken from <http://artolazzi.blogspot.com/2010/12/symmetrical-masks.html>