



# Spirit Masks

**GRADE:** 4                      **TIME:** 2 sessions

Developed by Karen Stomberg, FNSBSD Art Specialist



**KIT INCLUDES:**

- lesson plan
- vocabulary board
- procedure boards with project examples
- other teaching boards:
- traditional Yupik masks
- contemporary masks (2)
- Yupik mask styles and features( drawings)
- Spirit masks, old and new
- CD-*Drums of the North* by Pamyua
- DVD-*Agayuliyararput: Our Way of Making Prayer*

**MATERIALS:**

- white paper plate, 6-7". (Chinet brand is best or cut white poster board circles)
- markers, broad-line colors and fine-line black
- 5- 6" pieces 1/16" dowel, wooden skewers or popsicle sticks
- construction paper—many colors, assorted small sizes
- metallic paper, small pieces
- scissors, white glue
- strapping tape

**LESSON DESCRIPTION:**  
Students examine and discuss contemporary and traditional Yupik masks. Several typical mask elements are recognised and incorporated in a mask related to student’s life and interests.

**VOCABULARY:**

Yupik	traditional
spirit	contemporary
shaman	appendage
asymmetrical	

**ART ELEMENTS:**

- Line
- Shape/Form
- Color
- Value
- Texture
- Space/Perspective

**ART PRINCIPLES:**

- Pattern
- Rhythm/movement
- Proportion/Scale
- Balance
- Unity
- Emphasis

**CONTENT CONNECTIONS:**  
Social studies  
Language arts  
Citizenship

**THEMES:**  
Storytelling

**OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:** Students will:

- explore how masks have been made and used in traditional and contemporary Yupik life
- consider how artists incorporate traditional ideas to make personal contemporary art
- observe common features in old and new Yupik masks
- create a mask with meaning to their own life, incorporating common elements of Yupik masks
- present their mask to the class orally describing the personal meaning of the elements--storytelling

**PREPARE:**

1. Gather and prepare materials as listed above.
2. Make a sample to better understand lesson and guarantee student success.
3. Preview video and CD.
4. Locate masks, mask makers, storytellers, dancers or elders in your community and arrange a visit to your classroom.



## ENGAGE AND EXPLORE:

If possible, bring in mask makers, storytellers, dancers or elders from your community to visit with your classroom.

**Introduce students to Yupik masks in traditional (old) and contemporary (new) life. (Note: Yupik is alternatively spelled Yu'pik.)**

A. Begin by telling students to close their eyes.

Ask them to:

- Imagine that you are telling an important story to the whole class.
- You want everyone including yourself to forget who you are so you can concentrate on the story. You want to become someone or something else.

Ask them:

- What could you do to help the illusion?

Most classes will have ideas and think of masks; if not, prompt them.

Brainstorm situations when we use masks: ie. Halloween, costume parties, theater, etc.

B. Display the Spirit Masks Old and New boards.

**OLD:** Look at the old pictures first. Ask students to tell the class what they see in the bird mask. Show them the dancer wearing the mask and the photo of the Yupik man (perhaps a shaman) posing in a mask for the photographer.

- traditional Yupik masks were made to use in dance ceremonies. The exact meaning is not understood by us, but these masks were powerful and had strong spiritual and ceremonial uses.

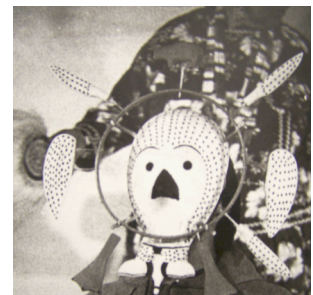
- traditional masks were usually made by the shaman, who was the spiritual leader, or by a good craftsman who was asked by the shaman to create a mask. They were very beautiful and were collected for museums all over the world.

- Most of the dance masks were worn only once, then given away, left outside or essentially thrown out. These masks became highly prized by collectors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then after the arrival of the white missionaries, who discouraged ceremonial dancing, mask making was only practiced as an art form to be sold. These masks were intended to be hung on walls, not worn.

**NEW:** Look at the new photos. In the 1980's a revival of carving masks for ceremonial dances began. Master Yupik carvers created masks for dancers in the Bethel area. Masks were alive again!

Show students the photos on NEW board of the making, presenting and finally wearing of a snowy owl mask. Look at the pictures of John McIntyre dancing. Ask students;

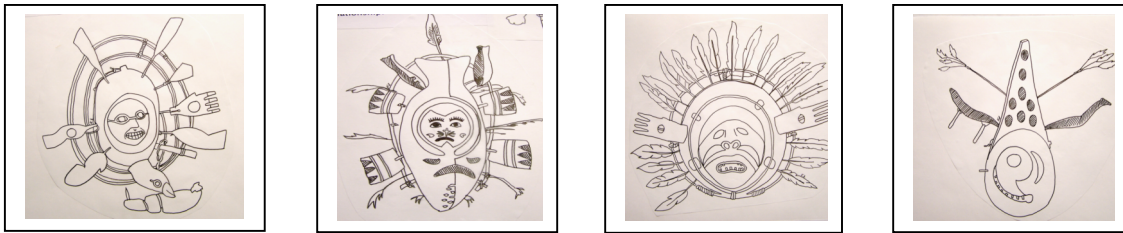
- Do they know a carver?
- Have they danced? Have they seen a dance?
- Do they have masks at home or have they noticed them anywhere?



- There are Alaskan native artists today carving masks in the traditional styles. There are also Alaska native artists working in a very contemporary way—creating masks that reflect life in a modern world.

C. Display the 4 boards of Traditional Yupik Mask styles.

Tell students that these masks represent frequently used features in Yupik masks. They will be able to identify Yupik masks from these elements. Here is the information on the Yupik mask styles boards:



- These drawings represent frequently used styles of traditional masks made by Yup'ik people of the Yukon-Kuskoquim Delta area. The masks represented here were all created before 1900.

•Traditional masks were carved from driftwood, using an adze first to rough out the shape. A curved knife was used for the main carving. Feathers and other appendages were made to stick out of the sides of the masks to quiver as the dancer moved.

•Animal masks with a human face, called an inua or spirit carved into it. It is difficult to know the exact purpose of these beautiful masks. Their use was special and ceremonial, perhaps to help ensure successful hunting and fishing. The Yup'ik people have a strong connection to the land and to animals and these masks represent aspects of that interrelationship.

•Some accounts attribute the holes in the outstretched hand-like extensions on some masks to the idea of hunting with a compassionate spirit. The hunters will allow some animals to escape their hands and will take only what they need.

•Concentric Rings were often incorporated in Yup'ik mask designs to represent the world and levels of the universe.

•Asymmetrical, unbalanced looking masks--These represent humorous, evil or weird spirits, often well-known to people in legend.

D. Display the two-fold Traditional Yupik Masks Photos.

Ask students: What are the traditional Yupik mask features that you see here?

E. Display the two-fold boards of Contemporary masks.

• Look at the boards of Henry Shavings masks. Henry is from the village of Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island. His masks look very traditional and have traditional features. These are all on walls in schools and museums!

Ask students:

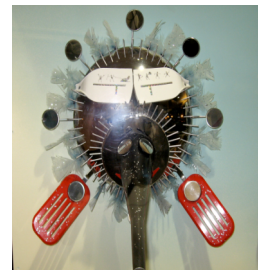
- Were these masks made to be worn? How can you tell?
- How can you tell that the carver is Yupik?
- What are the Yupik features that you see?



•Look at the boards showing the work of contemporary artists Jim Schoppert and Larry Beck. These artists use modern materials like shiny metal, bright paints, plastic and found objects.

Ask students:

- What are these made of?
- What are the traditional Yupik mask ideas used by these artists?



**CREATE:**

Students make a mask about what is important in their own life. Play the enclosed CD called Drums of the North by Pamyua as students work.

Materials for making a mask are listed on page 1. Please notice:

- for base of mask: small (7") white paper plate-heavy Chinet brand best (or cut out a circle of heavy cardboard using the circle pattern attached)
- for face: circle or oval (pattern attached) white poster board, cover copier paper or construction paper
- glue gun, 3" piece wire or yarn for hanging

Demonstrate each step for students.

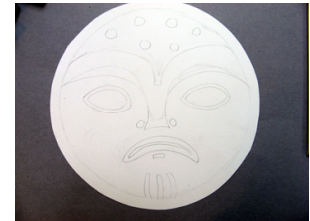
1. Use a pattern to trace an oval or circle to make a mask face shape on the white poster board, cover paper or construction paper. Cut out the shape.

2. Draw your mask face features with pencil onto your face shape.

Look at displayed mask pictures and features board.

Choose ideas for:

- the forehead, hairline and nose.
- the mouth. Is your mask female (mouth down)? Or male (mouth up)?
- the eyes round or oval? With pupils or not?



3. Color your mask using marker. Choose a color scheme of *not more than 2 colors* and black.

•Fill large areas first. Use the marker carefully, making broad lines in the same direction.

- Add details and patterns.
- Outline features with fine-line black pen



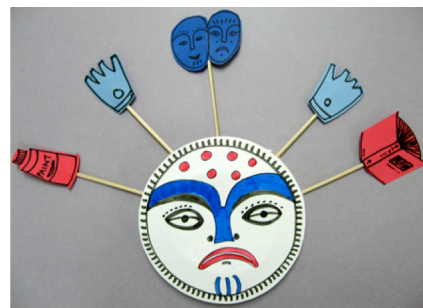
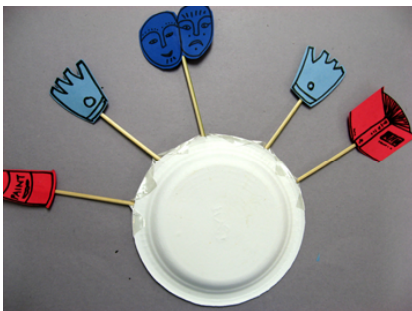
4. Create appendages. Think of 3 or more things that are important to you. These may be things like pets, sports, hobbies, activities, places or people you care about, enjoy or would like good luck with. You can add feather shapes, hands or feet like on many Yupik masks, as well.

- Draw a simple SYMBOL for those things on colored construction paper.
- Cut out shapes
- Use fine-line black marker to add a few details.
- Glue shapes to sticks using white glue.



5. Tape appendages to mask base. (The base paper plate or cut-out heavy cardboard circle)

- Arrange the sticks around with plate (upside down!) mark on the edge with a pencil
- Flip plate back over and tape the sticks on at your marks. Use 2" strips filament strapping tape or duct tape cut into 1" x 2" strips. Fold tape around to back of plate to hold sticks firmly in place.



6. Glue colored face to base with appendages already taped on.

7. Add a loop of wire or yarn to the back with a glue gun for hanging.

**CLOSE:**

Assessment/follow-up activity. Have students present their masks, telling what the appendages mean to them and what features of traditional Yupik masks they have used in their mask.

Play music and dance!

Teacher administered assessment tool

DN	OK	UP	Lesson_____ Teacher_____
			Grade_____ Date_____ Number of Students_____
			Using the thumbs up, ok, and down technique, ask your students the following questions and record their answers. (K=knowledge, S=skills, C= creativity, A=attitude, E=engagement)
			1. Did you include traditional Yupik mask features in your mask? (K)
			2. Can you tell me what traditional Yupik masks were used for? (K)
			3. Is your mask about your own life? (C)
			4. Did you use paper, markers, sticks and glue to make a mask? (S)
			5. Does your mask have your own unique personal touch? (C)
			6. Did you listen carefully and follow directions?(A)
			7. Did you work hard during this lesson?(E)

Teacher self-critique

8. My teaching of this lesson:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
needed improvement							was highly successful		

9. What would I do differently next time?

**ALIGNMENT:**

**Alignment of Standards:**

Art: A1,3,4; B1,3,4,5,8; C2a,b,e; D2,5  
 English A,B  
 History: A,B  
 Geography: B  
 Health: A  
 World Language: B

**Alignment of GLE's:**

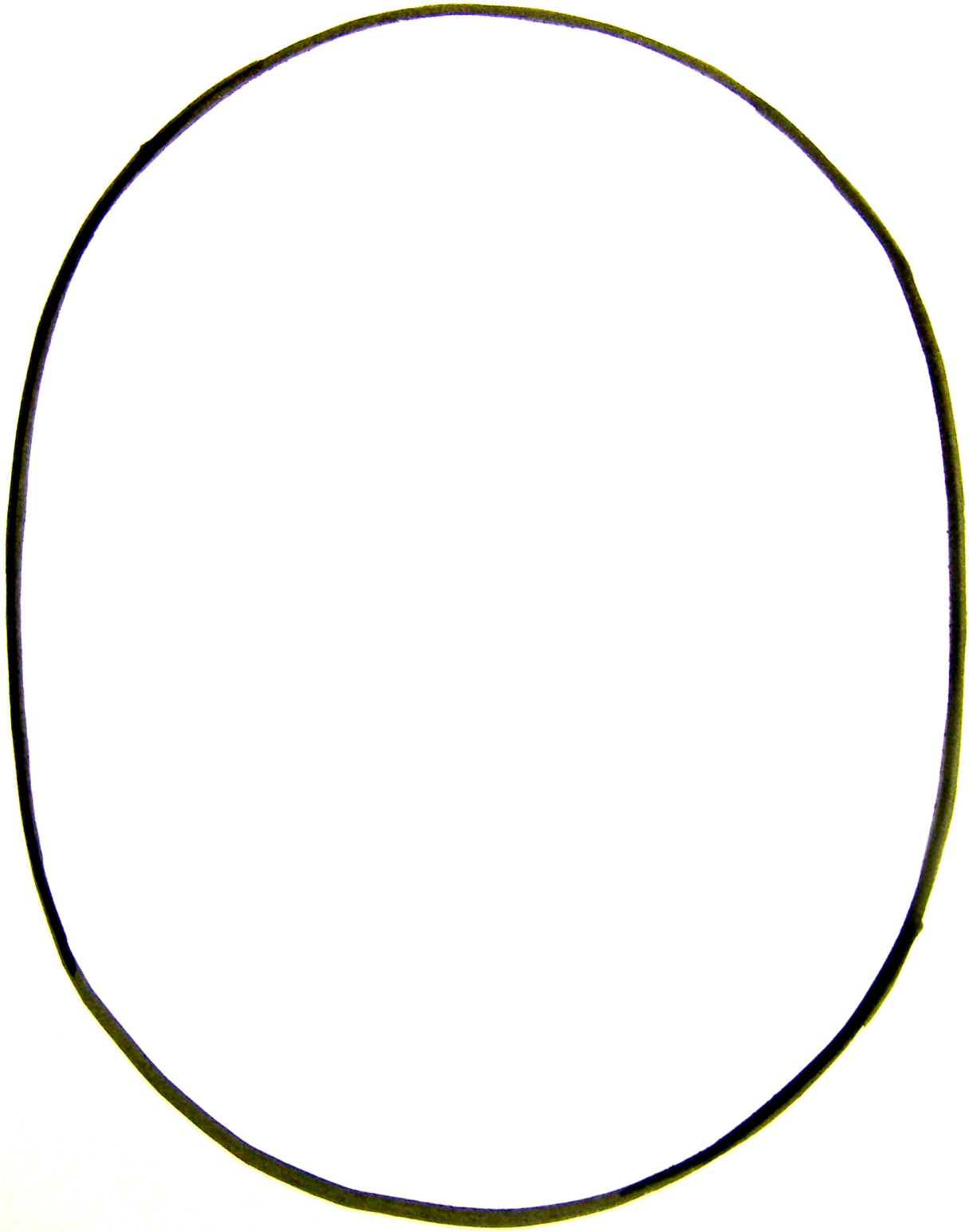
Reading: R1.1, R2.8

**CREDITS:**

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# Oval Mask Face Pattern



# Circle Mask Face Pattern

