

## Mask Making

### Paper Plate Masks

Ages K-3

Paper plates are one of the simplest and most effective mask making materials for children, especially young ones! First supply 3 sturdy paper plates per child, and, if possible, little bowls too. The first task is to decide whether you will put your own face in the middle of the plate, or somewhere else. For instance, you may want it to be a half-mask, leaving the mouth open, with the head extending above your own head. Be creative!

Then, hold the paper plate up to your face, and put your two index fingers on the outside of the plate where your eyes are. Have a partner mark those spots with a pencil. (See how accurate your hands are in knowing your own face, even without the aid of sight!) Take the paper plate off your face and make a pin prick where the marks are. Check if you can see through the little holes and if not, adjust before drawing and cutting your larger eye holes.



Draw your mask character's features on the plate, attaching (with staples) and overlapping the other plates, bowls, or cut out shapes for ears, hair, noses, etc. Be sure to make space for your own nose, by either cutting a hole there, or making a U shaped flap in the right spot. Color and decorate your masks by stapling, gluing, taping, sewing or otherwise attaching materials such as yarn, fabric, fur, buttons, glitter, or anything you can think of!

Last, use a hole punch to make a hole on each side of your mask, at least an inch from the edge. String elastic or string through the holes and tie a knot to secure it, measuring the elastic so that it fits your head, or the string so that it can be tied behind your head. Voila, your mask is done!

## Paper Maché Masks

Paper maché is one of the most simple, durable, and versatile materials from which to make masks! Children from about 7-10 will enjoy this process, and come away with a wearable, expressive, and fun character!

What you need:

- Styrofoam wig head, cut in half
- Oil clay or plasticene
- Vaseline
- Newspaper and paper bags, cut or torn into approximately 1"x2"strips.
- White glue (like Elmer's)
- Acrylic paints
- 1/2 – 1" thick elastic

Place your 1/2 wig head in front of you. Decide if you will make a half mask (to below the nose) or a full mask which would include the chin. Cover the wig head with plenty of oil clay, working it well and having plenty extra.

Take your time to sculpt your mask with oil clay, onto the wig head. Exaggerate the features and avoid undercuts where possible.

When your mask is sculpted, apply, but do not rub in, a layer of Vaseline on every part of your mask, including any part of the wig head that may be uncovered.

Gather a pile of paper strips. Mix glue with water in a ratio of 2 parts glue to 1 part water. Mixture should be the consistency of drinkable yogurt.

Dip a paper strip into the glue mixture. Make sure it gets well covered, then wipe off excess dripping glue. Lay the strip onto the mask sculpture. Repeat, overlapping each piece with a previously laid piece.

Cover the entire mask with paper bag strips, then do the next layer in newspaper. Do the third layer with paper bag strips, and, if necessary or desired, a fourth layer can be applied in either newspaper, paper bags, or tissue paper for an interesting texture.

Allow to dry at least overnight. When dry, hold the front of the mask with one hand, and carefully remove paper maché from the mask mold. If it is difficult, separate the paper maché from the mold by running a dull knife between the clay and the paper maché until all the edges are released. Then carefully pry the mask from the mold.

Clean the inside of the mask by wiping well with paper towels.

Paint with acrylic paints, cut out eye holes with an Exacto knife, and decorate as desired.

Punch a hole on either side of the mask, at least an inch from the edge near your ears. Measure your head, and thread the appropriate length of elastic through, tying knots to secure.

Now bring your mask to life, with movement!! Welcome to the world of masks!