

HHS-World Studies (H)

Name: _____

Exchange & Encounter: African Mask Project Date: _____ Period: _____

Standard: *I can produce clear and coherent writing in which I answer a prompt in grade-level and academic language*

Objective:

1. **Read** a simple text to determine main idea and supporting details of a text
2. **Write** a coherent paragraph that explains the mask you create
3. **Create** a mask that represents a historical figure or celebrity

Setting the Stage: *In Africa during the Middle Ages, trade routes became the lifeblood that turned cities into kingdoms and kingdoms into empires. The spread of Islam fostered relationships between traders and introduced new ideas among cities and cultures. The expansive size of this continent included/s hundreds of different ethnic and tribal groups; one of the main characteristics of culture of African peoples is use of masks in rituals and ceremonies. These masks represent spirits of animals or ancestors, mythological heroes, values or a form of honoring of a person in a symbolic way. They are made from materials that were local and some gained from trade, such as wood, pottery, textiles, copper and bronze. Details could be made from animal teeth, hair, bones and horns as well as feathers, seashells and even straw and egg shells.*

Part 1: Reading Comprehension

→ Read the following text and answer the questions that follow

THE FUNCTION OF AN AFRICAN MASK

In the early 20th Century, artists like Pablo Picasso and Andre Derain were inspired by the bold **abstract** designs that they discovered in African tribal masks. They collected and used these works of art to influence their own style. In effect, they used African culture to refresh the tired tradition of figure painting in Western Art.

As a result, we now tend to admire the bold design and **abstract** patterns of African masks through European eyes. We appreciate them as exhibits on museum walls, cut off from their original meaning and intended power. However, this is not how they were designed to be viewed.

African masks should be seen as part of a ceremonial costume. They are used in religious and social events to represent the spirits of ancestors or to control the good and evil forces in the community. They come to life, possessed by their spirit in the performance of the dance, and are enhanced by both the music and atmosphere of the occasion. Some combine human and animal features to unite man with his natural environment. This bond with nature is of great importance to the African and through the ages masks have always been used to express this relationship.

Questions: write the answer that best answers the question in the space provided

1. _____ The following statement best reflects the main idea of the above text:
 - a. The best examples of African masks were created by artists such as Pablo Picasso and Andre Derain and influenced the style of the masks.
 - b. American and European viewers of African masks today will never understand how they were made or their symbolism because of their biases
 - c. Though modern artists created a bias in the display and viewing of African masks and art, today's audiences should be aware of the original variety of uses of the masks and the symbols used in them to express relationships.

Vocab Box

Abstract: something that is not physical, an idea; abstract art portrays what an artist feels and thinks, rather than what he or she sees. An abstract artist uses colors and shapes to express his or her emotions and ideas (see examples in FIGURE 1)



Figure 1 examples of abstract art-modern and ancient



2. ____ To find the main idea, we
 - a. put together expressed supporting details
 - b. found direct quotes in the text
 - c. made an inference and added it to the main idea of the passage

3. ____ The function of an African Mask is to
 - a. be part of ceremonial, religious and social events
 - b. represent the spirit of ancestors and control good and evil forces in a community
 - c. use human and animal features to unite man and nature
 - d. all of the above

THE USE OF PATTERN IN AFRICAN MASKS

Bold pattern, either painted or carved, is a powerful and expressive element in African mask design. Most patterns tend to be **geometrical** and **symmetrical** and are used in a variety of ways.

Different **geometric** patterns are sometimes used to distinguish between male and female masks. Square and triangular checkerboard grids are often carved to decorate sections of a design. A variety of complex braided hairstyles adorn the top of the head.

Some patterns are often used as a form of coded information. Parallel, zigzag, **cruciform**, curved and spiral lines, representing **scarification marks** or tattoos, are frequently used to adorn the **planes of the mask face**. These can represent social status or have magical or religious powers.

Interlacing crosses and **geometric** forms are often seen as details on African masks. With the spread of the Muslim faith in Africa, some of these designs show an influence of the decorative ideals of Islamic Art.

Questions: write the answer that best answers the question in the space provided

4. ____ A variety of patterns are used to express all BUT that following
 - a. differentiate between cardinal directions
 - b. signify social status
 - c. possess magical or religious powers
 - d. differentiate between genders

5. ____ Which of the following elements denotes cultural diffusion (spread of an idea from one culture to another)
 - a. squares and triangles
 - b. parallel lines
 - c. interlacing crosses and geometric forms
 - d. spiral lines

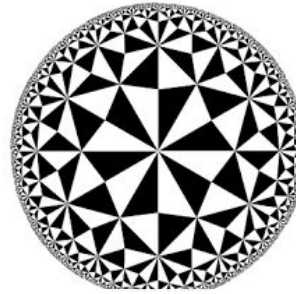


Figure 2 a geometric and symmetrical design



Figure 3 a modern geometric design

Vocab Box

Geometric: characterized by or decorated with regular lines and shapes. (see FIGURE 2 AND FIGURE 3)

Symmetrical: one half mirrors the other half; sides are even and exact parts face each other (see FIGURE 2)

Cruciform: shape of the cross, usually Christian

Scarification marks: marks made by scratches leaving scars on the skin (see FIGURE 4)

Planes of the mask face: surfaces on the face, like the forehead, the cheeks, the chin, the noses, etc. (see FIGURE 1)

Interlacing: cross or be crossed together, interweaving (see FIGURE 5)



Figure 5 interlacing design



Figure 4 scarification marks on the face

Part 2: Creation and Writing

Mask Requirements: Create a design for your own mask. It must include

- 3 patterns or symbols
- use of color
- no visible pencil marks (outline in marker/colored pencil/crayon)

Written Requirement: Write 1 paragraph (8 sentences) about whom the mask celebrates and what it represents.

Answer the prompt below.

- Fully answer the prompt
- **Explain** 3 symbols, marks, color, shaped used on your mask
- Include a topic sentence, conclusion, and 3 supporting details
- Use transition words
- Use grade-level vocabulary
- Double-check your grammar and mechanics!
- Cite 2 credible sources in MLA format below your paragraph

Prompt: *How does your decorative mask represent a historical figure/celebrity?*

web-outline here:

Directions: Use the organizer below to structure your ideas before writing your paragraph.

Person:

Topic Sentence:

Supporting Detail #1:

Supporting Detail #2:

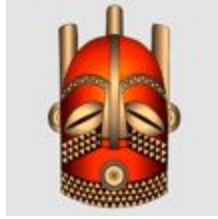
Supporting Detail #3:

Conclusion:

Examples of African Masks



Baule Mask



Biombo Mask



Bwa Mask



Dan Mask



Goma Mask



Kota Mask



Kwele Mask



Ligbi Mask



Lulua Mask



Lwalwa Mask



Pende Mask



Punu Mask

Mask Rough Draft:

