

ANCIENT GREECE

Follow-up 6: Theatre Masks

Objectives: To make a suitable theatre mask for a character from Greek legend; to know that actors in Greek theatre wore masks and costume.

Materials: Materials for making papier mache, paints, felt-tips, crayons, picture books, post-cards, prints showing Greek heroes and monsters

Class set-up: Activity may be best done individually or else in pairs; suitable costumes could also be made, in which case a small group could work together on one character to produce the mask and costume.

Vocabulary: Legend, myth, names of the heroes/monsters chosen for the activity e.g. Medusa, Herakles, Achilles, Cyclops

Activity:

Tell the class about some of the heroes and monsters of Greek legends (you could use the Geography Story about Odysseus). Look at some pictures in picture books, or prints/postcards of paintings of Greek heroes. Ask the children if the characters look like they had imagined them.

Explain that in Greek theatre, tragic plays often retold old legends. The actors would wear different masks to play the different characters in the story. Use the Festivals Explore section of the website to show examples of theatre masks. Tell the class that they are going to choose a character from a Greek legend and make a suitable theatre mask for them.

Individuals or pairs choose their character and make initial sketches of the mask, indicating colours and special details, before choosing the best one. They will then model the mask with papier mache on an inflated balloon. Once this is dry, using their chosen design the children will use paints, felt-tips or crayons to create the face of their character. They may also want to add hair, using perhaps strips of paper or wool.

Once the masks are completed, they could be modelled to the rest of the class, with the maker explaining who the mask is for and what aspects of that character they wanted the mask to emphasise.

The finished masks could be hung on a wall as part of a lovely display on Greek theatre.

Background Information:

For more information visit www.ancientgreece.co.uk and look at the following section

The Festivals Explore section of the website.

You may find the following Background Information sheets, found on www.ancientgreece.co.uk useful for this activity:

Theatre