

Kids:
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professional
artist



Art Thief

Vol. 2, Heist 10
**MAKE AN
AFRICAN MASK**

1 2 3 4 5
DIFFICULTY METER

What you need

Paper plate, paint or crayons, brown paper bag, black paper, red paper.

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Behind the mask

The carved mask is the most well-recognized and widely-appreciated African art form. Each ethnic group brings a unique shape, style and patterns to their carvings in an artistic tradition that has been handed down from generation to generation for more than a thousand years!

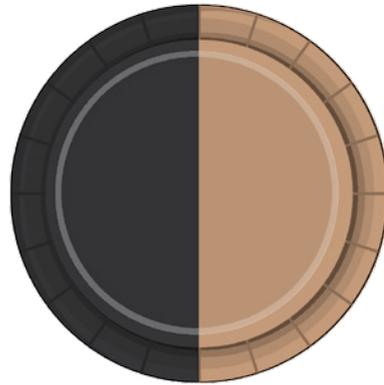
African masks can be found in many of the world's greatest museums. Seeing a group of beautiful masks can be visually thrilling, but you are only getting some of the story. The tribal masks you see were created to be part of a larger performance art that included a full costume, music, chants and audience participation.

When an actor puts on a mask, he becomes part of the spirit world. This tells the audience that the story that is about to unfold contains wisdom from the wisest ancestors and leaders and therefore is more important than anything learned in the everyday world. By repeating these ceremonies, each new generation learns the traditions and values of their tribe.

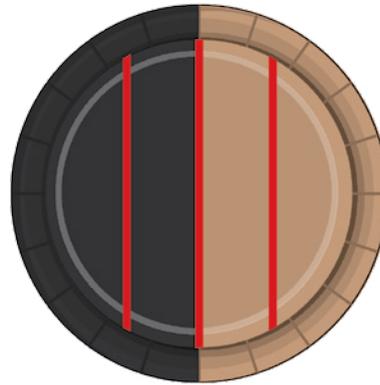
Some masks are of animal faces. These can represent the actual animal or sometimes it is a virtue of that animal that is being invoked. A buffalo is strong; an antelope is fast; a hyena is fierce.

African ceremonies pay homage to the journey of life from birth until death and may include:

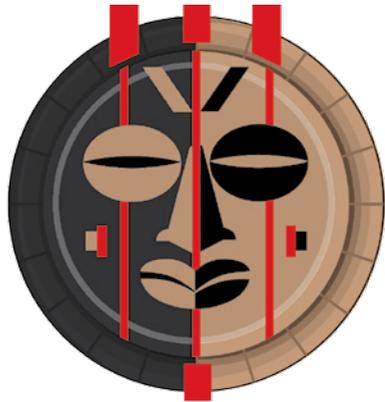
- preparation for a hunt or war
- celebration for marriage, birth, harvest or a hunt
- initiation into adulthood
- helping a deceased loved one enter the spirit world.



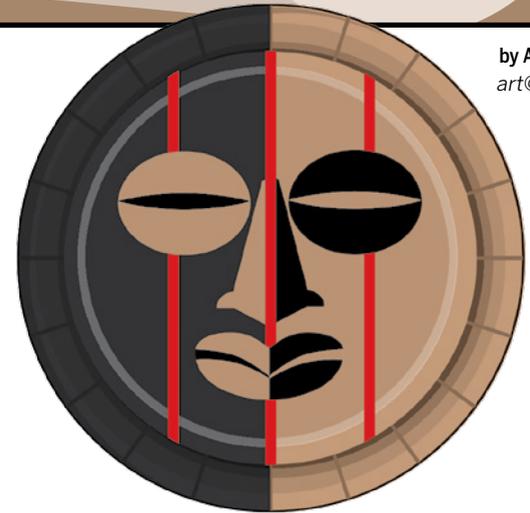
1 Paint (or color) the bottom of a paper plate half black and half light brown.



2 Cut three 1/4"-wide strips of red paper to glue vertically on the mask. The middle one will be 7" long. The other two will be 6" long. If you don't have red paper, color strips of white paper with a red marker.



4 Add the finishing touches to your mask. We have a headdress and beard of short, thick, red strips. We have black and brown eyebrows and some vertical paper strips on the cheeks.

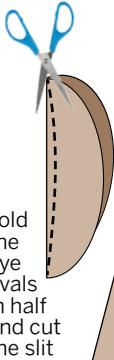


3 On a flat portion of your brown paper bag, draw an oval for the brown eye. Fold it in half and cut the slit for the eye opening. Repeat this process on the black paper. If you don't have black paper, use the brown paper and color it black with a wide, black marker.

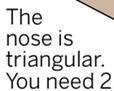
Draw the half-nose on your brown paper. make sure the right side of the brown nose is straight and the left side of the black nose is straight.

The mouth is somewhat heart-shaped on top and oval on the bottom. You may find it easiest to cut the entire shape out of brown paper and color the black half with a thick, black marker.

Glue everything down.



Fold the eye ovals in half and cut the slit



The nose is triangular. You need 2.



Cut the mouth from brown paper. Use a marker for the black area.

Masks across the continent:



South Africa



Nigeria,
Yoruba
people



Ivory
Coast



Masai



Gabon,
Fang
people

SHUTTERSTOCK, WIKI

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