

### Uncovering our Masks

#### Grade Level

6 - 12

#### Theme

The artist in his or her environment

#### Curriculum Framework Emphasis

Writing

The Arts

#### Common Curriculum Goals

##### *Writing*

Develop a well-planned and inviting beginning using a clearly stated topic.

Develop a logically sequenced body with effective and well-placed details that reinforce and enhance the main idea.

Develop a satisfying and effective conclusion that brings closure to the writing.

Consciously use a variety of transitional words or phrases to connect sentences and paragraphs.

Write in an effective style so that writing retains the interest of the audience and achieves the purpose.

Consciously use a consistent point-of-view that enhances the writing.

##### *The Arts*

Create a piece of art for presentation using experiences, imagination, artistic methods, and composition to achieve desired effect.

Apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient effort, confidence, responsibility, and sensitivity that one's intentions are carried out in one's artwork.

Use characteristics from other cultures in own artwork.

Create a piece of art that shows intensity of emotions and/or personal expression.

#### Objectives

Describe how the artist uses animal images in his artwork.

Understand Native Americans' use of a totem animal.

Create a piece of independently designed artwork using paper mache.

Write an imaginative story from the point of view of the student as a totem animal.

Present student-created artwork and accompanying story to an audience.

#### Materials

Rick Bartow POAH videotape

Newspaper

Paint

Water

Aluminum foil

Plastic wrap

Flour

Salt

#### Vocabulary

Eskimo

paper mache

sequence

transition

Hopi

point-of-view

supernatural

Iroquois

potlatch

totem

## Activities

### Part A: Totem Animals (45 minutes)

1. Read aloud the story "Poogweese" from the book *Echoes of the Elders: The Stories and Paintings of Chief Lelooska*.
2. Questions for discussion:  
Why do you think that Poogweese wore a mask?  
Have you ever worn any kind of a mask?
3. Totem Animals: Description and Discussion
  - A. Native American people have long believed in supernatural powers that could assist or harm people on Earth. Often those supernatural powers take on the form of an animal and that animal form has particular characteristics. For example, some Native American people believe that they have an animal guide, called a Totem Animal, and that a person would have a connection with that animal for life, through some of the characteristics or behavior of the animal, in dreams, or some other interaction. This animal guide would stay with them through life on earth and life after death.
  - B. Discover your Totem Animal.  
Ask students to answer the questions on a handout containing the questions below, from the website: *Native American Legends: Native American Totems and their Meanings*.  
  
Here are some questions to ask yourself if you're wondering what your totem animal is:
    - *Have you ever felt drawn to one animal or another without being able to explain why? This could be animal, including birds and insects.*
    - *Does a certain kind of animal consistently appear in your life? This doesn't necessarily have to be a physical appearance, it could be represented in other ways such as receiving card and letters with the same animal pictured over and over, unexplainable dreams of a particular animal, watching television and seeing the same animal featured time and time again, or, actually having the animal show up.*
    - *When you go to the zoo, a park, wildlife area, or forest, what are you most interested in seeing?*
    - *Are there any animals that you find to be extremely frightening or intriguing?*
    - *Is there a particular animal that you see frequently when you're out in nature?*
    - *Have you ever been bitten or attacked by an animal?*
    - *Have you ever had a recurring dream about a certain animal, or a dream from childhood that you have never been able to forget?*
    - *Are you drawn to figurines or paintings of a specific animal?*
  - C. Each student will select an animal as his or her totem animal. Use the website above to share with students the characteristics of the totem animal each selected.
4. In the next lesson, we will be introduced to an artist of Native American descent, Rick Bartow, who often uses animal representations in his paintings.

### Part B: Introduce Rick Bartow (60 - 75 minutes)

1. Ask for volunteers to read aloud the description of the characteristics of the totem animal they selected, and then to comment on how they feel they are alike the animal.
2. Introduce Rick Bartow, an Oregon artist. Rick Bartow was born and raised on the Oregon coast near Newport. His mother was Caucasian and her family was from Idaho. His father was of Native American descent, from the Yurok tribe. His father died when he was 5 years old, and his aunt, a teacher and the first person in his family to earn a college degree, kept him busy during that time with art projects and supplies. He eventually decided to become a teacher and after college was drafted into the Vietnam War.

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He served in Vietnam from 1969 until 1971, and returned home with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He became an alcoholic and fell into a deep depression. He married and divorced. He began to start drawing again with graphite and paper, the only supplies he could afford. His artwork became a therapeutic way to work through his depression and into sobriety. Encouraged by his 2nd wife and others, he became a professional artist and continues to produce powerful and emotional works of art that often portray layered images of animals and people.

3. Exhibit the painting, *Wolf and Deer* (1993) by Rick Bartow. The painting can be seen online at *A Time of Visions: Interviews by Larry Abbott*. (see references)
4. Read the quote by Rick Bartow from the interview with Larry Abbott, "In *Wolf and Deer* [1993] there are two separate drawings. That came about from listening to Chief Lelooska. He's a hell of a storyteller. He told a story about the deer and the wolf. The wolf has these big sharp-knifed teeth and he invites animals to something like a potlatch, but he watches their mouths and asks them to sing so he can see how their teeth are, and if they've got little flat teeth he eats them. But the deer would say, oh, I don't sing like that and he'd keep his teeth covered. So that's what this one's all about. Of course, the wolf cajoles the deer into opening his mouth and sees that he has flat teeth, so the wolf chases after him, and from then on the wolf has chased the deer and the deer has always run. That's what this drawing is about."
5. Before viewing the video, alert students to note the following as they watch:
  - The variety of animal images used by the artist.
  - The metaphor the artist gives for using an eraser when he is drawing.
  - The discussion by the artist about how people use masks.
6. Watch the Rick Bartow video. Consider the age level of students when viewing the video and edit as necessary. Some images may not be appropriate for all ages.
7. After viewing the video, discuss students' findings regarding the questions posed before the video.
8. Read aloud the quote by Rick Bartow from the interview with Larry Abbott, "I don't know where you are in your life, but for me, and I can only speak for me, and I can only say this: I'm not a missionary, I'm not a preacher, but the masks falling away were all these personas that I'd amassed to try to hide whoever I am in here. I'm still looking for that person, to be really honest, to be bluntly honest. I'm still looking to get to something that I'm really comfortable with. I'm okay in the world. I don't hurt and I don't get hurt too much. But I've got a lot of work to do."

### **Part C: Totem Animal Masks (3 to 4, 60-minute sessions)**

Students will create a paper mache mask of their totem animal. The completed mask will be painted and must be able to be worn by the student.

1. Introduce types of masks used by some Native American people with by reading the following quotations from the book, *Native American Crafts Workshop* by Bonnie Bernstein and Leigh Blair:
  - A. "The Eskimo held dances both for religious festivals and for social gatherings – especially during the long winter months. In these dances the Eskimo acted out many of the important aspects of their lives. Each dance has its own story, song, and gestures... In many of the dances, men wore wooden facemasks representing various characters of Eskimo religion and mythology. Masks of animals and bird spirits and of the sun and moon gods were very common."
  - B. "Kachinas were spiritual beings who played an important role in the Hopi religion. The Hopi believed that the kachinas encouraged the gods to provide an abundant harvest. The men believed that when they put on a kachina mask they became the spirit that the mask represented. Dressed as kachinas, the men appeared at a number of ceremonial dances in the kivas, underground ceremonial rooms, and on the plazas of the villages."

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- C. "Members of the Iroquois Husk Face Society wore cornhusk masks while impersonating the spirits who introduced farming to the people. These spirits with their frightening faces were called on to scare away the forces that caused illness. During important celebrations, the Husk Face Society and other medicine societies performed publicly. Husk Face members danced carrying cornstalks and hoes and making puffing sounds through their masks."
2. Ask for a student volunteer to help you give a demonstration of how to make a mask from paper mache (use instructions for the more realistic mask using tin foil as a base online at <http://familycrafts.about.com/cs/makingmasks/l/blpmchface.htm>)  
Remind students that they must be able to actually wear the mask, so to take care to preserve the inside shape of the mask as they work.
3. Students help each other to make the tin foil base for the masks, and then begin layering on the paper mache individually. This process will take 3 – 4 sessions to allow adequate time to layer paper, drying, and the final painting of the mask.

#### **Part D: Imaginative Writing: The Animal Inside (Three, 45-minute sessions)**

1. Session 1: Introduction and Rough Draft
- A. Read aloud the story "Raven and Monster Halibut" from the book *Spirit of the Cedar People: More Stories and Paintings of Chief Lelooska*.
- B. Have students place their completed paper mache mask of their totem animal on their desk. Explain that they will write a rough draft of an imaginative story in which they will be their totem animal. The story must meet the following requirements:
- Be written in first person narrative.
  - Contain a problem or conflict.
  - Involve at least one other character.
  - Include dialogue between the totem animal and another character(s).
  - Involve some aspect of the natural environment and how it came to be.
  - Contain an effective and engaging beginning, a logically sequenced body, and a recognizable conclusion.
  - Correct use of punctuation and grammar so as not to affect readability.
  - Write using double-spacing to allow for later editing and revision.
2. Session 2: Editing and Revision
- A. Pair students and read rough drafts aloud. Peer edit rough drafts for clarity and understanding of content.
- B. Further editing and revision conducted by the student independently, if this is to be a scored assessment. If this is an exercise that will be graded but not scored, you may wish to edit stories with each student individually.
3. Session 3: Write Final Copy
- A. Students will write a final copy of imaginative stories from edited and revised rough drafts.

#### **Part E: Presentation of Totem Animal Stories (2 – 3, 30-minute sessions)**

1. Students will read stories aloud wearing their totem animal masks. They may also choose to dress to accompany the mask.
- Students can present the stories to a variety of audiences:
  - Students in the class
  - Students in classes at the same grade level
  - Students in classes at other grade levels

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## References

### Books

*Echoes of the Elders: The Stories and Paintings of Chief Lelooska.* Edited by Christine Normandin.

*Spirit of the Cedar People: More Stories and Paintings of Chief Lelooska.* Edited by Christine Normandin.

*Native American Crafts Workshop* by Bonnie Bernstein and Leigh Blair.

### Websites

Flintridge Foundation, Rick Bartow, Southbeach, OR:

[http://www.flintridgefoundation.org/visualarts/recipient20012002\\_rickbartow.html](http://www.flintridgefoundation.org/visualarts/recipient20012002_rickbartow.html)

POAH Online: Rick Bartow: [http://www.poahonline.org/bio\\_bartow.html](http://www.poahonline.org/bio_bartow.html)

Froelick Gallery: <http://www.froelickgallery.com>

A Time of Visions: Interviews By Larry Abbott: [http://www.britesites.com/native\\_artist\\_interviews/rbartow.htm](http://www.britesites.com/native_artist_interviews/rbartow.htm)

Native American Legends: Native American Totems and their Meanings.

<http://www.legendsofamerica.com/NA-Totems.html>

Making Paper Mache Masks: <http://familycrafts.about.com/cs/makingmasks/l/blpmchface.htm>

## Vocabulary Definitions

**Eskimo** - a member of an indigenous people of Greenland, northern Canada, Alaska, and northeastern Siberia, characterized by short, stocky build and light-brown complexion.

**Hopi** - a member of a Pueblo Indian people of northern Arizona.

**Iroquois** - A Native American confederacy inhabiting New York State and originally composed of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples, known as the Five Nations.

**paper mache** - a substance made of pulped paper or paper pulp mixed with glue and other materials or of layers of paper glued and pressed together, molded when moist to form various articles, and becoming hard and strong when dry.

**point-of-view** - view from which the people, events, and details of a story are viewed.

**potlatch** - (among American Indians of the northern Pacific coast, esp. the Kwakiutl) a ceremonial festival at which gifts are bestowed on the guests and property is destroyed by its owner in a show of wealth that the guests later attempt to surpass.

**supernatural** - of, pertaining to, characteristic of, or attributed to God or a deity.

**totem** - a natural object or an animate being, as an animal or bird, assumed as the emblem of a clan, family, or group.

**transition** - A word, phrase, sentence, or series of sentences connecting one part of a discourse to another.