

## Yam Masks and Cultural Identity

Students will learn about the significance of yam masks in the Abelam culture of Papua New Guinea. After discussing how the masks shape cultural, social, and spiritual identities, students will create masks inspired by their own personal beliefs, celebrations, and cultures.

### Kansas Standards

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#### History

HGSS: 3.1—The student will recognize and evaluate how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.

HGSS: 5.1— The student will recognize and evaluate dynamic relationships that impact lives in communities, states, and nations.

#### Fine Arts

VA:Cr1.2.3a—Apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process.

### Materials

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- Paper masks
- Assorted natural and recycled materials (students can bring their own materials, too)
- Glue and tape
- Paints, brushes, and markers

### Procedure

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1. Ask students to name physical objects that are important to them or their family.
2. [Show images of yam masks in the Mulvane collection](#), and discuss their significance in the Abelam culture.
3. Students will write responses to prompts asking them to consider ideas, objects, and people that are important to their cultural and personal identity.
4. Using their responses as a guide, students will design a mask that expresses something about their identity. They will use the paper mask as a base, adding materials and decorations to it.
5. Students will write an explanation of their mask and how it relates to the content of this class.
6. Students will present their masks to the class.

Read a [detailed version](#) of this lesson plan with background information and resources.