

# Unit 16: Performing with Masks

**Unit code:** H/502/5105

**QCF Level 3:** BTEC National

**Credit value:** 10

**Guided learning hours:** 60

## ● Aim and purpose

This unit explores how actors use and perform with masks; learners will develop techniques used in mask acting through creating and rehearsing performances and then present them to an audience.

## ● Unit introduction

Learners will investigate how a mask works in performance, looking at its use from cultural, social and historical points of view. Masks have been popular in performance throughout history and learners will study different types and uses of masks to create interesting and exciting drama. Learners will explore techniques for acting with masks and will take part in workshops to develop these skills. They will perform rehearsed drama for mask and evaluate the effectiveness of this material, identifying strengths and weaknesses in their own work and the material being prepared for performance.

An understanding of the opportunities for using mask as a performance tool will be valuable for learners intending a career in the performing arts industry. Masks have been used throughout the ages to communicate with audiences, both as ensemble and choral devices and to explore theme and character. The specific physical and vocal techniques this demands of the actor will provide valuable skills that will develop understanding of movement and physical theatre techniques.

**Learners will be assessed in at least one performance, lasting a minimum of five minutes.**

## ● Learning outcomes

**On completion of this unit a learner should:**

- 1 Understand the mask as a performance instrument
- 2 Be able to develop mask acting techniques in practical workshops and rehearsals
- 3 Be able to create and perform mask drama
- 4 Understand the effectiveness of mask performance.

# Unit content

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## 1 Understand the mask as a performance instrument

Uses: eg ritual and religious rite, possession, ceremony, carnival, trance, demonstration, contemporary applications, social mask, political theatre, comedy, tragedy

Origins: eg Greek theatre, Noh theatre, Balinese mask, Commedia dell'Arte, masquerade

Types and properties: eg ceremonial, chorus, tragic and comic, full face, helmet, half face, partial, animal, neutral

Materials: eg skin and hide, feather and fur, wood, leather, cloth, paper and card, papier maché, clay, plaster, celastic, latex, fibreglass, wire, plastic

## 2 Be able to develop mask acting techniques in practical workshops and rehearsals

Key principles: inherent properties of a mask; levels of naivety and sophistication; how to put on and take off a mask; the actor's relationship with the mask; developing and extending character in mask; playing to an audience

Preparatory work: use of face; emotional expression; use of body; stock character types; use of sound/text; the naive actor

Stimulating and animating the mask: eg introductions, encounters, improvisations, scenarios and routines, physical extension of the mask, work with music, work with props, work with hats and costume, developing dialogue, vocal techniques, creating and developing mask performance pieces, lazzi, acrobatics, repetition, physicality, attitudes, use of opposites

## 3 Be able to create and perform mask drama

Performance context: where the performance will take place, audience relationship and reactions, purpose of the performance, audience relationship

Performance purpose: eg mystery, social comment, comedy, political theatre, tragedy, celebration

Performance skills: eg use of body, use of voice, transformation, interaction and relationship, timing, expressive range and variety, communication with audience

Artistic skills: creativity; execution of technical skills; appropriateness of use of mask; fulfilment of objectives; audience response

## 4 Understand the effectiveness of mask performance

Evaluation: response by self and others as to the effectiveness of the performance; incorporating the key principles; reviewing the preparatory work; the appropriate use of performance context and purpose; the use of performance and artistic skills; impact and response from audience; relevance to audience; truthfulness to original ideas; practicalities of developing the mask performance; future development ideas

# Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

<b>Assessment and grading criteria</b>		
<b>To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:</b>	<b>To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:</b>	<b>To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:</b>
<b>P1</b> Explain the origins, different uses and types of performance masks [IE]	<b>M1</b> Explain, in detail, the origins, different uses and types of performance masks	<b>D1</b> Critically comment on the origins, different uses and types of performance masks
<b>P2</b> Develop mask performance, applying some of the key principles of mask work [CT, RL]	<b>M2</b> Develop mask performance in a responsive way, practically applying a range of the key principles of mask work	<b>D2</b> Develop mask performance in a highly flexible, imaginative and fully reflective way, practically applying a comprehensive range of the key principles of mask work
<b>P3</b> Perform in a mask, showing character and meaning that partially communicates with an audience [CT, RL, EP]	<b>M3</b> Perform in a mask, demonstrating that the mask is handled with ingenuity and ease, while communicating character and meaning to an audience	<b>D3</b> Perform in a mask, showing assuredness and imagination in its handling; the performance will be inventive, embody the character and clearly communicate and respond to an audience
<b>P4</b> Evaluate the success of practical work making some recommendations for development. [RL]	<b>M4</b> Evaluate the success of practical work making detailed recommendations for development.	<b>D4</b> Evaluate the success of practical work making detailed, considered and feasible recommendations for development.

**PLTS:** This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

<b>Key</b>	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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# Essential guidance for tutors

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## Delivery

This unit should use practical workshop classes to develop learners' awareness and application of the mask in performance. These will be tutor led and structured, but learners should be encouraged to pursue their own particular areas of interest in research for the unit. These choices may influence the direction of the practical work undertaken for preparation and performance. Learners should be guided and supported through the historical, social and cultural influences on development of the use of mask in performance. This exploration should be developed in workshops and practical activities.

Tutors should ensure that learners have the opportunity to engage in practical exploration of a range of styles and types of mask during the development of their mask acting techniques. This should expand learners' investigation work and support understanding and confidence in using this medium. Learners would benefit from the opportunity, where possible, to work with practitioners who use mask as a performance medium. Practical workshops should give learners the chance to work with a range of masks, for example half masks and full masks, and to consider their different performance opportunities and constraints.

The assessment requirement is one workshop performance piece per group to an audience. The responsive demonstration of the mask and communication can then be shown. Learners should, however, be given more than one opportunity to achieve this criterion and to perform to audiences that allow them to develop skills in responsive communication. Learners should be able to consider and evaluate the effectiveness of rehearsals and performances and use this to inform subsequent work. Consideration should also be given to where the performance will take place and potentially, specific purposes the performance may have which are aimed at engaging the audience in an original way.

A working log should be kept of all practical work, both as a practical resource and in order to reveal levels of understanding. This log could link to the investigative work undertaken. The log could also include evaluation of skills developed and performances undertaken, showing the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses and set meaningful targets for improvement. Analysis should also include audience reaction to masked performance and there are opportunities for comparative study of various masks in performance by the learner. Analysis can be stimulated by the tutor and can be reflected in the log, or carried out as a separate assignment.

Research and practical process: it is very useful for learners to see a performance using masks at the beginning of this unit in order for critical skills to be encouraged from the beginning and also to support exploration in physical skills required. If a performance is not possible, encouragement of peer assessment is useful, as well as regular structured time in practical workshops to evaluate character and scenario development with learners assessing each other using the criteria.

Performance: it would be very helpful for learners to engage with the local economy and community and aim to perform this unit within a community setting outside of the classroom to gain experience in audience engagement and professional protocol. Also, a more contemporary performance can be aimed for if the role of the audience in masked performance is considered by learners from the beginning of the unit.

Evaluation: can be in the form of class discussion, written reports, or a formal presentation. If audience feedback has been obtained some class analysis of this could then encourage individual evaluation skills.

## Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

<b>Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment</b>
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme – whole class.
<b>Assignment 1: Exploring Masks from Different Cultures/Genres – P1, M1, D1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>research a mask employed for a specific use or research a type of mask</li><li>analyse use of mask in relation to an audience</li><li>write presentations and give presentations.</li></ul>
Introduction to techniques of acting with mask – whole class.
<b>Assignment 2: Practical Assignment: Creating a Mask Character – P2, M2, D2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>using techniques create and develop a masked character</li><li>create scenario or story for a performance</li><li>explore a variety of possible performance contexts and consider audience</li><li>performance development: Create a mask performance.</li></ul>
<b>Assignment 3: Performing with Masks – P3 M3 D3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>select a context in which to perform that is appropriate for the mask</li><li>explore potential audience involvement in the performance</li><li>perform to audiences using masks.</li></ul>
<b>Assignment 4: The Objective Eye – P4, M4, D4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>reviewing the development of the performance piece</li><li>collating the views of the audience, peers, tutors and own thoughts on performance skills</li><li>producing an evaluation that highlights the improvements for future performances.</li></ul>

## Assessment

Learning outcome 1 could be evidenced through a written report, a log book or a presentation by one learner or a small group. Presentations should be recorded for internal and external verification purposes. Learners could also hand in annotated research or original ideas for their own mask design, drawings of ideas or video. It would be useful for learners to evidence historical and contemporary practices in masked performance. Learners should be encouraged to produce evidence that reflects a wide range of masks being utilised for a variety of uses.

Learning outcome 2 can be evidenced using a wide variety of methods that track learner progress through the practical process. Photographs, DVD recordings, checklists, diagrams, learner notes, notes about stimulus used and notes from performances and trips are possible forms of evidence, plus tutor observation statements. Learning outcome 3 can be evidenced by a DVD recording and audience feedback. It will also be useful for learners to explore the impact of the performance in their logbook. Learning outcome 4 can be evidenced using and self evaluation and reflection checklists; these will enable learners to track their own progress as well as set future goals throughout the rehearsal process. Learners can submit their evaluations in an appropriate format, for example a written report, a video diary, or an audio/visual presentation.

For P1, learners must be able to explain some of the origins of mask drama. Analysis can attempt to explore, to a limited extent, the impact of mask drama on an audience. For M1, learners must employ independent thinking and respond imaginatively to research findings. Analysis will be thorough and there are references to practical examples. For D1, learners will be able to comment critically on their research. They will be able to provide considerable analysis and coverage of styles and usage of performance masks.

For P2, learners will be able to develop mask performance techniques in workshops and rehearsals, experimenting with the basic principles. They may have more success with some techniques than others. There may be a reliance on tutor support and guidance. Ideas for developing character and relationships will be simplistic. For M2, learners will develop mask acting techniques with confidence and a willingness to experiment with ideas. They will try out different ideas and approaches to developing their performance, incorporating their own ideas, and guidance from others, into their work. For D2, learners will demonstrate creativity and engagement in the process of developing their mask performance. They will be consistently involved in creating, experimenting and developing their work.

For P3, learners will be generally successful in performance, allowing the audience to build a relationship with the masked character. Although there may be minor technical performance issues the overall work will be clear and demonstrate understanding of the context. For M3, learners will be confident and comfortable performing with a mask, demonstrating an awareness of the needs and context of the performance and the audience. For D3, learners will perform with skill, accuracy, subtlety and confidence. Learners will have focused their performance to suit the needs of the audience, and have the awareness and ability to modify the work if necessary.

For P4, learners will be able to offer suggestions for the strengths and weaknesses of the mask performance and be able to highlight key elements and ideas for future progression. At M4, there should be more evidence of detailed evaluation, making clear decisions about the strengths and weaknesses and offering creative and considered ideas of how the performance could be developed further eg plans to develop the tragicomic elements of the work, or how the costume and music could be used in a more subtle manner to impart particular emotions. For D4, these ideas should derive from discussion and feedback from workshops, rehearsals and performances. Their use of technical language and referencing will be correct, as well as consistently appropriate and accurate.

## Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1: Exploring Mask from Different Cultures/ Genres	Learners will research masks employed for specific uses. They will then analyse the use of specific masks chosen in relation to an audience.	<p>Log to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflection on research carried out</li> <li>• presentation</li> <li>• ideas on audience relationships.</li> </ul>
P2, M2, D2	Assignment 2: Creating a Mask Character	Learners will use techniques to create and develop a masked character, then create a scenario or story for a performance. During the preparation they will also explore a variety of possible performance contexts and consider audience relationship with the mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical workshops.</li> <li>• Log to include initial ideas for mask, ie various cultures and purposes of masks for performance, and potential audience involvement.</li> </ul>
P3, M3, D3	Assignment 3: Performing with Masks	In group, learners to select a context in which to perform that is appropriate for the mask being employed. Also explore potential audience involvement in the performance. They will then deliver a live performance to an audience using masks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical workshops.</li> <li>• Performance.</li> <li>• Log to include contexts considered for performance and audience involvement.</li> </ul>
P4, M4, D4	Assignment 4: The Objective Eye	Learners will collate feedback and comments from a variety of sources to review and evaluate own progress as a performer using a mask.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Log to include details of development of performance and amendments to work.</li> <li>• Evaluation eg audio/visual recording, discussion, written report.</li> </ul>

## Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Developing Acting Skills	Acting Skills and Techniques	Performance Workshop
	Devising Plays	Historical Context of Performance
	Mask Making	Devising Plays
		Developing Physical Theatre

## Essential resources

For this unit learners should have access to appropriate mask making equipment or appropriate masks to use for a performance. It would also be helpful to see live or recorded masked performance in order for learners to grasp appropriate styles and content. Recording of learner performances is also essential and access to video recording equipment for this purpose is essential.

## Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres are encouraged to engage learners with local or national theatrical events, performances and workshops that specialise in masked performance. Visits to museums or exhibitions of masks could also be useful for learners making or designing their own mask. Masked performances are suitable for community arts settings and learners would benefit from designing their performance around or for a setting outside their centre and engaging with the local community or local festivals.

## Indicative reading for learners

### Textbooks

Chamberlain F and Yarrow R – *Jacques Lecoq and the British Theatre* (Routledge, 2001)  
ISBN 9780415270250

Gallop J – *Thinking Through the Body* (Columbia University Press, 1990) ISBN 9780231066112

James T – *The Prop Builder's Mask-Making Handbook* (North Lights Books, 1990) ISBN 9781558701663

Lecoq J – *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre* (Methuen, 2002) ISBN 9780413771940

Rudlin J – *Commedia dell' Arte: An Actor's Handbook* (Routledge, 1994) ISBN 9780415047708

### Journals

*The Drama Review*: Editor R Schechner, ISSN 1054-2043

*Theatre Research International*: Editor(s) Freddie Rokem, Tel Aviv University, Israel  
Elaine Aston, Lancaster University, UK, ISSN 0307-8833

### Websites

<a href="http://www.balinesedance.org">www.balinesedance.org</a>	Welcome to Balinese Dance
<a href="http://www.carnivalpower.com">www.carnivalpower.com</a>	Carnival Power
<a href="http://www.commedia-dell-arte.com">www.commedia-dell-arte.com</a>	Judith Chaffee's Commedia Website
<a href="http://www.internationalmaskfestival.com">www.internationalmaskfestival.com</a>	International Mask Festival 2007
<a href="http://www.kabuki21.com">www.kabuki21.com</a>	Kabuki 21
<a href="http://www.mask-and-more-masks.com">www.mask-and-more-masks.com</a>	Mask and More Mask
<a href="http://www.masksoftheworld.com">www.masksoftheworld.com</a>	Masks from around the world
<a href="http://www.staginggreekdrama.com">www.staginggreekdrama.com</a>	Staging Greek Drama
<a href="http://www.strangeface.co.uk">www.strangeface.co.uk</a>	Strange Face, Arts Council England
<a href="http://www.theatrehistory.com">www.theatrehistory.com</a>	Theatre history

## Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

<b>Skill</b>	<b>When learners are ...</b>
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	researching the cultural and historical nature of mask performance
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	creating a mask and performance
<b>Reflective learners</b>	developing masked performance skills
<b>Team workers</b>	devising a performance
<b>Self-managers</b>	researching and evaluating masked performance
<b>Effective participants</b>	performing a masked performance or engaging with the community.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

<b>Skill</b>	<b>When learners are ...</b>
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	planning and carrying out research on masks designing a mask for their own performance
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	devising a performance trying out different ideas making a mask and adapting it for performance
<b>Reflective learners</b>	planning a performance setting goals or tasks inviting feedback on their own work and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism evaluating their experiences and learning to inform future progress
<b>Team workers</b>	producing a performance taking responsibility for their own role (if working in a group) managing discussions to reach agreements and achieve results
<b>Self-managers</b>	seeking out challenges or new responsibilities and showing flexibility when priorities deal with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands responding positively to change, seeking advice and support
<b>Effective participants</b>	engaging with a group or audience.

## ● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>ICT – Use ICT systems</b>	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching masks
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	planning for a performance
<b>ICT – Find and select information</b>	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	creating and finding resources and ideas for a mask and adapting them for use
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	exploring, extracting and assessing the relevance of information from mask or performance related websites
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	communicating with other members of a performance group
<b>Mathematics</b>	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	using estimation and calculation to plan the layout of flyers, posters or website pages
<b>English</b>	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	doing pair work on the analysis of masked performance and giving presentations on conclusions attending performance production meetings
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading research and selecting appropriate material
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing reports or log or evaluation writing copy for advertisements, posters for performance.