

# Unit 86: Mask Making in the Performing Arts

<b>Unit code:</b>	<b>T/502/5626</b>
<b>QCF Level 3:</b>	<b>BTEC National</b>
<b>Credit value:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Guided learning hours:</b>	<b>60</b>

## ● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to expand learners' knowledge and develop skills in mask-making methods used in the performing arts industry. Learners will do this through a study of different kinds of masks and construction methods and through making and designing masks using stimulus material.

## ● Unit introduction

The use of mask has a long and honourable history. Its roots can be found in religious festivals, social ritual and celebration. In the performing arts it can be seen in Japan, China, India and Africa as well as in the familiar forms of the European drama; in Ancient Greece, medieval forms, Commedia dell'Arte and a host of others.

For the performer the mask can assist in discovering expressive forms that force the entire body to engage in performance skills and not rely on facial expression alone. In many ways the mask represents the essence of the drama. It can help in identifying the elusive truth of the drama through ritual that emphasizes meaning that is not forced to pay abeyance to the mundane reality of everyday life.

This unit is about the making of masks for performance. Learners will investigate different kinds of masks and develop skills to design and construct them. Learners will gain an understanding of how these design skills can be incorporated into other relevant design elements inherent within the performing arts. Learners will appreciate how these skills offer enhanced opportunities for employment within the performing arts sector.

This is an opportunity for learners who wish to develop their craft and model-making skills within a creative production-based context. The techniques explored within this unit are very useful across a wide range of performing arts and visual industries.

## ● Learning outcomes

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

- 1 Know how to collate research findings
- 2 Be able to generate design ideas
- 3 Know how to use materials, construction and decorative techniques
- 4 Be able to construct masks from designs.

# Unit content

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## 1 Know how to collate research findings

*Investigate:* eg historical, cultural, contemporary, identify relevant information, secondary sources, books, the internet, film, video

*Collate:* selection of relevant information; photographs; photocopies; printouts; drawing; diagrams; text; planning; presentation

## 2 Be able to generate design ideas

*Ideas development:* work to text or devised material; character analysis; origination of ideas; development of designs; sketchbook; design sheets

*Evaluation of designs:* group critique; self and peer-assessment; selection and finalisation of design proposals; working drawings; presentation of designs

## 3 Be able to use materials, construction and decorative techniques

*Investigate materials:* eg construction materials, methods, card, plaster casting, mould making, latex, foam rubber, modelling, casting, health and safety

*Collate:* sketchbook; notebook samples; analyse suitability of construction samples

## 4 Be able to construct masks from designs

*Construct:* eg using selected techniques, cut and folded constructed card mask, casting actors' features, plaster casting, modelling features/details with plasticine, re-casting in papier mâché, latex, foam rubber, butter muslin/PVA, apply paint finish to surface, decorative/realistic

*Fit masks:* ensure fit is comfortable and sight unimpaired; make necessary adjustments; fit with costume under lights; check colour compatibility and surface finish

## 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 criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
<b>P1</b> produce some evidence of research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks [IE]	<b>M1</b> produce evidence of appropriate research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks	<b>D1</b> produce evidence of detailed research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks
<b>P2</b> generate some design ideas related to the research [CT]	<b>M2</b> generate effective design ideas related to the research	<b>D2</b> generate detailed design ideas related to the research
<b>P3</b> produce, with guidance and support, an investigation of techniques and methods of construction [IE, RL]	<b>M3</b> produce, with limited guidance and support, a detailed investigation of techniques and methods of construction	<b>D3</b> independently produce a comprehensive investigation of techniques and methods of construction
<b>P4</b> use resources and ideas in the final design(s) to communicate an effective interpretation of the stimulus material and character [CT]	<b>M4</b> use resources and ideas in the final design(s) to communicate a clear interpretation of the stimulus material and character	<b>D4</b> use resources and ideas in an imaginative approach to the final designs which communicate attention to detail, clear interpretation of the character, and demonstrate a creative way to utilise the stimulus material
<b>P5</b> construct masks that are fit for purpose and relate to the performance material. [SM]	<b>M5</b> create masks that clearly relate to the performance material, are accurate and use correct construction techniques.	<b>D5</b> create masks that are robust, accurately reflect the design, demonstrate attention to detail and are entirely appropriate to the performance material.

**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	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

# Essential guidance for tutors

## Delivery

This unit should use a range of teaching and learning strategies. Learners should be encouraged to use a range of research sources and methods resulting in a catalogue of historic and stylistic material that may be used for reference purposes. Research findings should be collated in a coherent format.

It is essential that learners are able to relate their research to performance material. Mask designs should occur in the context of a performer's needs and character. Ideally the mask designer should negotiate design with performers and directors or choreographers so that purpose of design is clear and fit for purpose.

Learners should be encouraged to use a broad range of visual language in the generation of ideas and the preparation of final designs. They should be able to evaluate and analyse design and sample results both orally and as part of a group critique.

Learners should demonstrate an understanding of 3D modelling and construction techniques and be encouraged to use creative expression in mask production.

## 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.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme.
Introduction to historical, cultural and ethnic masks.
Lectures/discussions on historical, cultural and ethnic masks.
Videos of masks in performance.
<b>Assignment 1: Historical, Cultural and Ethnic Masks – P1, M1, D1</b>
Learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research historical, cultural and ethnic masks</li><li>• collate written and pictorial information.</li></ul>
Introduction to designing masks.
<b>Assignment 2: Design Ideas – P2, M2, D2</b>
Learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• draw on research and produce some design ideas</li><li>• present work and review it.</li></ul>
Introduction to mask making techniques.
Practical demonstrations by lecturer.

## Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

### Assignment 3: Techniques and Methods of Construction – P3, M3, D3

Learners:

- carry out research into techniques and methods of constructing masks
- carry out practical experimentation
- produce evidence of the investigation into construction techniques.

Introduction to stimulus material and character analysis.

### Assignment 4: Designing Masks for Performance using Stimulus Material – P4, M4, D4

Learners:

- carry out text/character analysis using stimulus material
- carry out research
- collate research
- produce initial design ideas for a mask for two characters from the stimulus material
- design masks for two characters from the stimulus material
- present work and review it.

### Assignment 5: Constructing Two Masks – P5, M5, D5

Learners:

- select methods for constructing masks
- plan construction of masks
- construct masks and applies decorative finishes
- fit mask on model
- present mask and review it.

Feedback and reviews.

## Assessment

Evidence for this unit can be generated through the collation and presentation of historical, cultural and contemporary research in the form of a well-annotated sketchbook/notebook or file.

Learners should generate a complete portfolio of 2D design ideas linked to research. There should be evidence of character analysis through text supported by a subject-related sketchbook. Evidence of material and 3D-modelling techniques should be provided in the supporting sketchbook in the form of samples and/or photographs of 3D work.

Learners should produce two masks using selected methods, eg cut and folded card, casting, mould making, modelling and casting, papier mâché, foam, rubber or latex. The masks should be appropriate to the design process and demonstrate an understanding of the work undertaken. The masks should be in response to performance material, eg a devised, scripted performance or dance.

Learners must show evidence of researching at least three different types of masks and the designing and making of at least two different masks.

When applying the grading criteria tutors should follow the advice given below.

Learning outcome 1, which relates to grading criterion 1, requires learners to carry out research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks and collate the evidence. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent in the level of ability shown by learners in producing the relevant evidence. The principle source of evidence will be a written and pictorial portfolio of work which can be backed up by tutor/ learner discussion and tutor observation.

- At pass level, learners must identify some historical, cultural and ethnic masks. The information must be correct but it can be basic. Learners will include some pictorial examples to illustrate their work.
- At merit level, learners must produce competent and thoughtful research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks. Learners will produce appropriate pictorial examples to support the information given. Learners will show some attempt to analyse the research material. The explanations need not be sophisticated but they must show a competent level of understanding. The work will be presented with care.
- At distinction level, learners must produce sophisticated and thoughtful research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks. Learners will produce wholly appropriate pictorial examples to support the information given. Learners will demonstrate a thorough understanding of their research material by appraising it and articulating their findings verbally or in writing.

Learning outcome 2 relates to criteria 2 and 4. Criterion 2 requires learners to draw on their research material and produce design ideas for masks. Criterion 4 requires learners to study stimulus material and design masks for characters. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the level of skill and appropriateness shown in the design work.

- At pass level, for criterion 2, learners will draw on their research material and produce some simple design ideas. Pass learners will produce work that is accurate but unelaborated and shows little development of the original research material. At pass level, for criterion 4, learners will produce straightforward designs that show some understanding of the characters and the stimulus material. Although basic, the designs must clearly show the artistic intentions of learners.
- At merit level, for criterion 2, learners will draw on their research material and produce some competent design ideas. The designs will be thoughtful and produced with care. The work will show a skilful development of the research material. At merit level, for criterion 4, learners will show a considered understanding of the characters and the stimulus material. The work will be produced with care and will show very clearly the artistic intentions of the learners.
- At distinction level, for criterion 2, learners will draw on their research and produce some design ideas that move beyond the purely conventional. The designs will display creative thinking and will be produced with great care. The work will show sophisticated and imaginative development of the original research material. At distinction level, for criterion 4, the design work that learners produce must show that they have thoroughly understood the characters and the stimulus material. Learners must be able to articulate fluently their design choices by appraising them verbally or in writing. The designs will be detailed and display a high level of creativity.

Learning outcome 3, which relates to grading criterion 3, requires learners to outline techniques and methods for the construction of masks. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent in the level of understanding shown by the learners and the level of ability that they show in collating relevant information.

- At pass level, learners will carry out research and outline some techniques and methods for the construction of masks. Learners will produce work that will be descriptive rather than evaluative and analytical. Pass level learners would expect to receive support from their tutor to achieve this criterion.
- At merit level, learners will carry out research and will explain in some detail techniques and methods for the construction of masks. To achieve a merit learners' work will show a sense of thoughtfulness and display a sense that the concepts have been understood. Learners will give examples to support their ideas. Merit level learners would expect to receive some degree of support with this work
- At distinction level, learners will show that they have carried out a thoroughly detailed investigation into techniques and methods for the construction of masks. To achieve a distinction the work will show an awareness that the concepts have been understood. Learners will articulate their understanding by evaluating their research findings. Learners will work independently throughout this process.

Learning outcome 4, which relates to criterion 5, requires learners to construct masks. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the level of skill shown in the construction of the masks and the level of the appropriateness of the masks for the performance material. This criterion will be assessed by tutor observations and by the assessment of the finished masks.

- At pass level, learners will construct two simple masks that could be worn in performance and which are appropriate for the performance material. The masks will not be elaborate and could be made and decorated using basic materials and straightforward construction techniques. Pass level learners would expect to receive support from their tutor to achieve this criterion.
- At merit level, learners must produce two well made masks that could be worn in performance and clearly relate to the performance material. The construction of the masks will display competent technical skills. However, throughout the construction process merit level learners will still need occasional advice or support in some aspects of the work.
- At distinction level, learners must produce two well-made masks that move beyond the purely conventional. The masks will be wholly appropriate for the characters and the stimulus material. The masks will show a totally accurate and skilful use of techniques and materials. Whilst constructing the masks learners will find innovative solutions to problems, carrying them out competently and confidently. Learners will work independently throughout the construction process.

## Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the 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: Historical, Cultural and Ethnic Masks (Learners carry out research.)	Brief from a performing arts magazine wanting research material relating to historical, cultural and ethnic masks that can be used to produce an article for a forthcoming issue of the magazine.	A well-annotated sketchbook/notebook or file, which shows evidence of researching historical, cultural and ethnic masks.
P2, M2, D2	Assignment 2: Design Ideas (Learners draw on research carried out in assignment 1 and generate design ideas.)	Brief from a performing arts magazine wanting design ideas relating to historical, ethnic and cultural masks which can be included in a forthcoming issue of the magazine.	Design ideas for masks, which show evidence of having drawn on the research material collated in assignment.
P3, M3, D3	Assignment 3: Techniques and Methods of Construction (Learners experiment with techniques and methods of constructing masks and collate the information.)	Brief from a performing arts magazine that wants information on techniques and construction methods of masks which can be used in an article in a forthcoming issue of the magazine.	Portfolio consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written and pictorial information on techniques and construction methods of masks</li> <li>evaluation of techniques and construction methods.</li> </ul>
P4, M4, D4	Assignment 4: Designing Masks for Performance using Stimulus Material (Learners carry out text/character analysis and generate designs for two masks.)	Brief from the design department of a theatre company wanting designs for masks for plays for their forthcoming season.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>text/character analysis</li> <li>interpretation of the stimulus material</li> <li>origination and development of design ideas</li> <li>final designs.</li> </ul>
P5, M5, D5	Assignment 5: Constructing Two Masks (Using design ideas learners construct two masks that are fit for purpose.)	Brief from the design department of a theatre company wanting masks constructed for their forthcoming productions.	Project work consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sketches and instructions for constructing masks</li> <li>two finished masks</li> <li>evaluation of finished masks.</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
Exploring Design Skills for the Performing Arts	Design for Performance	Performing with Masks
	Mask Making	Design Drawing Development
		Design Materials and Processes
		Design Method
		Designing Costume for Performance
		Period Costume for the Stage

This unit also has links with the following National Occupational Standards:

### Technical Theatre

- CPD1 – Improving your skills
- CPD2a – TP Keeping up to date with technical and production developments in the live arts
- CPD4a – Contributing to technical production work for performance
- HSI – Working safely
- TP2.5a – Contribute to the interpretation of designs for sets or props
- TP2.5c – Ensure accurate interpretation of designs for sets or props
- TP2.5b – Interpreting designs for sets or props
- TP3.4b – Planning props requirements for a production
- TP7.2a – Making and finishing props.

## Essential resources

Learners will need access to a learning resource centre, library, internet, specialist video, film, visits to appropriate exhibitions, galleries and museums for research. For the design element, a basic design studio environment will be required. For notation of research results, access to an IT suite is required. Specialist plaster workshop access will be required for casting and moulding. Access to a clean working area for card modelling and decoration of masks will also be needed. Health and safety induction when working within 3D workshops and using glue and cutting equipment is necessary.

## Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Learners should develop links with theatre, film and television studios that have mask/prop workshops. Mask makers and designers are usually willing to talk to learners about the processes involved in designing and making masks.

Both Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for the audio-visual industries and the BBC have substantial sections of their websites dedicated to careers, including job descriptions – [www.skillset.org/careers](http://www.skillset.org/careers) and [www.bbc.co.uk/design/careers](http://www.bbc.co.uk/design/careers).

## Indicative reading for learners

### Textbooks

Bridgewater A and Bridgewater G – *Carving Masks: Tribal Ethnic and Folk Projects* (Sterling, 1997)  
ISBN 978-0806913360

Chandavij N and Pramualratana P – *Thai Puppets and Khon Masks* (Thames & Hudson, 1999)  
ISBN 978-0500974568

Cordry D – *Mexican Masks* (University of Texas, 1982) ISBN 978-0292750746

Fienup-Riordan A – *The Living Tradition of Yup'ik Masks* (University of Washington, 1996)  
ISBN 978-0295975238

Finley C – *The Art of African Masks: Exploring Cultural Tradition* (Lerner, 1999) ISBN 978-0822520788

Grater M – *Paper Mask Making* (Dover Publications, 1984) ISBN 978-9996573217

James T – *The Prop Builder's Mask-Making Handbook* (North Light Books, 1990) ISBN 978-1558701663

Lechuga R and Sayer C – *Mask Arts of Mexico* (Chronicle Books, 1998) ISBN 978-0811808118

Lelooska – *The Traditional Art of the Mask* (Schiffer Publishing, 1999) ISBN 978-0764300288

Mack J (editor) – *Masks: The Art of Expression* (British Museum Press, 1996) ISBN 978-0714125305

Malin E – *A World of Faces: Masks of the Northwest Coast Indians* (Timber Press, 1994)  
ISBN 978-0917304057

Markman P and Markman R – *Masks of the Spirit: Image and Metaphor in Mesoamerica* (University of California, 1994) ISBN 978-0520086548

Mauldin B – *Masks of Mexico: Tigers, Devils and the Dance of Life* (Museum of New Mexico Press, 1990)  
ISBN 978-0890133255

McNair P – *Down From the Shimmering Sky: Masks of the Northwest Coast* (Douglas & McIntyre, 1998)  
ISBN 978-1550546231

Nunley J and McCarty C – *Masks: Faces of Culture* (Harry Abrams, 1999) ISBN 978-0810943797

Peter P – *The Masks of Orthodoxy: Folk Gravestone Carving in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 1689-1805*  
(University of Massachusetts Press, 1977) ISBN 978-0870232374

## 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.

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	carrying out research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks carrying out research into techniques and construction methods for masks
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	generating design ideas for masks
<b>Reflective learners</b>	evaluating construction methods and techniques
<b>Self-managers</b>	organising time and resources when constructing masks.

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.

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	researching productions in which masks have been used and analysing and evaluating the information found visiting mask construction workshops
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	designing masks that are appropriate for a character/production experimenting with alternative methods and techniques when constructing masks
<b>Reflective learners</b>	inviting feedback on their own work and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism evaluating their experiences and learning to inform future progress reviewing progress and acting on outcomes
<b>Self-managers</b>	working towards goals, showing initiative, commitment and perseverance responding positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed
<b>Effective participators</b>	discussing issues of concern, seeking resolution where needed proposing practical ways forward, breaking these down into manageable steps.

## ● 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 cultural, ethnic and historical masks researching techniques and construction methods for masks
<b>ICT – Develop, present and communicate information</b>	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• text and tables</li> <li>• images</li> <li>• numbers</li> <li>• records</li> </ul>	collating research material on cultural, ethnic and historical masks collating material on techniques and materials for the construction of masks
<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 quantities of material needed to construct masks using measurements to ensure the accurate fit of a mask
<b>English</b>	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	presenting and reviewing mask designs presenting and reviewing finished masks
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading information on historical cultural and ethnic masks reading information on techniques and methods of construction of masks
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing reports on research into historical, cultural and ethnic masks writing reports on research into techniques and methods of construction of masks.