

Picasso Masks

Collaborative Clay: Art/Art History

Best suited for middle/high school students.

Duration: 2 90-minute session (session 2 could be a shorter session if needed)

Learning Goal(s): Student will create a clay mask inspired by Pablo Picasso and the Cubist movement.

Learning Objective(s): Students will be able to: (1) identify abstract and Cubist art and the artist Pablo Picasso; (2) construct a mask from clay slabs and coils; and, (3) translate realistic facial features into abstract elements.

Big Question(s): (1) Who is Pablo Picasso? (2) What is Cubism? (3) What is a mask? And, what is its use if it cannot be worn? (3) How do you simplify something, like the human face, into its basic geometric shapes?

Skills/Necessary Demos: Session 1 - slab construction, coil rolling, slipping and scoring (scratching and attaching); Session 2 - painting, glazing



Ceramic Terms ([Claymobile Vocabulary Terms](#)):

- Clay
- Ceramics
- Slab
- Coil
- Slip and Score (scratch-and-attach)
- Underglaze
- Glaze
- Bisque Fire (bisqueware)
- Glaze Fire (glazeware)

Other Related Terms:

- **Mask** - an object normally worn on the face, typically for protection, disguise, performance, or entertainment. More generally in art history, the term “mask” is used for a flat face without a body.
- **Cubism** - early 20th-century art movement which uses simple geometric shapes, interlocking planes, and collage, abandoning the single view-point perspective from earlier art movements.
- **Pablo Picasso** - a Spanish painter, sculptor, print-maker, ceramicist, stage designer, poet, and playwright who spent most of his life in France. He is known for co-founding the Cubist movement.

Variations/Modifications:

- Pieces can be finished in multiple ways: (1) bisque fire and glaze during a second session; (2) underglaze while leather hard and left bisqued without a gloss glaze; or, (3) bisque fire, then cold finish with acrylic paint, water color, or oil pastels (this works well if the pieces are painted black first).
- To simplify, students can cut out a base shape and then paint features with underglaze instead of sculpting the different features.
- **Warm-up Activity** - Students can draw/sketch masks on paper first.

Cultural/Artistic References:

- [Who is Pablo Picasso](#) from Tate Kids
- Article: [How Pablo Picasso Elevated the Ceramic Art](#) from Park West Gallery

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Cultural/Artistic References continued:

- Article: [Picasso, the potter: A new look at the artist's bravado in ceramics](#) from the Los Angeles Times
- YouTube Video: [Pablo Picasso: Cubist Art Lesson](#)
- YouTube Video: [What is cubism? Pablo Picasso's Three Musicians at the MoMA](#) from the MoMA
- Teacher Resource document: [Three Musicians by Pablo Picasso](#) from the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Session 1 Materials:	Session 2 Materials:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay • Scoring tool (or fork) • Slip (or water) • Needle tool (or skewer) • Wareboards (or cardboard) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underglaze* • Clear glaze * • Paint brushes <p><i>*Colored gloss glaze can be used in lieu of under-glaze and clear glaze.</i></p>

Construction Process:

Session 1 (90 minutes)

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Cut out the base shape	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a slab from a piece of clay. 2. Using a needle tool, lightly draw/sketch out the "head" shape. 3. Cut out the base shape using the needle tool and place it onto the ware-board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slabs should be about $\frac{1}{3}$ inches thick (or about the thickness of a finger). • If a student makes a mistake while drawing the base shape, they can wipe away the drawing with their finger.
2	Sculpt the features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Features can be sculpted in two different ways: (1) solid features (like eyes) can be cut from scrap slab pieces leftover from making the "head" shape; or, (2) linear features (like eyebrows) can be fashioned from rolled coils using scraps trimmed away earlier. 2. These techniques can be combined by slipping and scoring smaller shapes/coils onto larger features (like coil pupils scored onto a slab eye). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break up the face features into simplified shapes. For example, nose becomes a triangle. • Use a mirror, referencing each others' faces, or looking at portraits as photo references. • Consider both the size and scale - will both eyes be the same size? Will they be larger or smaller than the nose? How will the nose relate to the mouth? Remember this is an abstract portrait and take creative freedom!
3	Map out the mask and attach features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrange the loose features on the base "head" shape. 2. Once all features are in place, connect each feature one at a time to the base by slipping and scoring (scratching and attaching). 3. Smooth out any rough edges and visible scratches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This step can also supersede the sculpting of the features. Some students might work better sketching out the locations prior to making the different features. • Rough edges may become shape after bisque firing. • <i>Note: If you plan to hang the pieces afterwards, be sure to poke holes in the pieces prior to firing.</i>

Collect all projects and fire them in the kiln.

Construction Process:
Session 2 (90 minutes, can be shortened)

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Underglaze	1. Paint bisqued pieces with underglaze.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are the pieces decorated? With flat colors, covered in patterns, etc. <i>Modification/Variation: Student can paint with colored gloss glazes rather than underglaze and clear glaze.</i>
2	Clear glaze	2. Once underglaze is dry, coat with clear glaze. Be sure to leave the bottoms of the pieces clean.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is glaze on the bottom of the piece, it will fuse to the kiln shelf during firing. Sponge bottoms of pieces to ensure no glaze remains.

Collect all projects and fire them in the kiln.

National Core Art Standards:

Creating - Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.

Responding - Understanding and evaluating how arts convey meaning

Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard #8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work

Anchor Standard #9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Connecting - Relating artistic ideas and work with meaning and external context

Anchor Standard #11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

Pennsylvania Standards for the Arts and Humanities:

9.1. Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts

A. Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.

B. Recognize, know, use, and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review and revise original works in the arts.

C. Know and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

D. Describe and use knowledge of a specific style within each art form through a performance or exhibition of a unique work.

J. Apply traditional and contemporary technologies for producing, performing, and exhibiting works in the arts or the works of others.

K. Apply traditional and contemporary technology in furthering knowledge and understanding in the humanities.

9.2. Historical and Cultural Contexts

A. Explain the historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.

B. Relate works in the arts chronologically to historical events (e.g., 10,000 B.C. to present).

C. Relate works in the arts to varying styles and genre and to the periods in which they were created (e.g., Bronze Age, Ming Dynasty, Renaissance, Classical, Modern, Post-Modern, Contemporary, Futuristic, others).

D. Analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective.

E. Analyze how historical event and culture impact forms, techniques, and purposes of works in the arts (e.g., Gilbert and Sullivan operettas).

F. Know and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities.

K. Identify, explain, and analyze traditions as they relate to works in the arts.

L. Identify, explain, and analyze common themes, forms and techniques from works in the arts.

9.4. Aesthetic Response

A. Identify uses of expressive symbols that show philosophical meanings in works in the arts and humanities.

B. Investigate and communicate multiple philosophical views about works in the arts.

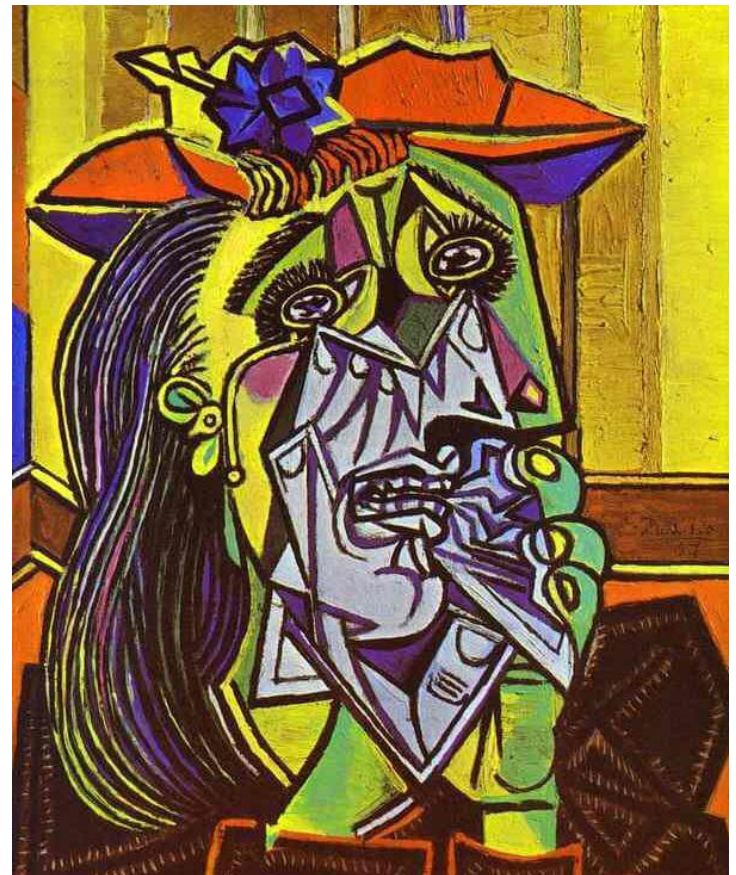
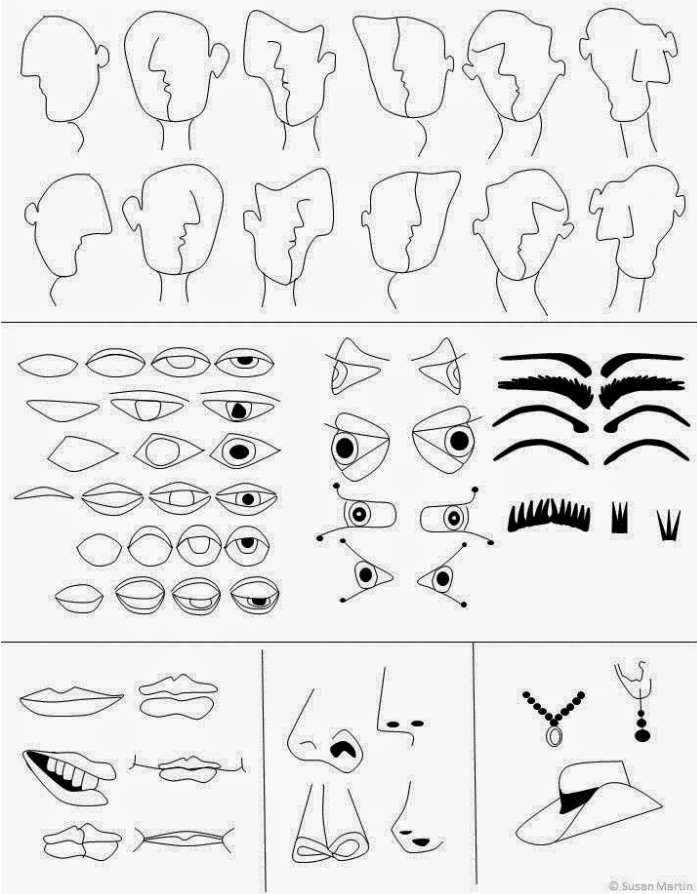
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