



**Juneau School District  
Elementary Art Program  
Activity Kit**

# Like a Face: Alutiiq masks and paper sculpture

**GRADE:** 4th      **TIME:** 1 ½ hrs.

By Heather K Ridgway



**KIT INCLUDES:**

- Lesson plan w/ label masters
- Step-by-step fold-out
- Story board Map w/ flip-book & 2 story puppets
- Two Journeys book in slip
- Set of 41 mask cards
- "influence" board
- "reproduce" board

**MATERIALS needed:**

- Per student -
- 18x12" construction paper
  - scissors
  - pencil
  - sheet of newspaper
- Shared -
- roll of masking tape
  - Globe if available
  - Needle-and-thread

**LESSON DESCRIPTION:**

Learn about an Alutiiq mask collection in France that travels "home" to Kodiak Island. Use simple 3-D paper construction techniques involving cones, and other forms, to create a mask inspired by these Alutiiq artifacts. Name your masks to match moods or features.

**VOCABULARY:**

- Mask-making
- Influence
- Reproduce
- Form
- Sculptor
- Museum Curator
- Mood

**ART ELEMENTS:**

- Line
- Shape/Form
- Color
- Value
- Texture
- Space/Perspective

**ART PRINCIPLES:**

- Pattern
- Rhythm/movement
- Proportion/Scale
- Balance
- Unity
- Emphasis

**CONTENT CONNECTIONS:**

- Geography** – maps, travel, history, and cultures
- Math** – flips, symmetry
- Social Studies** - Alaska Native People

**OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA** - Students will:

- Make a paper mask inspired by Alaskan culture: Alutiiq
- Identify "reproduction" and "influence" in art and in their mask-making
- Recognize 3 parts of most Alutiiq masks: brow-line and nose, cheeks (face-base), and mouth
- Differentiate between a variety of forms in paper sculpture
- Recognize symmetry vs. asymmetry in their artwork and that of their peers
- Determine possible emotions, moods or ideas evoked by their masks and the mask-work of others
- Recognize self as "Sculptor"

**PREPARE:**

- Cut 12"x18" construction paper for each student and a demonstration: one 12"x12" + one 6"x12."
- Pre-read the story of Alphonse Pinart, Helen Simeonoff, and the Alutiiq and French museum curators; Practice using the story-board and the puppets to illustrate the story: with posters, book & globe
- Take the "Simeonoff" puppet out before starting. The "Pinart" puppet should be in France.

**ENCOUNTER:** Students learn the history of the “Like a Face” exhibition of Alutiiq masks.

Introduce Alphonse Pinart, Helen Simeonoff, and the museum curators responsible for bringing the “Like a Face” Alutiiq mask exhibit home to Kodiak:

***You will need***

- a globe
- the 5x8” flip-book
- the map story-board
  - w/ 2 puppets: *Simeonoff* and *Pinart*
- 2 posters, *Influence* and *Reproduce*
- the Two Journeys book

Read the flip-book as you illustrate with the puppets, posters, globe and book.

Instill appreciation for preserving artifacts for the influences they have on people:

“Even better than books, museums preserve things so we can look at them in real-life.”

After visiting the masks in France, Perry Eaton said, “They have a life unto themselves. The most valuable thing about this collection is that it shows the *shape* and *form* – *The attributes that define an Alutiiq mask.*”

Lena Amason said, “After only seeing them in photographs, it was surprising how *deeply* they were carved, how *large* some of them were, and how *small* some were - some fit in your hand; and some must have hung on the wall! Seeing them in person, you could tell some of them were made by the same carver- *certain masks were related to one another.*”

Identify the shapes and forms of Alutiiq masks together:

***Use the cards so everyone has an opportunity to study a few masks***

“What ARE the shapes we see when we look at Alutiiq masks?”

What attributes are special? How would you describe what they look like to someone who has never seen one before?”

***Give students a chance to freely, but respectfully, describe what they see and interpret:***

***Attributes of a typical Alutiiq Mask:***

- ✓ Symmetrical shape: Oval, elliptical, round, egg-shaped...
- ✓ 3 basic levels:
  - Brow-line and nose are carved from the same plane  
(connected; often appearing mushroom or arrow shaped...)
  - Cheeks make up the base of the face
  - The mouth often rises out of the base  
(...as a beak shaped grin, or frown, or a whistling cone...)
- ✓ Small eyes and mouth holes

Demonstrate paper sculpture techniques to achieve these features:

**Establish a personal stock of eight or nine 1-inch-long pieces of tape, somewhere handy.**



***Follow the step-by-step fold-out -***

- 1.) Fold the big piece of paper in half and to cut out a round, symmetrical, face shape
  - Keep the fold as the longest part of your shape
  - Start cutting from the fold, working away from it, to avoid getting 2 pieces instead of one symmetrical piece with the fold in the middle.

*(This is a just like cutting a valentine, but try to avoid a “heart” shape, as it isn’t “Alutiiq”)*

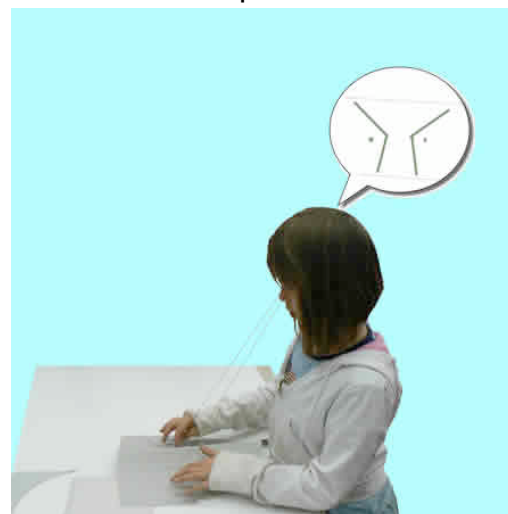
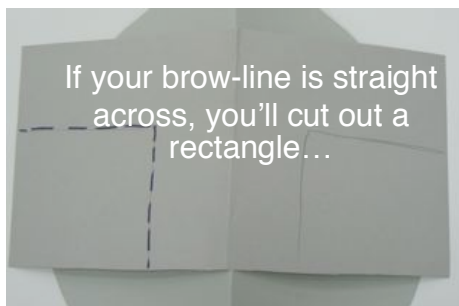
- 2.) Slit and overlap your face shape to establish a 3-D base
  - Snip a 1-inch slit in the bottom of the fold.
  - Overlap across the slit and the paper will form a 3-D “chin”
  - Tape it from the back; use glue to fix the flap in the front,
  - “Lint” a piece of tape so you don’t have to hold this flap down until the glue dries. By *linting* the tape first, you can peel it off later without tearing the paper. Anytime a student wishes to temporarily tape something onto the front of their mask, linting is the trick!

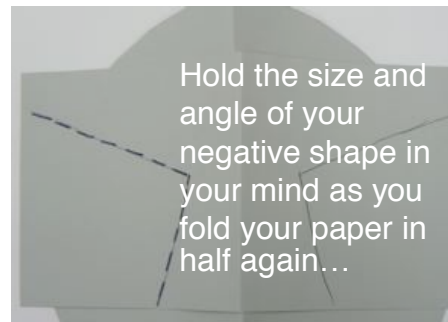
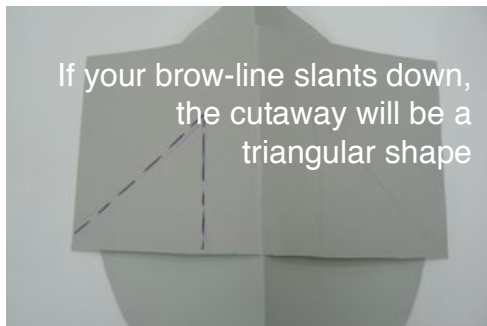


TIPS: Do not encourage kids to “lint” for tape on the back: it doesn’t hold as well. Slitting-and-overlapping is effective at the TOP of the mask fold as well, **BUT** if you want to maintain a tall, pointed top, that might work best “flat.”

- 3.) Determine the shape of your brow-line and nose

- This is symmetrical too, so fold the long piece of paper “hamburger-style”
- Unfold it, and place it over the face-base so the folds match up
- Imagine the brow-line you want ...  
picture what’s in your mind on this paper
- Draw the lines you “see” with your fingers...
- Determine the shape of the negative space (the part you will cut away):





- Refold the paper, and cut this shape out, symmetrically, from both sides with the same cut. Again – Be careful to cut AWAY from the fold, or lose your nose!

4.) Score and crease your brow-line and nose into a 3-D piece

***First, fold your sheet of newspaper at least twice, into a cushion. Scoring doesn't work without a cushion under your paper to take the indentation.***

- Turn your brow-line over, “face-down” into the cushion.
- hold your scissors like a pencil and press a line into the paper, at least a finger's width from the edge, along the lines you just cut, and across the bottom of your nose. For this reason, it is best if your initial nose shape is not too skinny!
- Crease along the score-lines, and snip a tab near the corner on both sides of the nose, so you can fold the bottom of the nose over.

5.) Create a “box” at the nose

- Where the snipped nose-tabs touch when the nose end is folded under, add glue, and fix with tape from the back. If you need tape on the front, lint it first for easy removal later.

6.) Attach the nose to the face-base

- Hold the brow-line over the base to determine where the end of the nose will connect to the fold. Pinch the fold to mark the spot and cut a 1-inch slit 90° into it.
- Push the nose-box into the slit - This is called “tab-and-slot” construction.

7.) Attach the brow-line to the base with tape tabs, from the back of the brow piece – Also use tape from the back of the mask to the back of the brow, for extra security.

8.) Trim or tuck the top of your mask into an Alutiiq shape: we have not seen any Alutiiq masks with square “brow-wings.”

9.) Poke, cut and sculpt the eyes and mouth, using what you've learned!

- If you have time, model making a cone from a scrap of paper and tab-and-slot attach it for a whistling mouth.

*In some SW Alaska cultures, whistling is communicating with spirits; it is believed to bring bad luck if done without proper respect!*



**SAFETY NOTES:** Use a peace sign behind your paper when poking your pencil through to keep from accidentally stabbing your own finger. Don't let students wear one another's masks if you're concerned about controlling communicables.

**ENGAGE:** Students create an Alutiiq style mask in paper sculpture. They name the mask in Alutiiq tradition: for a feature, a story, or a mood.

Before beginning, ALL students:

- Tear-off a 2-foot strip of tape and establish a personal stock of tape
- Fold their newspaper in  $\frac{1}{2}$ , twice, to create their cushion.  
(*Remind them, scoring doesn't work w/o a cushion.*)
- Recite together the steps illustrated on the step-by-step fold-out:

Students build a mask – (Teacher assists, by watching for the *italicized concerns...*)

**1.) Cut out a face shape**

*(watch for masks too narrow to attach a brow; also watch for kids cutting out the fold)*

**2.) Snip, overlap, and fasten**

*(This requires multiple demonstrations for some; take an unfinished face-base around with you as you tour the room.)*

**3.) Fold, Cut, Score, Crease, and Snip the brow / nose piece**

*(Some students have a difficult time imagining: Ask them if they want upward-slanting brows, downward-slanting brows, or straight-across brows. Can they trace these lines on the paper themselves? Some students have difficulty projecting what they imagine: If it is comfortable, stand behind the student. Help them “project their vision” by using your index fingers as “laser beams” from their head to the paper. Have them follow your fingers with theirs as they identify the shape they will cut out.)*

**4.) Form a box with the nose, snip a slot, and attach** *(watch for holes instead of slits)*

**5.) Add tape tabs to the brow, attach and trim**

*(If you do one side, the student should do the other; then they can show a friend! Narrow face-bases can be taped directly off the side of the face, from the back, onto the back of the brow. Folding the brow over the top of the mask can create a pointed brow like some of the Alutiiq masks.)*

**6.) Poke, Cut, Tab-and-slot – Finish adding eyes and mouth!**

*If you desire attributes true to the Alutiiq forms, remind them of symmetry, small eye-holes, and beak-shaped mouths*

*Before students take their masks home, give them a **label** strung on a piece of thread to tie through an eye, or mouth hole, like reproductions bought at museum gift shops!*

**Mounting/Preparing for presentation:**

It's fun to see the entire class collection taped to the white board! Strips of masking tape attached where you would punch holes for a “string” sticks them nicely to the board nicely! If you attach it with the sticky facing out, and fold it back to touch the board, you can't see the tape and it's not on the front of the mask (linted tape won't stick to board).

**Clean-up tips:**

Teach students to use just a little dot of glue. Too much glue is messy – “*Less is Best.*”

**REFLECT:** Identify mood in the masks; identify influences and inspirations**Refer to ART VOCABULARY:**

Shape, Line Form, Balance, Mask-making, Sculptor, Negative space,  
Cones, Cylinders, Proportion

Read the label together to reflect on specific 4<sup>th</sup> grade Art objectives

Share what students notice about the card collection –

“What is the name of the mask on your card? Why do you think it’s called that?”

Share about students’ ideas in their own masks and the masks of their peers –

“Point to a mask you think has a certain mood or expression. What did the artist do in the mask to make you feel that way?”

This is an excellent stimulus for a writing project –

“Imagine the story that goes with your mask, and write about it.”

Reflect on the way certain lines and forms on a face indicate specific emotions:

“What kind of emotion might be shown with brow lines that tilt up?”

(Anger, determination, concentration)

“Brow-lines that slant down? Are these lines of expression universal?”

Reflect on the process, and new skills -

“What techniques did you learn as paper sculptors that you would use again?”

“If you had a friend who wanted to make a mask, what advice would you give?”

*(There are reflection suggestions in the back of the 5”x8” flip-book for the story of the Alutiiq Mask collection.)*

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** JSD Art Team / The Alutiiq Museum and Archeological Repository / The Alaska Daily News / KYUU / Alaska Art Education Consortium

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Paper masks and Puppets by Ron and Marsha Feller, Looking Both Ways Smithsonian exhibit catalogue; Richard Jensen’s photo of Helen Simeonoff from Flickr; The Pinart puppet was traced from an engraving featured on Wikipedia.org by Emile Bayard, 1877; Natalie from Erin Carriker’s class modeled for the “projecting your vision” illustration; Images of Bologne-Sur-Mer and Chateau Musée taken from [www.ville-boulogne-sur-mer.fr](http://www.ville-boulogne-sur-mer.fr); 4 Old Men, used with permission from the artist, taken from the Rasmuson Gallery [http://www.rasmuson.org/ArtOnDisplay/artistGallery.php?artist\\_name=Perry%20Eaton](http://www.rasmuson.org/ArtOnDisplay/artistGallery.php?artist_name=Perry%20Eaton)  
Picasso images: *Des Moisselles* excerpt from the Usbourne Introduction of Modern Art by Rosie Dickins; *Self Portrait 1907*: <http://www.eyeconart.net/history/cubism.htm>, *Head of a woman* from Olga’s Gallery <http://www.abcgallery.com/P/picasso/picasso-2.html>, World map from [www.bristolstories.org/resources.php](http://www.bristolstories.org/resources.php) (GREAT source).


Paper masks by

class



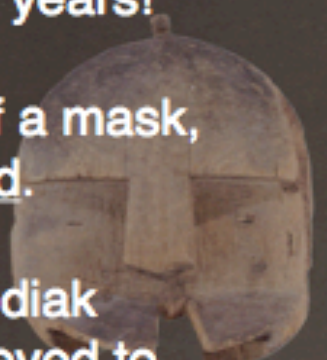
# Alutiiq Masks

In 1871, when he was 19 years old, French ethnologist Alphonse Pinart kayaked to Kodiak to record the language and culture of the Alutiiq people. He collected discarded masks used in native rituals and took them home after his 6 month stay. Curators have been protecting them in a French museum for over 140 years!

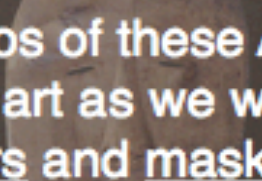


Sometimes, the abstract features of a mask, communicate a special mood.

Recently, Alutiiq artists from Kodiak heard about the masks and journeyed to France to learn about their lost culture from Pinart's collection.



We let photos of these Alutiiq masks influence our art as we worked as paper sculptors and mask-makers.



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