

GREEK THEATRICAL MASKS Children's art activity

THE ANCIENT GREEKS

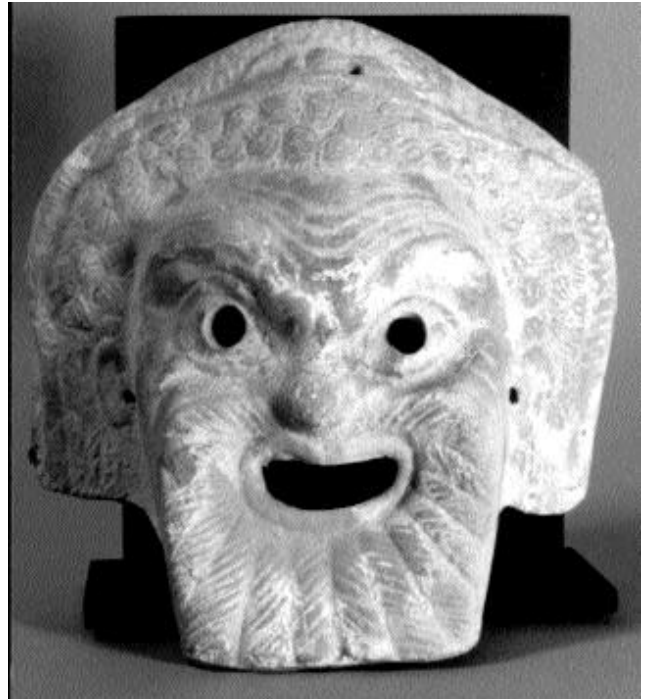
loved to attend the theater. Greek plays arose from religious rituals associated with **Dionysus**, god of wine and drama. Dionysus, was a temperamental god and the only way to please him, and keep him from wreaking havoc on the people, was to act out plays: **tragedies, comedies** and **satyr plays**. Tragic plays explored the ancient world of gods and heroes. Comedies were humorous stories of daily life. Satyr plays were dramas whose plots revolved around the boisterous exploits of the satyrs, followers of Dionysus who were part men and part horse or goat. In each play there was a large group of actors known as the chorus, who commented on the play's action and addressed the audience directly. Other actors would play the individual parts. The actors always wore masks when performing and since there were no female actors, the men would act out their parts wearing the mask of a woman. Male or female, the mask's facial expression would show the character's personality. The most well-known characters associated with ancient Greek drama are tragic or comic types. Did you know that in the ancient Greek world there were over two hundred character types?!

Materials

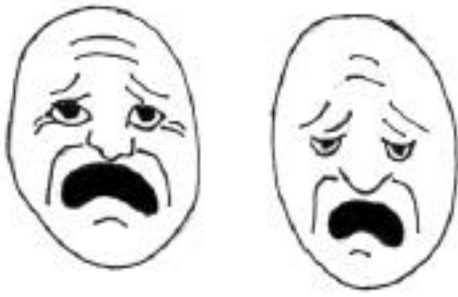
mask outlines
permanent markers
crayons
Scissors
staples
staplers

Procedures

Step 1. Begin by looking at the examples given.
Step 2. Select a mask outline and turn it to have either a beard at the bottom of the face or a large hair-do at the top (see examples on the back).
Step 3 Choose to make either a tragic (sad) face or a comic (funny) face

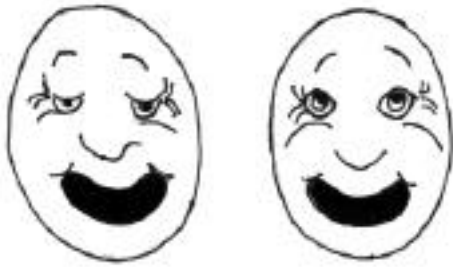


Theatrical Mask of Bearded Father of Comedy
Greco-Roman East. 1st century B.C.-1st centuries A.D..Terracotta



Tragic faces

To portray **sorrow** the mask's brows would pull in and upward, wrinkles would be on the forehead and open mouths would drop at the outside. Tragic eyes could be wide open in horror or partially closed in sadness, and cheek furrows would extend around the mouth. **Comic** masks had mouths with corners turned upward which bunched the cheeks under the eyes. Partially closed or open eyes often have smile wrinkles around them.



Comic faces



Vertical lines

Horizontal lines

Diagonal lines



Curved lines

Zig-zag lines

Spiral lines

- Step 4. Have fun creating different kinds of lines for the beard or hair. Try these or create your own kind of line. Use one kind of line or mix different kinds for variety.
- Step 5. If you wish color in the shapes created by your line work.
- Step 6. Cut out the mask and then cut the eyes and the mouth.
- Step 7. Position the mask on the child's head and staple the head bands together.

