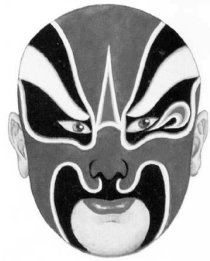


Peking Opera Masks



A lesson for PROSPECT OPEN ROOM
Students ages 7 to 10, grades 3 & 4
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I. Theme/Subject:

Peking opera (also known as Beijing Opera) has a history of over 200 years. The music originated from Xipi and Erhuang, in Anhui and Hubei, respectively, and over time techniques from many other local operas were incorporated.

Peking opera began when the famous four Anhui opera troupes came to Beijing after 1790. Peking opera developed quickly during the reign of Emperor Qianlong and the Empress Dowager Cixi under the imperial patron, and eventually became more accessible to the common people.

Long ago, Beijing Opera was performed on open-air stages in markets, streets, teahouses, or temple courtyards. In order to be heard over the crowds, the orchestra was forced to play loudly while the performers had to develop a piercing style of singing. The stages were lit by oil lamps and were so dim that the costumes were intentionally designed to be gawdy and made from harsh, contrasting colors.

Peking Opera is a harmonious combination of Grand Opera, Ballet and acrobatic display. In each performance, there is dancing, dialogue, monologue, acrobatic combat and mime. This type of opera is thus more physically demanding, requiring an actor or actress to be more diversely qualified than those in other forms of performing art. He or she has to be a performing artist, a singer, and a dancer at the same time. It usually takes the student more than ten years of training to learn singing and acrobatic skills. Therefore, it is often extremely difficult and challenging to become an able performer in Peking Opera.

II. Objectives/Concepts:

- Students will become familiar with Peking Opera.
- Students will recognize symbolism in Peking opera such as colors in make-up and costumery.

- students will recognize and overcome stereotypes of Asians and Asian Americans in performing arts and media.
- Students will design and create their own masks using the symbolism evident in peking opera masks.
- Students will gain experience handling art materials such as paint and paintbrushes.

III. Standards:

A. National

1. Visual Arts

- NA-VA K-4.1: Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories.
- NA-VA K-4.2: Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas.
- NA-VA K-4.3: Students know the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures.
- NA-VA K-4.4: Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum.

B. Ohio State standards

1. Social Studies

- Describe the cultural practices and products of people on different continents.
- Describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence the behavior of people living in a particular culture.
- Demonstrate skills and explain the benefits of cooperation when working in group settings
- Demonstrate self-direction in tasks within the school community
- Obtain information from oral, visual and print sources.

2. Math

- Use mathematical strategies to solve problems that relate to other curriculum areas and the real world; e.g., use symmetry in artwork.

3. Visual Arts

- Benchmark 1A: Recognize and describe visual art forms and artworks from various times and places.
- Benchmark 1B: Use historical artworks such as paintings, photographs and drawings to answer questions about daily life in the past
- Benchmark 2B: Establish and communicate a purpose for creating artworks. Identify, select and use art elements and principles to express emotions and produce a variety of visual effects.
- Benchmark1C: Identify and describe the different purposes people have for creating works of art
- Benchmark 2A: Demonstrate knowledge of visual art materials, tools, techniques and processes by using them expressively and skillfully.

- Benchmark 2B: Identify, select and use art elements and principles to express emotions and produce a variety of visual effects.
- Benchmark 2D: Begin to revise artwork to a level of personal satisfaction.
- Benchmark 3B: Use context clues to identify and describe the cultural symbols and images in artwork.
- Benchmark 4A: Apply basic reasoning skills to understand why works of art are made and valued.
- Benchmark 4C: Talk about their thoughts and feelings when looking at works of art.
- Benchmark 5A: Demonstrate the relationship the visual arts share with other arts disciplines as meaningful forms of nonverbal communication. (Use visual art materials to express an idea from a song, poem, play, or story.)
- Benchmark 5B: Use the visual arts as a means to understand concepts and topics studied in disciplines outside the arts.

IV. Vocabulary:

- *Erhuang*: Peking opera melody derived from Anhui and Hubei
- *Opera*: A performing art consisting of a dramatic stage performance set to music
- *Pantomime*: acting using gestures and body movements without spoken language
- *Peking Opera*: Chinese musical drama using pantomime, symbolism, and
- *Xipi*: a form of clapper opera

V. Materials:

- Dry Erase markers
- (1) One plastic mask per student
- Acrylic Paints (Red, Blue, Yellow, White, Black)
- Paint Brushes
- Paper Towels
- Paint trays
- Examples of Peking Opera mask designs
- Sketchbooks with preliminary designs (from AMAM tour)

VI. Strategies and Procedures:

A. Engage (motivation):

Prospect Open Room students have been preparing to perform an original opera with the help of Cleveland Opera Un Tour staff members. Students will be attending the performance of Turandot, and have been learning about how to overcome stereotypes of Asian and Asian Americans. Puccini's Turandot tends to simplify and skew Asian culture to fit the storyline and create added

drama. It is important for students to understand what elements are not truly part of Asian culture and which are.

B. Explore:**AMAM visit**

Students will first come to the Allen Memorial Art Museum and examine different types of masks, specifically the African mask, and the Japanese masks.

Students will then view examples of Peking Opera masks, both in person and via the internet at the following site:

<http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Opera/index.html>

(teachers can print handouts from this site to use as examples)

Sketching activity:

Students will create their own masks using line and shape to represent different emotion and expressions.

Color Symbolism in Peking Opera Masks

Red: loyalty, courage

Purple: wisdom, bravery, steadfastness

Black: loyalty, integrity

Watery white: cruelty, treachery

Oily white: inflated, domineering

Blue: valor, resolution

Green: chivalry

Yellow: brutality

Gray: an old scoundrel

Gold and silver: supernatural (demons, Buddhas, spirits)

Dark red: loyal, time-tested warrior

Pink: humor

Paint mixing for students:

Provide students with only primary colors (red, blue, and yellow) plus black and white

Have students make the following colors**:

- Green (yellow + blue)*
- Purple (blue + red)*
- Gray (white + black)*
- Pink (white + red)*

** Have students mix in order of colors listed. Such as adding blue to yellow—this will waste less paint as only a little of each second color listed is needed versus if adding the first color to the second*

**** Note that Orange is not listed as a color to mix—orange is NOT used as a mask color in Peking Opera.**

C. Create:

Students will follow the following procedures:

- Transfer final sketch from sketchbook onto plastic mask using a dry erase marker. (using this type of marker allows the student to simply erase errors by rubbing off the mistake, however, students must be careful not to erase lines they wish to keep!)
- Once all lines are drawn satisfactorily, select colors (it is best to work from light to dark) and begin to paint them in the appropriate spaces according to the design. (Remember: no paint is needed for white since the mask itself is a nice bright white!)
- Using a medium sized paint brush, begin painting the largest, lightest colored areas.
- Continue to paint in each color from light to dark, large to small. Use a fine paint brush for small areas and details.
- Allow ample drying time before wearing or displaying masks!

VII. Assessment:

Evaluate students' work based on the following criteria:

- Did the student follow directions?
- Did the student create a complete design of their mask during their museum visit?
- Did the student work well and respectfully with others?
- Did the student require little to no assistance?
- Did the student transfer his/her design using dry erase markers neatly onto his/her mask?
- Did the student use materials properly?
- Did the student use correct colors as symbolism?
- Did the student paint his/her design onto a mask neatly?
- Did the student clean his/her work area completely?
- Did the student require little to no discipline?

VIII. Closure:

Have student wear their masks and pantomime their emotions. Have other students guess what emotions their masks and pantomiming express.

Listen to examples of peking opera on CD. Have students discuss the differences between Chinese Peking opera and Puccini's Turandot..

IX. Across the Curriculum:

A. Social Studies: Have students create research the history of the Peking Opera. Explore the geography of China and learn about the culture of Beijing.

B. Science: Have students create kamishibai to explain scientific processes such as the formation of clouds, food chain, changing of seasons, germination of seeds, etc.

C. Math: Sequencing cards

X. Resources:

A. Books:

1. Chensheng, Dong. *Paintings of Beijing Opera Characters*. Zhaohua Publishing House: Beijing, 1981.
2. Menglin, Zhan. *Peking Opera Painted Faces With Notes on 200 Operas*. Morning Glory Publishers: Beijing, 1996.

C. Websites:

1. <http://www.arthistory.net/eras/chinese.html>
2. www.kamishibai.com
3. <http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/kamishibai/teachkam.html>
This site contains background information on *Kamishibai*, a summary of one story, and discussion questions.
4. <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/dictio/>
A young person's guide to the collections of Kyoto National Museum in Japan.
5. <http://www.washingtonchineseopera.org/aboutchinese.html>