



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

Educational Materials

Please forward to teachers

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Behind The Mask Theatre: Cat Mountain

Grade levels: 6-12

Cat Mountain: Adapted from a book by Francoise Richard and inspired by a Japanese folk tale, Sho, a servant girl journeys to a strange and far-off mountain where she hopes to find her freedom and her lost cat. But the people she meets on the way all tell her no one has ever returned from Cat Mountain! Performed solo, the little girl's special visitor tells the tale with an assortment of masks, storytelling, original music, traditional Japanese songs, Japanese vocabulary, and Japanese theatre-styles.

LEARNING GOALS:

1. To bring to life the story of Cat Mountain through the use of Mask Theater.
2. To explore the lessons of traditional folklore in modern society.

PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Archetypal Journey*

Discuss themes and motifs in literature. Think of familiar examples of the Hero's journey. Discuss common elements and use these to brainstorm ideas for original stories.

POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *What Do Masks Reveal About Characters?*

View images of Japanese masks as a class and discuss what is revealed in the mask. What do masks tell us about characters? Pick a favorite mask and write an accompanying character sketch and monologue.

CURRICULUM LINKS: Visual Arts, Theater, Music, History and Social Science, Foreign Languages, English Composition

PRE-ACTIVITY: *The Archetypal Journey*

LEARNING GOAL:

To understand the structure and elements of an archetypal journey myth.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Plain white paper and drawing supplies.

TIME: 1 hour

STEP 1: Introduce or reinforce the concept of literary and artistic themes and motifs. Ask students for examples of patterns in familiar works of literature and visual art, including the hero's journey.

STEP 2: Discuss examples of the hero journey in literature and film (e.g. *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*). Consider starting place, tests, and lessons learned in each story.

STEP 3: Have each group **share** their list with the class. Which elements are shared by multiple stories? If one group chose a story from another culture, are there cross-cultural similarities?

STEP 4: Read heroic archetypal stories from other cultures (see Resources). **Outline** the journey and pinpoint key symbols in the work.

STEP 5: In small groups, brainstorm ideas for a new hero's journey story based on a culture of the students' choice or changing one of the major elements of the hero's journey.

EXTENSIONS:

1. Use the ideas from the brainstorming session in class to compose original stories.
2. Research Carl Jung's concept of archetypes and discuss how his theories relate to the hero's journey.



POST-ACTIVITY: *What Do Masks Reveal About Characters?*

LEARNING GOAL:

To explore the ways that masks can reveal personalities.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

images of masks:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/05aug/00717/pages/masks.html> or

<http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/nohmask.html>

TIME:

30-45 minutes

STEP 1: Choose three or four images of masks. Present them to the class, either in a handout or projected on the wall, without any accompanying text.

STEP 2: Discuss with students what they notice about the masks. Focus on small details at first and then move on to comparisons and contrasts among the masks and feelings, ideas, or questions inspired by the masks.

STEP 3: Pose the question to the class: What do masks reveal about characters? Discuss what they might guess about the characters based on these masks.

STEP 4: Choose a mask either from *Cat Mountain* or the images viewed as the class. **Write** a character sketch and a monologue based on the mask.

STEP 5: Read the monologues aloud to the rest of the class.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION OF PERFORMANCE

1. What did you notice in the performance? Tell me what you saw/ heard/ noticed.
2. What questions do you have after viewing the performance? What are you wondering about?
3. How did Sho's opinion of her master and herself change as her journey progressed?

EXTENSIONS:

1. Choose characters from literature and design a mask. Write an explanation of design choices to accompany the mask.
2. Explore the multiple meanings of the word 'mask' and the ways that people use masks. How do we hide our faces? What might we find 'behind the mask'?



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VOCABULARY:

O yasumi nasai - Sweet dreams

Sumimasen - I am sorry

Konnichi-wa? - How are you?

Konban-wa minasan - Good evening, everyone

Oishi-so - Delicious

Kio-tsu-kete - Safe journey

Gomen kudasai?- May I come in?

RESOURCES:

Irvine, Gregory (1994) "Japanese Masks: Ritual and Drama". In: Mack, John (ed.) (1994) *Masks. The Art of Expression*. London: British Museum Press. pp.130-150.

Jung, Carl. (1981). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ.

Waley, Arthur (1921; 1965 4th impr.) *The No Plays of Japan*. [With letters by Oswald Sickert] London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

<http://www.ihawaii.net/~stony/loreindx.html>

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/index.htm>

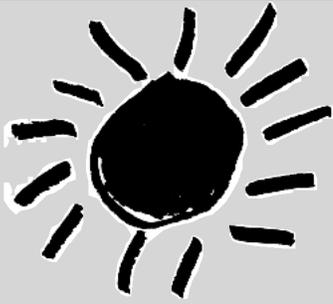
ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

Founded in 1990 by Eric Bornstein, Behind the Mask Theatre brings diverse international folklore to life through the magic of Mask Theater, original music, and dance. Based in New England, the performers each bring unique skills to the troupe. Mr. Bornstein has studied mask making with prominent masters in Bali and Italy. His masks have appeared at The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, The Fuller Craft Museum, Boston Lyric Opera, and Boston Ballet II; the troupe has performed at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, King Richard's Faire, and Christmas/Summer Revels. This show also highlights actor Hanna Barth, stilter/clown Barbara Michaels, and ritual artist Katja Esser. For more information on Behind the Mask Theatre, please consult the web site: www.behindthemask.org.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has distinguished itself as the vital link between Massachusetts schoolchildren (K-12) and more than 95 of the region's most accomplished actors, dancers, singers, musicians, and storytellers. Its 36 ensembles offer 57 interactive arts programs that represent a range of cultures, historical periods and artistic disciplines. YA is unique in its flexibility to offer interactive performances, tailor-made residencies, workshops, teacher-training, curriculum planning and multi-year projects. All programs include educational materials and satisfy local, state and/or federal arts education standards.

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MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

Behind the Mask Theatre: *Cat Mountain*

<i>Language Arts 10</i>	Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of different genres.
<i>Language Arts 16</i>	Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of myths, traditional narratives, and classical literature and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
<i>Language Arts 18</i>	Dramatic Reading and Performance...plan and present dramatic readings, recitations, and performances that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience and purpose.
<i>Arts-Visual Art 2</i>	Elements and Principles of Design...demonstrate knowledge of the elements and principles of design.
<i>Arts-Theatre 2</i>	...read, analyze, and write dramatic material.
<i>Arts- Theatre 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own theatrical work and the work of others using appropriate vocabulary.
<i>Arts- Theatre 6</i>	Purpose and Meanings in the arts...describe the purposes for which works of dance, theatre, music, visual arts, and architecture were and are created.
<i>Arts-Theatre 8</i>	Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change...demonstrate understanding of styles, influence, change.
<i>Arts-Theatre 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology / engineering.

