

Name: _____
Class: _____ Date: _____

Expressive Emoticons

An activity of "Our Singapore: Chinese Opera"

INTRODUCTION

In Chinese opera, the performer's heavy makeup and elaborate costumes provide a façade or 'mask' that transform their characters to life. Like internet emoticons, masks also convey or conceal one's emotions and expressions. If you could make a mask, what expression would you like to convey?

MATERIALS

Rolls of toilet paper, balloons, flour, tap water, a pair of scissors, acrylic paints, a bowl, markers, cling wrap, paintbrushes, protective clothing and accessories (sequins, feathers, glitter etc).

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **BROWSE** through "Chinese Opera" (<http://www.whatsup.sg/oursingapore/Opera.htm>).
2. **COVER** your table and floor with newspaper and wear protective clothing. This will get messy.
3. **MIX** 2 cups of flour with 1 cup of water in a bowl to create the paste.
4. **TEAR** the toilet paper into strips of about 2cm x 15 cm.
5. **BLOW** up a balloon to around the size of your head and tie it securely. **DRAW** eyes and mouth holes on your balloon with a marker. **WRAP** the balloon with cling wrap.
6. **DIP** each strip, one at a time, into the paste, and lay horizontally across one half of your balloon, starting from the top, making sure not to cover the eye and mouth holes. Overlap the strips until you reach the bottom of the mask. Allow each layer to dry completely before applying the next layer. The strips for the second layer should be laid vertically and the third layer, horizontally. (Note: To store your paste overnight, refrigerate and then microwave for 1 minute the next day).
7. **APPLY** additional strips where necessary to create facial features such as cheekbones, nose, lips and eyebrows etc. Finally, apply the last layer vertically. **REMOVE** the balloon and plastic wrap when your mask has nearly dry.
8. When your mask is completely dry, **PAINT** the desired expression on your mask and **DECORATE** your mask.
9. **SHOWCASE** your mask to your class, with a brief introduction explaining what expression it conveys and your reasons for choosing that expression.
10. **REFLECT**, as a whole class, how effectively masks like these can convey expressions without using words. How do you think such masks can help you if you have to communicate with a group of people whose language you do not know? Speculate about why masks are so popular around the world in so many cultures.