

# ART ADVENTURES

At-Home Art Project

## Marvelous Masks



This *At-Home Art Project* is an exploration of masks. What is a mask? A mask is something that you wear on your face. Why do you think people wear masks? When have you worn a mask? How does it feel to wear a mask?

Masks have many purposes. They can hide your face, change the way you look as part of a costume, or provide protection. Currently, people wear masks to prevent the spread of germs from one person to another. People also wear masks for holidays or rituals, such as celebrating a good harvest of food, a special wedding dance, or a funeral.

People from cultures all over the world have used masks for centuries. The oldest known mask is from **7000 BCE!** There may have been even older masks that were made from fabric and leather that **disintegrated**, or broke up into tiny pieces, and disappeared over time. The three masks shown in the *Look at Art* section below come from three different parts of the world, seen in the map below.

# Look at Art





*Mummy Mask of a Woman*, Egypt, mid-1st century BCE

This *Mummy Mask of a Woman* is in the Walters' collection of art and artifacts from ancient Egypt. This funerary mask was used in an Egyptian burial to cover the face of a woman who had died. The fact that the mask is painted gold tells us that this woman was probably wealthy. What do you notice about her face and expression? The mask was not meant to show how the woman looked in real life. Instead, it depicted her in a way that ancient Egyptians thought was ideal and beautiful. What other details do you notice on the mask? The eyes, scarab beetle on the head, and **ibis** (crane-like bird) at the bottom were all made from glass.



*Deer Head Mask*, Mexico, 600–900 CE

This *Deer Head Mask* was created by the indigenous people in what is now Veracruz, Mexico. This mask is small (it is only four inches wide by four inches tall) and would have been placed on the face of a small figurine. It is similar to ones that people would have worn for dance performances on special occasions. It was believed that the dancer transformed into the deer and acquired its spirit while wearing the mask. The deer was very important in ancient Mexican culture because it was used for food and clothing, and was associated with gods in the region. If you could wear an animal mask, which animal would you choose and why?

## Did You Know?!

The *Deer Head Mask* is considered **Mesoamerican**, which refers to a culture in the time before 1500 CE in the areas that are now referred to as northern Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, and central to southern Mexico.



*Mummy Mask with Wig*, Chancay, 1000–1450 CE

This mask is from the Chancay civilization in the area that is now Peru. In many cultures of this region, people were buried with special objects and wrapped in many layers of **textiles**, or fabrics, when they died. Masks such as this one were then placed on top of the **textiles**. What do you notice about this mask? What materials do you think the artist used? What traditions do you have in your culture when people die? How do you honor the memory of loved ones?

### *Challenge:*

*Describe how these three masks are similar and different. Talk about it with a friend, write your ideas, or draw pictures of what you see.*

## Texture Scavenger Hunt

Masks can be made from many different materials, which means they can also have many different **textures**. **Texture is** the way something feels. How do you think the masks from the Walters' collection (above) might feel?

**Texture** is all around us! Use the list below to explore **textures**—inside, outside, or both! Collect the objects you find, take pictures, or make rubbings (this is done by placing an object under a piece of paper and rubbing a crayon across the paper).

When you find something new, ask yourself: What do I **see**? What do I **think** about this object? What do I **wonder** about it?

When you finish your scavenger hunt, count the number of objects you found. Which objects had one texture? Which objects had many textures? Which one was your favorite, and why?

Look for something...

- Bumpy
- Smooth
- Soft
- Hard
- Rough
- Wet
- Dry
- Feathery
- Sticky
- Sharp
- Fuzzy
- Mushy
- Prickly
- Slick
- Damp

# Make Art: Textured Masks

## Supplies:

- Mask template
- Thin cardboard
- Assorted colorful paper
- Glue
- Foam stickers
- Sticky felt
- Scissors
- Two (2) sheets of white cardstock (thick paper)
- Feathers
- Pencil or pen

## Steps:

1. Think about the kind of mask you want to make. What is its purpose or what event will it be for? How will the mask change the way you look? Will it turn you into an animal? An imaginary creature? A different person?
2. Sketch your idea on a piece of scrap paper with a pencil or pen.
3. Cut out the mask template. Trace it on thin cardboard and cut it out. This is your mask base.
4. If you want to include big features (such as a beak, nose, horns, etc.), cut them out of the cardstock and attach them to the mask base with glue.
5. Cut out shapes and textures from the colorful paper to decorate your mask. Use the paper texture guide at the end of this activity packet to practice different techniques.
6. Attach the paper decorations to your mask with glue dots.
7. Continue adding decorations until you have covered the whole mask. Remember not to cover the eyeholes!
8. Add gems and feathers for a final touch.
9. Try on your mask and show it off! How do you feel when you put on your mask?

**SHARE:** Send pictures of your artwork to [familyprograms@thewalters.org](mailto:familyprograms@thewalters.org) so that we can add them to our online gallery. Please include your first name and age.

**REFLECT:** Tell us about your experience by completing this quick [survey](#).

Summer Art Adventures are made possible by the Women's Committee of the Walters Art Museum, The Ludwig and Nancy Sternberger Charitable Foundation, Ellin & Tucker, and members and donors to the Walters Art Museum.



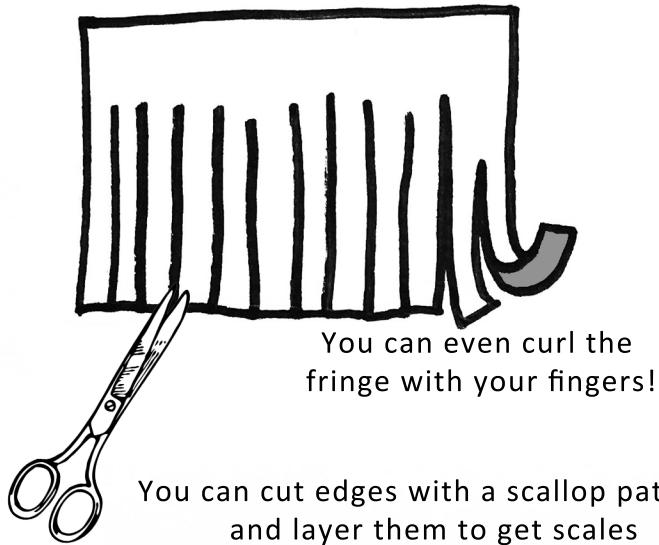
Mummy Mask of a Woman  
Egyptian  
mid 1st century BCE - mid 1st century CE

This mummy mask was decorated with symbols of protection and safe passage for the **afterlife**. At the top of the mask, there is a **scarab beetle**, which represents renewal and an **ankh**, which represents life. The **ankh** is an Egyptian **hieroglyph** that is cross shaped with a loop at the top. What symbols will you add to this mask? The original mummy mask was painted gold, red, and blue. What colors will you use?

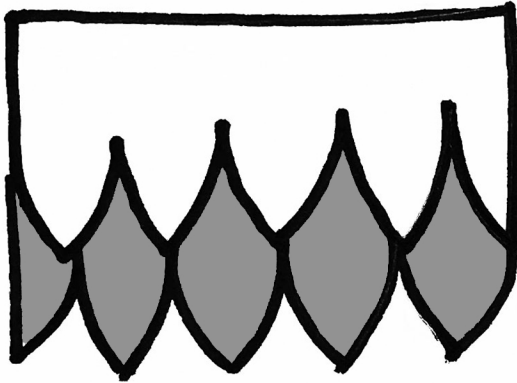


# PAPER TEXTURE CHEAT SHEET

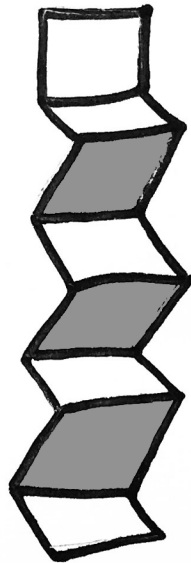
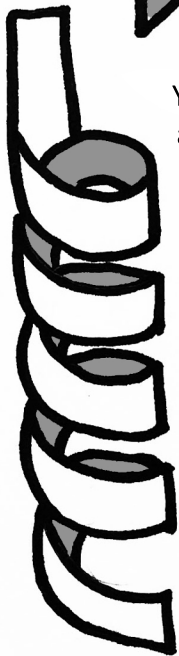
You can use scissors to cut fringe



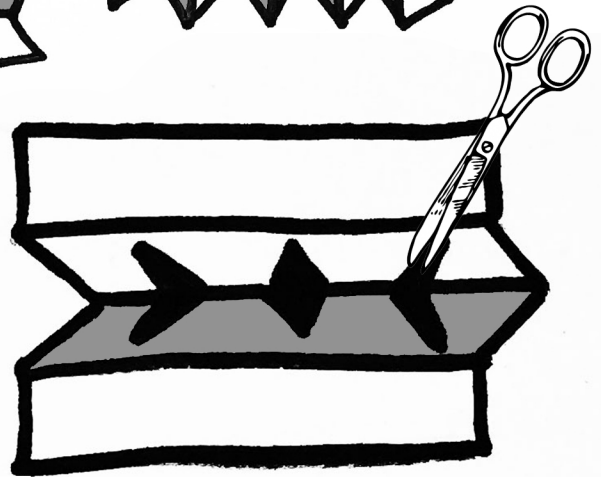
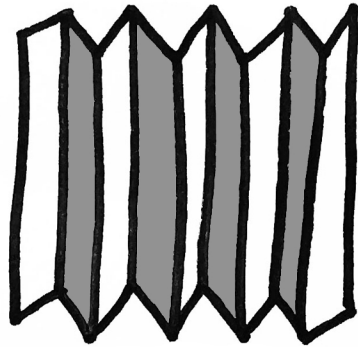
You can cut edges with a scallop pattern and layer them to get scales



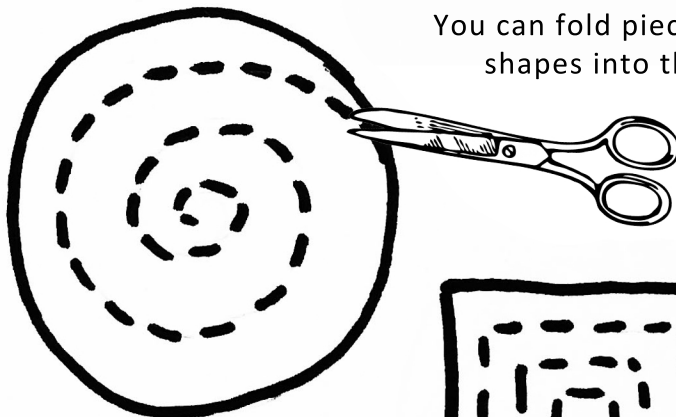
You can cut a strip and curl it around your finger



You can fold pieces of paper back and forth like a zig-zag accordion



You can fold pieces and cut shapes into the folds



You can cut out shapes and then cut them into a spiral!

