### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Tribal Mask

This lesson was an interdisciplinary art unit aligned with all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum. The purpose of this lesson was to study Native American art forms, this includes colors, symbols, use of natural materials and techniques of mask making. Included in this lesson was a handout to help the students while creating their masks and a reflection of writing that was completed at the end of the unit.

Before this unit, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders had used paint, scissors, glue, application of beads and feathers with previous art projects. The masks used all these materials and skills, but in more advanced ways.



After completing the project, students filled out the form below to express their feelings, discovering why they selected certain colors and symbols, and formulating a title (theme). When the masks were displayed, the filled out form was attached.

Title of Mask
<b>***</b>
The most important color that I used on my Native American Indian Mas is
This color symbolizes
to the Indians.
In a sentence explain why this color is important to you.



# NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN MASKS THIRD GRADE

#### STEPS:

- SELECT A PRECUT CARDBOARD MASK SHAPE
- REFER TO NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COLOR SYMBOLISM HANDOUT TO SELECT COLORS FOR MASK (LIMIT 3 COLORS)
- PAINT FRONT AND BACK OF CARDBOARD SURFACE WITH ONE OF THE CHOSEN COLORS
- PAINT EYES, WOODEN NOSE/MOUTH, STICKS, BRANCHES, AND WOOD DISKS USING A COLOR SCHEME
- WHEN DRY, ARRANGE AND GLUE FACIAL FEATURES AND DECORATIVE PIECES ONTO CARDBOARD MASK SHAPE

- INSERT PAINTED BRANCHES ONTO TOP OF MASK, APPLY GLUE TO SECURE
- GLUE FEATHERS/BEADS NEXT TO BRANCHES FOR DECORATION
- USING COLORED RAFFIA, CREATE TWO BRAIDS
- PAPER PUNCH HOLES IN EDGE OF MASK, INSERT BRAIDS
- STRING BEADS ONTO TWO PIECES OF YARN/STRING, PUNCH MORE HOLES AND ATTACH STRING PIECES
- COMPLETE WRITTEN REFLECTION: TITLE MASK, LIST OF COLORS AND SYMBOLISM, AND A SENTENCE DESCRIBING CHOICES.

#### LEARNING:

- COLORS HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS IN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE: TRAITS, CHARACTER, MOOD, FEELINGS, NATURE
- COLORS HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS IN MODERN CULTURE AS WELL

- LIMITING COLORS CREATES HARMONY AND UNITY IN ARTWORK
- PAINT CAN BE APPLIED TO DIFFERENT SURFACES
- NATURAL MATERIALS CAN BE UTILIZED IN MASK MAKING
- ARRANGING FACIAL FEATURES AND DECORATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE MASK
- USING A PAPER PUNCH
- SKILL OF BRAIDING
- STRINGING BEADS AND KNOTTING STRING
- APPRECIATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE/ART
- WRITING A REFLECTION

#### **Preparation for this project:**

I met many times with the third grade teachers so I could align my lesson with what they were teaching on Native American Indians.

I researched educational websites for a handout I gave to the students to help them learn about Native American symbolism and colors.

Last year, I created a similar project for third graders, but did not use natural materials

# NATIVE AMERICAN MASKS



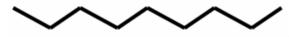
#### **Color Meanings & Symbolism Chart**

The following chart provides generalized details of each color, its meanings and its symbolism.

Color Meanings and Symbolism Chart						
Color	Color Meanings & Symbolism of Face Paint Color Meanings & Symbolism of War Paint					
Black	Victory and Success	Power, Aggression & Strength				
Red	Faith, Beauty and Happiness	Blood, Violence & Energy				
White	Sharing, Purity and Light	Mourning				
Yellow / Orange	Intellect and Determination	Willing to fight to the Death				
Green	Nature, Harmony and Healing	Endurance				
Blue	Wisdom and Intuition	Confidence				
Purple	A sacred color and symbolized power, mystery and magic					
Color	Color Meanings & Symbolism of Face Paint	Color Meanings & Symbolism of War Paint				
Color Meanings and Symbolism Chart						

#### Color Meanings Symbolism - Red Symbol Meaning

Red Color Meanings and Symbolism: The color of red symbolised violence, war, blood, wounds, strength, energy, power and success in war paint but might also symbolise happiness and beauty in face paint. The meaning of the Lightning symbol represented lightning which was believed to add power and speed to the warrior. Lightning and the zig-zag symbol, painted in red as shown in the above picture of the lowa Indian, is also associated with the legendary <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/jhunderbird">Thunderbird</a>.



## Lightening (Thunderbird) symbolColor Meanings Symbolism - Black Symbol Meaning

Black Color Meanings and Symbolism: The color of black was perceived as a "living" color and worn on the face to prepare for war as shown in the above picture. Black is a very aggressive color. Black meant strength. It might also indicated that the wearer was a powerful warrior who had proved himself in battle. Black was also used to symbolize victory and might be applied before returning home to the camp. The meaning of the <a href="Hand Symbol">Hand Symbol</a> represented success in hand to hand <a href="combat">combat</a>. It symbolized human life and this sign was believed to channel energy to the wearer. The color of black was produced from coal or charcoal mixed with spit or animal fat.



#### **Color Meanings Symbolism - White Symbol Meaning**

White Color Meanings and Symbolism: The color of white symbolized mourning but might also mean peace and happiness. White was also the color used to represent winter or snow. White was the color of peace when it was used as face paint. The color of white was produced from clay, limestone, ground gypsum, eggshells or sea shells.

#### **Color Meanings Symbolism - Yellow and Orange Symbol Meaning**

Yellow Color Meanings and Symbolism: The color of yellow symbolized the color of death. Yellow also indicated that the wearer was heroic, had led a good life and was willing to fight to the death. Yellow also symbolised intellect. The color of yellow was produced from bixa plant or tree, also known as annatto, it is a bushy shrub or small tree. Native Americans made a paste from annatto for a bright orange or yellow war paint

#### **Color Meanings Symbolism - Green Symbol Meaning**

Green Color Meanings and Symbolism: The color green symbolized endurance. Green is associated with harmony and is a great healing power and believed to <u>improve vision</u>. Green is the color associated with nature especially plants, hills, mountains, earth, summer and rain. The color of green was produced from moss or algae, flowers or berries.

#### **Color Meanings Symbolism - Blue Symbol Meaning**

Blue Color Meanings and Symbolism: The color blue symbolised wisdom and confidence. Blue also represented the sky, rivers, lakes and water. The color of blue was produced from duck manure, clays, oxides, powdered azurite and lapis, sun flower seeds, berries and flowers

#### Color Meanings Symbolism - Purple Symbol Meaning

xx Color Meanings and Symbolism: The color purple was not used as war paint or face paint. It was seen as a sacred color and symbolised power, mystery and magic. The color of purple was produced from coneflowers, Blueberries and hibiscus

#### **Color Meanings Symbolism - Important Tribal Colors**

Many Native American Indians believe that certain colors have religious, or sacred, meanings and connotations.

- The Navajo tribe considers the colors blue, white, yellow, and black important as they represent four sacred mountains. The eastern mountains were white, the southern blue or turquoise, the western yellow, and the northern black. The rise and fall of these mountains caused the alternation of day and night. When the White Mountains rose it was day, when the yellow ones rose it was twilight and the black mountains brought night, and the blue, dawn.
- The Apache tribe consider the colors green, white, yellow and black to be important as they also represent four sacred mountains
- The lowa Nation consider the colors black, yellow, red and white to be important as they represent direction, their flag, and what they consider to be four races of man

Significance of Tribal Colors

Each Native American Tribe has colors and symbols that represent their beliefs in the power of that color.

**Black** can represent any of the following: night; underworld; male; cold; disease; and when worn as face paint represents "living".

The black color was created from wild grapes, hickory bark, alder bark, dogwood bark, and mountain mahogany bark.

<u>Green</u> represented plant life; earth; summer and rain. When it was worn under the eyes as face paint it was believed to empower the wearer with night vision.

The green color was made from moss, algae, lily of the valley leaves, and jumiper berries.

<u>White</u> represented winter; death or snow. White was also the color of peace when it was used as face paint.

**<u>Red</u>** indicated wounds; sunset; thunder; blood; earth; and day. Used as a face paint it represented violence. The red color was created from sumac berries, dogwood bark, beets, and poke berries.

<u>Yellow</u> represented sunshine, day and dawn. As a face paint it was the color of death, worn only by those in mourning.

The color yellow was extracted from onion skins, golden stems and flowers, sunflower petals, dock roots, marigold petals, moss, peach leaves, birch leaves, and sage brush.

**Blue** stood for the sky, water, female, clouds, lightning, moon, thunder, and sadness.

The blue color was made from larkspur petals, alfalfa flowers, and sunflower seeds.

**<u>Brown</u>** was created from walnut shells and birch bark. It apparently was not used as face paint.

<u>Purple</u> was made from blackberries, blueberries, poke berries, raspberries, and rotten maple wood. It too, apparently was not used as face paint.

NATIVE AMERICAN DESIGNS AND COLORS (You are Here)

#### The People: Native American Legacy

Source: Department of Cultural Affairs- Nevada State Library and Archives

Native Americans decorated most of their crafts to make them more beautiful. They added color and designs with paint, beads, quill embroidery, and by carving and weaving. Sometimes a <u>design</u> or color was a symbol, that is, it stood for an idea or told a story. For example, among the Crow, the color black was a symbol for victory; arrow symbols might mean a hunt or a battle.

Each group had its own set of meanings for colors and designs to use on ceremonial crafts. These symbols could be drawn on a leather pouch or a drumskin to retell a myth or relate an important event Sometimes the maker of a ghost shirt or some other ceremonial object had a dream that revealed what design to use.

The decorative art on many everyday objects had no special meaning. Sometimes a geometric design might be called "butterfly" because the triangle shapes together on a basket looked like a butterfly. Usually, the only way to find out if a design was supposed to be a symbol with meaning was to ask the maker. Designs that showed people, birds, and animals were usually created by men. Women worked more with geometric shapes.

Color was important to add meaning to a design, too. Most Native Americans named four points of the earth, the four directions of the compass--north, south, east, and west--and assigned a color to each one. Among the Cherokee, north was blue, south was white, east was red, and west was black. Colors could also mean life or death, wax or peace, female or male, night or day. For example, the Navaho thought black represented men and blue, women. The Hopi thought that the color blue was the most sacred and used it to honor their gods. Here are some of the other meanings attached to colors:

Color	Meaning for Native Americans			
Black	night, underworld, male, cold, disease, death			
Blue	sky, water, female, clouds, lightning, moon, thunder, sadness			
Green	plant life, earth, summer, rain			
Red	wounds, sunset, thunder, blood, earth, war, day			
White	winter, death, snow			
Yellow	sunshine, day, dawn			

#### FACTS NATURAL DYES

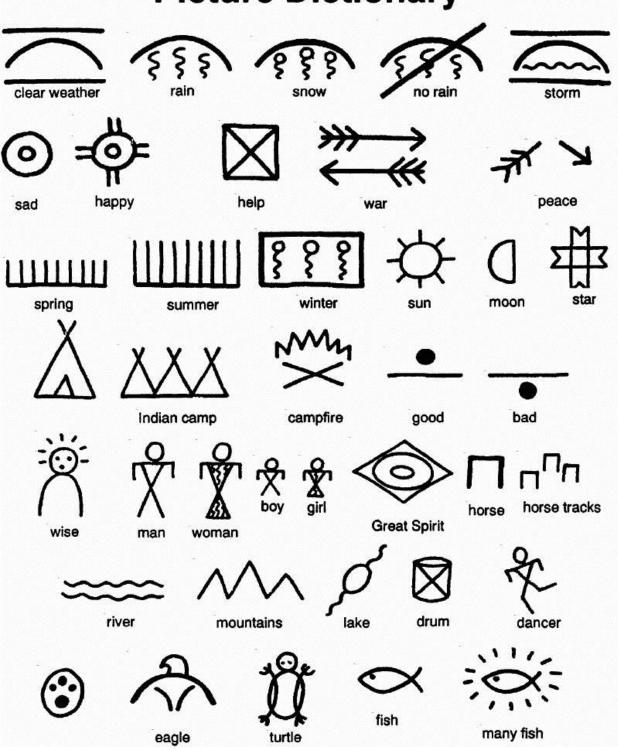
Native Americans used plant materials to make beautiful, soft colors to dye wool, cotton, and other fibers. They made almost every color, though shades of yellow were the easiest to produce.

Listed below are some of the plants Native Americans used for coloring.

Color	Plant Material				
Blacks	wild grapes, hickory bark, alder bark, dogwood bark, mountain mahogany bark				
Blues	larkspur petals, alfalfa flowers, sunflower seeds				
Browns	walnut shells, birch bark				
Greens	moss, algae, lily-of-the-valley leaves, juniper berries				
Purples	blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, rotten maple wood				
Reds	sumac berries, dogwood bark, beets, cranberries				
Yellows	onion skins, goldenrod stems and flowers, sunflower petals, dock roots, marigold petals, moss, peach leaves, birch leaves, sagebrush				

Source: Department of Cultural Affairs- Nevada State Library and Archives

# **Picture Dictionary**



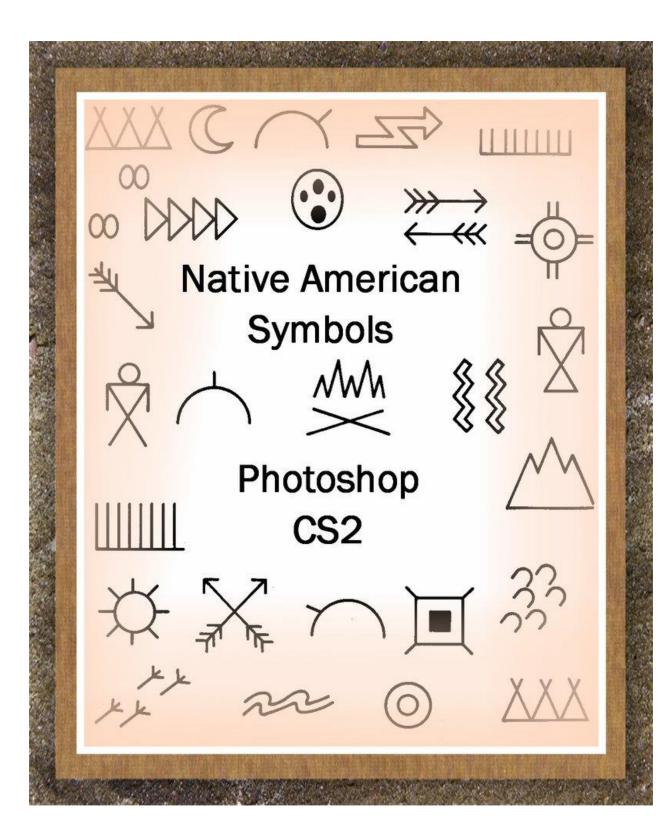






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