

Masquerading in Western Africa
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Abstract:

This unit is targeted to elementary students in a school with many new African immigrants. It focuses on West African life-cycle rituals and annual ceremonies where dancing, musical instruments, and masking are combined to commemorate events from birth to death, planting to harvest. Students not only will make their own masks and musical instruments, but will observe their use in Africa on videos. The wide range of captivating masks illustrated in African art books will give students the opportunity to use their artistic imaginations as they discuss the materials used in making masks, the symbolic meaning of different masks, and the occasions when masks and music are used in our own society.