Unit 4 - Traditional African masks

**Background:** Ritual and ceremonial [masks](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Mask) are an essential feature of the traditional culture of the peoples of a part of [Sub-Saharan Africa](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Sub-Saharan_Africa), e.g. roughly between the Sahara and the [Kalahari Desert](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Kalahari_Desert). While the specific implications associated to ritual masks widely vary in different cultures, some traits are common to most [African cultures](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Culture_of_Africa). For instance, masks usually have a spiritual and religious meaning and they are used in ritual dances and social and religious events, and a special status is attributed to the artists that create masks to those that wear them in ceremonies. In most cases, mask-making is an art that is passed on from father to son, along with the knowledge of the symbolic meanings conveyed by such masks. African masks come in all different [colors](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Colours), such as red, black, orange, and brown. Masks are one of the elements of great African art that have most evidently influenced [Europe](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Europe) and [Western art](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Western_art) in general; in the 20th century, artistic movements such as [cubism](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Cubism), [fauvism](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Fauvism) and [expressionism](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Expressionism) have often taken inspiration from the vast and diverse heritage of African masks.[[1]](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Traditional_African_masks#citenote1) Influences of this heritage can also be found in other traditions such as [South-](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/South_America) and [Central American](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Central_America) masked [Carnival](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Carnival) parades.

**Examples Draw 4 masks of your own in the space provided**

**-2 people & 2 animal and explain what they represent**

