Big Question:
How can masks both hide and reveal something about yourself?

Your students will:
• Explore the significance and many meanings masks can have
• Make their own masks that reflect something about their identities
• Compare how masks can both conceal and reveal parts of a person’s identities.

Visit Asian Arts Initiative with Freddie
As a class, co-view the episode “Mask Making & The Ketchup Catastrophe,” in which Freddie learns a paper mache technique for making a mask. Prompt a discussion about masks and identity. Conversations starters might include:
1. What does Freddie learn about masks that surprises her?
2. What are some different types of masks that you have worn? How does wearing a mask make you feel?
3. What characters from stories, shows or movies can you think of that wear masks? What about people in real life who wear masks?
4. What do the educators at Asian Arts Initiative mean when they talk about identity? What is “identity” and what does it have to do with mask making?
5. What choices do Freddie and the other students make in creating their masks? What do their masks show about themselves?

Materials

**Part 1**
- Aluminum foil (2 pieces per student)
- Strips of newspaper and printer paper (roughly 1.5 x 5 inches)
- Flour
- Water
- A fork
- A large bowl
- Smaller bowls for each student or pair of students

**Part 2**
- Paint (acrylic or tempera work best)
- Paint brushes
- Cups of water
- Paper plates

No flour? White glue works just as well as flour for a substitute for paper mache.
Lesson Activity

Teacher Prep:

- Note that this activity will require two class periods to complete, as the masks need time to dry.
- Prepare the paper mache ahead of time. Use a fork to mix one part flour with two parts water. Divide the mixture up into smaller bowls for each student or pair of students to use. They can add more flour or water if needed and stir up periodically.
- Cut up lots of strips of newspaper and printer paper ahead of time and mix them up for students to use. Using two types of paper will strengthen the material.

Instructions

Part 1
1. Layer two pieces of foil on top of one another.
2. Invite students to press the foil on their faces like Freddie and her friends do in the episode. Gently mold the foil around the nose, eyes, mouth, chin and the rest of the face.
3. Fold the edges of the foil back so that the mask begins to take the shape of an oval.
4. Dip the paper strips into the paper mache mixture and remove the excess with your fingers so that the strip is not too drippy.
5. Cover the foil with the wet strips until you can't see the foil anymore. You can rip the strips into smaller pieces as you go.
6. Set aside to dry overnight.

Part 2
7. Now it's time to decorate and paint the masks! Pour several paint colors onto paper plates for each student to use, and offer water for them to rinse their brushes.
8. Encourage students to plan out their mask designs before they start painting. What will the patterns, colors and images on the mask tell us about themselves and their identity?
9. When the paint is dry, remove the foil mold from the back. It should come right off, leaving just the paper mache mask.
10. Invite students to share and explain their masks to the class, just like the students do in the episode. What choices did they make when designing their masks and why?

Vocabulary

Identity: What makes you who you are and how you see yourself
Conceal: To hide
Reveal: To show off
Tips and Extensions

• Once the paint on the paper mache dries, you can punch holes right above where the ears would be and add yarn so that students can wear their masks.
• If paper mache feels like too much of a mess, consider making an old-fashioned paper plate mask, prompting your students to draw and decorate the paper plates in a way that reveals something about themselves.
• For students who might not like getting their hands messy, consider having gloves on hand for them to wear.
• Remind students not to press their paper mache too hard onto the foil mold so that it keeps its shape.

School-to-Home Connection

• Ask students to look for photos of themselves wearing masks at home. They might be photos of them playing dress up as a child, wearing a Halloween costume or wearing protective face coverings. Invite students to bring in their photos as inspiration for your discussion about masks.

• Are there masks your students have at home that can be repurposed into a new kind of mask? Invite students to bring in old masks (with adult permission) and make them into something new.
More about Asian Arts Initiative
Asian Arts Initiative is a community space that hosts art exhibits, provides artistic opportunities through residencies and offers classes and after school programs for children and families. The Asian Arts Initiative is located in Philadelphia’s Chinatown and aims to use art as a way to celebrate culture, identity and community conversation. To learn more visit asianartsinitiative.org.

More Classroom Activities
Visit PBS LearningMedia for more lesson plans like this inspired by The Infinite Art Hunt.

Children’s Books with Related Themes
Check out these children’s books online or at your local library to continue exploring the concepts in this episode.

**Behind the Mask** by Yangsook Choi
Kimin decides to dress up as his grandfather for Halloween, but his friends don’t understand why he’d want to dress as an old man. They learn that Kimin’s grandfather was a famous Korean mask dancer in this book that merges traditions and cultures.

**Why Am I Me** by Paige Britt
A simple story in which two children pose questions about connection, identity and what it means to be you and me.