

## Overdramatic Masks



Copyright © 2024  
Blick Art Materials  
All rights reserved



Create immediate stage presence with larger-than-life chipboard masks.

The use of masks in theater is ubiquitous across cultures and the ages. Their allure stems from the desire to obscure the self in order to embody and emulate the characteristics of another being in a ritual or performance. Simply put, we feel more comfortable acting in front of an audience when no one can see our face.

Thanks to popular events like Comic-Con, masks are gaining in current cultural relevance. Cosplay artists, or cosplayers, create elaborate costumes to emulate a favorite character from television, film, literature, comic books, and anime. They may also create their very own character to embody.

Cosplayers have a strong emotional connection to the characters they create and will spend a great deal of time finding and creating elements of their costume.

This rise in popularity has led to a torrent of new materials to support this art form. Professional cosplayers can now easily 3D print elements of their costume at home. Also available are variety of lightweight foam clays, dowel rods, and sheets, which can be cut, glued, sewn, and even modeled with a heat gun.

In this lesson, students will explore a variety of cost-efficient classroom materials like chipboard, butter board, masking tape, plaster cloth, Blick's Mix Instant Papier Mâché, and paint to create a mask to embody a character of their choosing. The definition of a mask is broad, but for the purposes of this lesson we will be focusing on a full mask that covers the whole head. With a little bit of imagination, students will be able to create a mask for the classroom performance of a lifetime!

**Note: Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.**

### Materials (required)

**Utrecht Chipboard**, Kraft, 29" x 46", 0.031" (13145-3146); share at least twelve sheets across class

**Blick Plaster Cloth**, set of 4, 4"x62.5 yds (34134-2500); share one package across class

**Elmer's CraftBond All-Temp Glue Sticks**, mini, pkg of 24 (23918-1024); share four bags across class

**Elmer's Dual Temperature Glue Gun**, 20 watts, Mini (23917-1020); share one between four students

**Blick Masking Tape**, Natural, 1/4" (24149-1014); share one roll between two students

**Blick Studio Willow Charcoal**, soft, box of 12 (21962-2131); share two boxes across class

**Blick's Mix Instant Papier Mâché**, 20 lb (33102-1020); share one bag across class

**Olfa Heavy-Duty Auto-Lock Utility Knife**, (57526-1002); share one between two students

**Blickrylic Gesso**, White, gallon (00711-1059); share one gallon across class

**Blickrylic Student Acrylic**

**Paints**, assorted colors and sizes (00711-); share a wide range of colors across class

**Uni Posca Paint Markers**, assorted colors and sizes (19994-); share a selection of four to six colors, including black and white

Scrap newspaper, packing paper and packing bubbles

### Optional Materials:

**Aleene's Felt and Foam Glue**, 4oz (83805-1004)

**Utrecht Butter Board**, 32" x 40", 0.04 (13146-3240)

**SKS Props HD-Foam Rolls**, assorted thicknesses

(84902-)

**SKS Props HD-Foam Dowels**, assorted shapes and sizes (34842-)

**Worbla Finest Art Thermoplastic Sheets**, assorted sizes, (61938-)

**Wagner Furno 300 Dual Temperature Heat Gun**, (84219-1001)

### Ready to order materials?

Go to [www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/](http://www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/)

**Overdramatic-Masks/**  
to access a product bundle for your convenience.

## Process

1. Determine the dimensions of the base structure for the mask. With a partner, measure from the top of the shoulder to the top of the head and add approximately 5". This number will be the height of the chipboard base. Use a string to measure around the head and add approximately 10". This will be the circumference of the mask.
2. Cut a piece of chipboard to these dimensions.
3. Curl the chipboard into a cylinder and secure loosely with tape. Place the cylinder over the mask wearers head to test. There should be enough room to freely move the head inside of the mask. But, it should not be so large that it slips off the shoulders. Adjust as needed and secure firmly with tape.
4. Cut three strips of chipboard measuring 2" x 29". Roll the strips so they will curve. Attach the strips with tape to the top of the cylinder in a crisscross pattern. This will be the top dome of the mask. Note that the cylinder should be taller than the wearer's head to allow space for a chin line, neck, and hair to be modeled in later steps.
5. Use charcoal to mark the placement of features. Begin with the neck and hairline, then the nose, eyes, and mouth. Refer to the provided proportion guide for drawing faces.
6. Shape scrap newspaper, packing paper, packing bubbles, or other lightweight materials to build features. Use tape to hold the shape of each feature and secure lightly to the mask.
7. Use pieces of Plaster cloth to permanently attach and cover the added features. Be careful not to overuse the plaster strips, as it can make the mask too heavy.
8. Following package instructions, add water to Blick's Mix Instant Papier Mâché to activate. Smooth a thin layer of the papier mâché mix over the entire surface of the mask. Blick's mix will begin to set up in about 30 minutes, at which point fine modeling and smoothing the surface is easy.
9. When completely dry, Blick's Mix can be sanded smooth, if desired.
10. Measure the placement for the wearer's eyes. This won't line up with the eyes of the mask and the exact placement will depend on both the mask construction and the size of the wearer. To measure, first put on the mask, then with one hand hold a piece of string and slide the hand under and into the mask. Hold the end of the string at eye level. With a free hand, grab the loose end of the string, pulling it taught. With the help of a friend and a binder clip, mark where the string hits the base of the mask. Remove the mask and measure the length of string that was in the mask to the clip.
11. Estimate the horizontal center line of the mask. With a pencil, mark the length measured on the string at this center line of the mask.
12. With an Olfa knife, cut a slit starting at the center line and moving out in each direction making a 3" line. Widen the slit vertically to about 1/8". Safety is paramount when working with a blade of knife. Always cut away from the body and hands. Younger students will need help from an adult for this step.
13. Put the mask on to assess the placement of the slit. Widen if necessary.
15. Apply a layer of Blickrylic gesso to the entire outer surface of the mask. The gesso will help smooth out rough areas and seal and prime the surface, making it ready for paint when dry.
16. Use Blickrylic acrylic paints to paint the mask. The paper mesh can be painted to match the surrounding area, though care should be taken to not fill the holes of the mesh.
17. Wear the mask to display!



**Step 1:** Create a cylindrical chipboard base. Cover the top of the structure with paper.



**Step 2:** Use scrap materials to model features, attaching with tape and plaster cloth.



**Step 3:** Refine and smooth areas with Blick's Mix Instant Papier Mâché.

### Ready to order materials?

Go to [www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/Overdramatic-Masks/](http://www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/Overdramatic-Masks/) to access a product bundle for your convenience.



## National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

### Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

### Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

