



Lesson: Testing Performance Skills

STANDARDS: New York: Strand # 1: Theater Making

Students will:

- Recognize, understand and apply various theatrical conventions in writing and improvisation, including...masks.
- Write original work drawn from or inspired by a variety of source material, including literature, history, current events, music, poetry, interviews, themes and their own imaginations.
- Write vivid, complex, and well-rounded characters drawn from or inspired by a variety of sources materials.
- Make imaginative and expressive use of props, costumes and setting.
- Understand how a director's concept and artistic choices impact the overall approach to a scene or play.

Literacy: Creating Original Artwork with Performance

Motivation: Show students opening clip in “Theater” e-presentation, where Mr. Elizondo shows examples of masks worn in [Ancient Greece](#). What effect do these masks have on the audience? What effect do these masks have on the actors? What limitations do the masks present, and what advantages?

Group Activity: Watch Hector Elizondo's performance of a monologue from *Antigone*. Note that Mr. Elizondo does not wear a mask. What facial expressions did Mr. Elizondo use which he could not have if he was wearing a mask? What other physical devices (posture, hand gestures, etc.) did he incorporate into his performance?

Next, watch “Words as Symbols” and “Need to Communicate.” What was Mr. Elizondo trying to convey during his speech? How did his actions help him? How would his ability to perform these actions change if he had been wearing a mask?

Independent Activity: Have students choose scenes from *Antigone* they would like to act out. Each character in the scene must have a separate mask. Have students design masks and explain why they chose the designs they did. What are the characters feeling in this scene? How do the masks portray this? Next, ask students to perform their scenes with and without masks. At the end of the performances, evaluate the performances – both what they saw, and what they felt while they were performing. What would they change after seeing the other performances? How could this exercise inform their acting in the future?