
*Cultural Syncretism in the Philippines*

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| **Introduction**  |
| This mask is worn on head during the Moriones Festival in the Philippines. It has a grimacing stern face in a gold helmet with multi-colored feather crest and nylon ties. The masks play a significant role in the Moriones Festival, which is a traditional Catholic festival that is celebrated annually on the island of Marinduque in the Philippines. The festival is a reenactment of the story of Longinus, a Roman soldier who pierced the side of Jesus Christ with a spear, and the masks are worn by participants to represent different characters in the story.The masks used in the Moriones Festival are typically large and elaborate, often featuring bright colors and intricate designs. They are hand-made using traditional techniques and materials, such as bamboo, cloth, and paint. Participants in the festival wear the masks during a procession through the streets of the town, reenacting the story of Longinus and other biblical scenes.The masks are an important part of the Moriones Festival and play a crucial role in bringing the story of Longinus to life. They are also a symbol of the rich cultural heritage of Marinduque, reflecting the island's traditions, values, and beliefs. In addition to their symbolic significance, the masks also serve an important social function, bringing people together and fostering a sense of community and shared identity. The Moriones Festival is an important way for the people of Marinduque to preserve their cultural heritage and to celebrate their shared history and traditions. |
| **Indiana Standards Connections:****7.3.3** *Describe and compare major cultural characteristics of regions in Africa, Asia, and Southwest Pacific.** ***Examples:*** *language, religion, recreation, clothing, diet, fine arts, family structure, and traditions*

**7.3.4** *Use historical maps to identify changes in Africa, Asia and the Southwest Pacific over time.***7.3.10** *Provide examples of ethnocentrism and how this attitude affected the relationships between different peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Southwest Pacific.***GHW.2.1** *Map the development over time of world religions from their points of origin and identify those that exhibit a high degree of local and/or international concentration.** ***Examples:*** *Universal religions/beliefs: Judaism (Jerusalem), Christianity (Jerusalem), Islam (Mecca, Medina) and Buddhism (Varanasi); Ethnic religions: Hinduism (Indus River), Confucianism (Qufu), Taoism (Yellow River), Shintoism (Japan), and Sikhism (South Asia)*

**WG.4.7** *Map the distribution pattern of the world’s major languages. Map and explain the concept of a lingua franca in various parts of the world.** ***Examples:*** *English, Chinese, Spanish, French, and Arabic languages; English as the language of business*

**S.3.3** *Explain how symbolic communication allows for socialization and cultural transmission.* | **Compelling Question(s):** * How did the spread of Catholicism in the Philippines influence their cultural and religious practices?
* How did the Spanish invasion shape Filipino culture, religion, and identity
* How is this reflected in festivals like the Moriones?
* What does the Moriones festival tell us about the blending of Indigenous and Colonial traditions?
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| **Lesson Objectives:** Students will:  * Learn about the Spanish invasion in the Philippines through observing the Morion mask used in festivals recreating the Passion of Christ.
* Analyze the role of Spanish colonization in shaping religious and cultural syncretism in the Philippines.
* Interpret how material culture reflects broader historical processes and cultural identity.
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| **Materials**  |
| Morion Masks* [Morion Mask W2W](https://w2w.indiana.edu/explore-collections/morion.html)
* [Moryonan (Moriones) Mask – Museum of Cultural Masks](https://www.maskmuseum.org/mask/moriones-1/)

Cultural and Historical Context* [Morion Head Mask – UNESCO ICH](https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub3/pdf_file/domain5/099_Morion_Head_Mask.pdf)
* [Video Documentary Series #5: The Moriones Festival](https://www.unesco-ichcap.org/board.es?mid=a10501010000&bid=A111&act=view&list_no=20103&tag=&nPage=5)
* [Spanish Colonial Empire in the Age of Exploration Map](https://www.worldhistory.org/image/14411/spanish-colonial-empire-in-the-age-of-exploration/)
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| **Learning Plan**  |
| **Activities** 1. Show students images of the Morion masks using the resources provided above. Ask them to describe what they observe.
* Who is represented on the mask?
* What is the mask made of?
* How and for what occasion would someone wear this mask?
1. Using a map, students will identify Spain and the Philippines on the map and will trace the Spanish colonization process.
* What was the purpose of the Spanish colonization?
* What were the material and ideological consequences of this process?
* How might the Morion mask reflect aspects of this colonial history?
1. Explain that the mask represents Longinus, a Roman soldier who pierced the side of Jesus Christ with a spear, and the masks are worn by participants to represent different characters in the story.

Emphasize how this tradition showcases cultural syncretism, blending local and colonial elements (e.g. the use of local materials and techniques such as bamboo, cloth and paint, cultural syncretism)1. Show students the [elaboration process](https://www.unesco-ichcap.org/board.es?mid=a10501010000&bid=A111&act=view&list_no=20103&tag=&nPage=5) of Moriones masks to demonstrate and deepen the cultural significance of this festival.
2. Ask student to reflect and share their ideas on the following questions:
* In what ways do Morion masks represent both local identity and foreign influence?
* How do the materials and symbols used to create the masks blend indigenous culture with European religious traditions?
* What does this say about cultural identity and resistance in the Philippines?
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| **Assessment Suggestions**  Provide a worksheet with images of Morion masks and guiding questions discussed throughout class discussion.  |
| **Extensions** Students can compare the Moriones festival with another mask-based festival such as the Venetian Carnival, Japanese Noh theater, or Mexico’s Moros y Cristianos dance. They can begin their research by browsing [museum collections](https://www.maskmuseum.org/home/) and selecting a mask they like. Afterwards, they can write a short essay explaining and comparing both festivals and the use of masks in different cultures.  |

Morion Mask Activity Possibilities

Some of the best opportunities for education are *integrative*—meaning that students are able to make connections across disciplines to reinforce the knowledge that they are developing. For example, they may be learning about Renaissance Italy in World Studies at the same time that they read Dante’s *Inferno* in English class while also studying Botticelli in Art. Feel free to combine and adapt some of the ideas across disciplines and standards to best suit your particular context. You can also collaborate with other teachers at your school or supplement the resources provided by contacting your librarian.

**Note: The following ideas are meant to give general guidance for teachers to include artifacts and other material culture in their classrooms. They are not meant to be treated as comprehensive activities or lessons that are one-size-fits-all for any classroom. They should be personalized to best fit the needs of a teacher’s individual context in accordance with prior student learning, student abilities, available resources, and any curricular guidance.**

**Art**

**Visual Arts – Responding:**

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| **Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work****Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed throughout engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.** **Essential Question(s): How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art?**  |
| **VA:Re7.1.1a** | Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.6a** | Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value. |
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| **VA:Re9.1.5a** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society |
| **VA:Re7.1.Ia** | Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIa** | Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIIa** | Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of and experience with art and life |

**Visual Arts – Connecting:**

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| **Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.** **Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.** **Essential Question(s): How does art help us understanding the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the videos of a society> How does art preserve aspects of life?**  |
| **VA:Cn11.1.1a** | Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.2a** | Compare and contrast cultural uses of artwork from different times and places. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.3a** | Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made |
| **VA:Cn11.1.4a** | Through observation, infer information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.6a** | Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.7a** | Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses |
| **VA:Cn11.1.8a** | Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIa** | Compare uses of art in a variety of social, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIIa** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society. |

*Students can be asked to consider how folk art reflects time periods, beliefs, cultures, traditions, etc. In exploring the Morion mask, students are examining how items such as this reflected class and stature in colonial and post-colonial contexts and how such items reflect cultural syncretism. Students could also explore how cultural traditions have changed over time and how these are reflected on the material productions; how different cultures use art, artifacts, and props to demonstrate their interests, beliefs, and stature; how such items demonstrate social capital; etc. Students can discuss why some foreign elements are adopted and transformed into their own culture; for instance, Eruopean symbolisms are adopted and reinterpreted into local customs through their material objects using regional materials, producing a novel cultural identity that reflects the historical events while preserving some aspects of the regional culture.*

**Social Studies**

**Grade 6: History, Places, and Cultures in Europe and Americas**

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| **6.1.3** | ***Explain the impact of humans on the physical environment in Europe and the Americas.*** |
| **6.3.10** | *Explain the ways cultural diffusion, invention, and innovation change culture.*  |
| **6.3.11** | *Differentiate between the terms anthropology, archaeology, and artifacts while explaining how these contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the past.*  |

**Ethnic Studies**

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| **ES.4.1** | *Students examine historical and contemporary economic, intellectual, social, cultural and political contributions to society by ethnic or racial group(s) or an individual within a group.*  |

**Geography and History of the World**

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| **GHW.4.2** | *Use a variety of text (writing, maps, timelines and/or other graphic representations) to show the movement, spread and changes in the worldwide exchange of flora, fauna and pathogens that resulted from transoceanic voyages of exploration and exchanges between peoples in different regions. Assess the consequences of these encounters for the people and environments involved.*  |
| **GHW.4.3** | *Identify and compare the main causes, players, and events of imperialism during different time periods. Examine the global extent of imperialism using a series of political maps.*  |
| **GHW.4.4** | *Analyze and assess how the physical and human environments (including languages used) of places and regions changed as the result of differing imperialist and colonial policies.* |

**World History and Civilization**

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| **WH.7.3** | *Investigate and interpret multiple causation in analyzing historical actions and analyze cause-and-effect relationships.* |
| **WH.7.6** | *Formulate and present a position or course of action on an issue by examining the underlying factors contributing to that issue and support that position.*  |

*Outside of the 6th and 7th grade Indiana standards, the exploration regarding how imperialism has led to an impact on other cultures and environments. Students should be able to examine the role of human environment interaction involved in the development of such items as the Morion mask included in this lesson. There’s room for them to make connections to contemporary issues that are similar to and as a consequence of colonialism and imperialism.*

**Language Arts**

**Writing Skills:**

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| **4.W.5**  | **Conduct short research on a topic.** * **Identify a specific question to address (e.g., What is the history of the Indy 500?).**
* **Use organizational features of print and digital sources to efficiently locate further information.**
* **Determine the reliability of the sources.**
* **Summarize and organize information in their own words, giving credit to the source**
* **Present the research information, choosing from a variety of formats.**
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| **5.W.5** | Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.* With support, formulate a research question (e.g., What were John Wooden’s greatest contributions to college basketball?).
* Identify and acquire information through reliable primary and secondary sources.
* Summarize and paraphrase important ideas and supporting details, and include direct quotations where appropriate, citing the source of information.
* Avoid plagiarism and follow copyright guidelines for use of images, pictures, etc.
* Present the research information, choosing from a variety of sources.
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*Students could conduct research projects in which they examine examples of cultural syncretism and racial miscegenation. They can focus on the Spanish colonization of the Philippines or of the Americas and research how these cultures were influenced by this process and how these events influenced their cultures and is reflected in the material objects.*