**African Art**

**#13**

**I. Introduction**

Art links past, present, and future generations, often spanning centuries. In Africa, ancestors are considered to be close to gods and spiritual forces. Therefore ancestors are able to get involved on behalf of the living and to act as go-betweens for humans and the spirit world. Maintaining a positive relationship with the ancestors assures the well-being of individuals, families, communities and other social groups. Statues, masks, and other works of art allow a two-way communication by giving the ancestors a voice in human affairs and giving living generations a way of contacting their ancestors. Art can also be used to remember and honor one’s ancestors.

**II. Masks**

One African art form is the mask, which generally is carved out of wood and worn with ceremonial costume that covers the entire body. Masks are generally used in religious ceremonies or rituals. The carving of the masks and the performing of dances while wearing them symbolize the link between the living and the dead. Those who wear the masks and perform the songs and dances are acting not as themselves, but as spirits. In this role, they show people what their ancestors wish for them.

**DIRECTIONS:** **Around the room are several different African Masks. Go around the room and fill out the information below. When you have visited each station and filled in the chart, complete the template.**

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| **MASK NAME** | **REASON & PURPOSE OF THE MASK** | **UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE MASK** |
| **HAWK MASK** |  |  |
| **FEMININE BEAUTY MASK** |  |  |
| **FERTILITY & FEMININE BEAUTY MASK** |  |  |
| **STRONG ANTELOPE MASK** |  |  |
| **BUFFALO MASK** |  |  |