



**TITLE:** *Scene from Nō Drama*  
**ARTIST:** Unknown  
**DATE:** Unknown  
**SIZE:** Height: 2 ¾; Width: 4; Depth: 2 5/8 inches  
**MEDIUM:** Wood  
**AQUISITION #:** 88.1.2  
**ADDITIONAL WORKS BY THE ARTIST IN COLLECTION?**  
 YES NO UNKNOWN X

### Context

In the eighth century nō theater developed from Chinese traditions. By the Muromachi Period (1336-1568) nō theater was thriving in Japan. One of the oldest forms of theater, nō plays continue to be performed today. A single performance typically consists of five nō plays paired with shorter interludes known as kyogen plays.

During the Muromachi Period, nō performances were based on tales from traditional literature inclusive of legends and mythological themes. The kyogen tales were drawn from the daily routines of the lower and middle classes. As kyogen plays relied on humor and comic dialogue, the nō tales were much more dramatic and elaborate as they incorporated mythological spirits and demons into the script. Nō tales of this dramatic nature continue to be performed today. The performance is created without the use of equipment. The typical elements include mask props, music and dances, and the unique nō stage.

### Nō Stage: *Miyajima Itsukushima Shrine Nō Stage*

The nō stage structure is comprised of three major areas; the bridge, a roof, and the large open space. The bridge remains as a symbolic passage way. It first acts as a way for performers to reach the main stage and secondly acts as a transformative space. The bridge represents an area where the present world merges with the mythical one and the performers mature into their characters. The pine tree located on the main stage wall is also symbolic. The pine tree symbolizes longevity. Legend has it that the pine tree was sent from the heavens as a gift for humanity.

The *Miyajima Itsukushima Shrine Nō stage*, located in Japan, is the oldest nō theater stage. The first play was performed here in 1568. At the time, the stage was considered to be temporary. This particular stage is unique as it is located on the sea. The structure itself seems to literally be floating on the shore, signifying the relationship to visual images of the floating world found in Japanese wood block prints, originating in the Edo period.



*Miyajima Itsukushima Shrine Nō Stage*



*Nō Mask: Okina*

### Nō Actors & Masks

In nō theater there are many roles to be performed. The lead role, typically a main actor, wears an elaborate mask, known as *Okina* (old man mask). This is the oldest type of nō mask. Others include: *Jō* (elder mask), *Onna-men* (woman mask), *Otoko-men* (man mask), *Kishin* (demon mask), and *Onryō* (ghost and spirit mask).

Not everyone wears a mask, for instance the role of *Waki* is an unmasked performer who is living in the present state and not a mythical one. Additional roles include the chorus comprised of six to ten actors and a band that involves a flutist and two or three drummers.

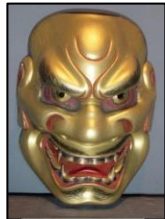
### Resources

<http://www.the-noh.com/en/world/mask.html>,  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41154287>, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/59221>,  
<http://www.theatrenohgaku.org/aboutnoh>,  
<http://visit-miyajima-japan.com/en/culture-and-heritage/spiritual-heritage-temples-shrines/sanctuaire-itsukushima.html>,  
<http://www.the-noh.com/en/world/stage.html>

## Nō Drama Mask Making Activities

### Developing Nō Drama Masks ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN- 3-5

**Session Activity:** In this activity students will work in teams to analyze *Scene from Nō Drama* and each student will draw a nō mask. Each group will choose one type of mask from the list provided and will then perform the mask facial expression.



This is an example of the Kojishi Nō mask. Kojishi means lion.

**Materials:**

- White paper
- Pencil
- Markers
- Websites given below
- One mirror per group

**Objectives:**

1. Students will analyze the figurines from *Scene from Nō Drama* as well as the mask list (provided).
2. Students will utilize teamwork.
3. Students will exercise their creativity and public speaking skills.
4. Students will draw the expressions of nō masks, for analysis- <http://www.historyofmasks.net/famous-masks/noh-mask/>

**Procedure:**

1. Together the class will analyze and discuss the figurines in *Scene from Nō Drama*. Information on and lists of nō masks can be found here: <http://www.historyofmasks.net/famous-masks/noh-mask/> <https://nohmask21.com/eu/mlist.html>
2. Students in groups will discuss the different facial expressions used in nō dramas.
3. While holding up a mirror each student will practice making the facial expressions found in nō masks.
4. Students will pick one mask from the lists on the web link: <https://nohmask21.com/eu/mlist.html>
5. Each student will draw him or herself as if wearing the chosen nō mask. The details on the mask should be illustrated in the student's self-portrait drawing.
6. Each student will present his/her mask to the class indicating which nō mask was chosen, explaining the unique facial expression on the mask and the way the expression was achieved.

### Wearable *Onryō* and *Kyōgen* Masks ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: 6-8

**Session Activity:** In this activity students will analyze *Scene from Nō Drama* and each will create a wearable *Onryō* (ghost and spirit mask) or *Kyōgen* (comic mask). They will each choose one type of mask from the list provided. In groups, students will then develop performances using the masks as props.



This is an Ebisu mask, also known as the "God of Commerce."

**Materials:**

- White paper or mat board
- Pencil
- Markers
- String
- Websites given below

**Objectives:**

1. Students will analyze the *Scene from Nō Drama*.
2. Students will review the masks from the website provided.
3. Students will exercise their creativity and group interaction skills.
4. Students will each create a nō mask.

**Procedure:**

1. Together the class will analyze and discuss *Scene from Nō Drama*. Examples of *Onryō* (ghost and spirit mask) or *Kyōgen* (comic mask) can be found here: <https://nohmask21.com/eu/gohststyle.html> <https://nohmask21.com/eu/kyogenmask.html>
2. Students will discuss the two types of masks and describe the plays for which they are used.
3. Each student will draw a chosen mask on a thick piece of white paper or mat board. The mask will be cut out.
4. Holes will be provided for string to secure the mask while wearing it.
5. Students will work in small groups to develop short nō dramas or kyōgen performances. To create the performances, students can use their masks and trade with others. Information on nō theater and performance can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blOzH842IYg>
6. Students will adjust their masks as needed to convey the emotions or expressions of the characters in their short nō dramas or kyōgen performances.

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: Grade 3**

**Strand:** Critical Thinking and Reflection

**Enduring Understanding:** Assessing our own and others' artistic work, using critical-thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, is central to artistic growth.

**Standard 2 #1:** Assess personal artworks for completeness and success in meeting intended objectives. (VA.3.C.2.1)

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: Grade 6-8**

**Strand:** Critical Thinking and Reflection

**Enduring Understanding:** Assessing our own and others' artistic work, using critical-thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, is central to artistic growth.

**Standard 2 #1:** Assess personal artwork during production to determine areas of success and needed change for achieving self-directed or specified goals. (VA.68.C.2.1)

**Resources**

<http://www.historyofmasks.net/famous-masks/noh-mask/> / <https://nohmask21.com/eu/> / <http://www.the-noh.com/en/world/mask.html> / <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blOzH842IYg>