

Overview

Learners will use the image of a Gabonese spirit mask from [the collection in the National Museum of Scotland](#), as a context for the suggested challenges. With a focus on social studies, learners will explore primary and secondary sources as a stimulus to develop their understanding of Gabonese cultural identity. Aspects of cultural life in Gabon can then be compared to that of Scotland.

Learners can express their curiosity about the spirit mask and its history by considering first what they see, thinking about what its purpose might be, and what its 'story' could be. They could then find out what the museum has said about it by reading the French text and working out its meaning in groups. The English text is available to help learners evaluate how much information they have understood.

Artisans who make these masks form an important part of Gabon's tourist industry. Learners could go on to explore tourism in Scotland and Gabon, exploring Gabon's growing eco-tourism industry and issues regarding sustainability.



Image of an Okuyi mask made of cottonwood representing the spirit world, made by the Balumbo people of Gabon. © National Museums of Scotland.

Social studies experiences and outcomes explored

By comparing the lifestyle and culture of citizens in another country with those of Scotland, I can discuss similarities and differences.

SOC 2-19a

I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past.

SOC 2-01a

Other curriculum areas explored

Having analysed how lifestyle can impact on the environment and Earth's resources, I can make suggestions about how to live in a more sustainable way.

TCH 2-02a

I work on my own and with others to understand and discuss simple texts in the language I am learning. I can share simple facts about features of life in some of the countries where the language I am learning is spoken.

MLAN 2-09a

Responsibility of all:

Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select and sort information from a variety of sources and use this for different purposes.

LIT 2-14a

Themes across learning:

Global citizenship

Overview of learning

Possible prior experiences

Consider the activity 'I think, I see, I wonder' and read the French information card [to find out more about the mask](#).

[Drumming video](#).

[Dancing video](#).

[Videos about Gabon](#).

Discussion on what constitutes a primary and secondary source.

Research on Gabon and its culture: [BBC's Gabon profile](#).

Visit to the [National Museum of Scotland](#)

<http://www.nms.ac.uk>

Challenges

Mask challenge

Learners could research the history of African Spirit masks, while drawing and making comparisons with the Scottish tradition of Halloween. The class could make a [Glow Wiki](#) on the topic of masks and their cultural significance; each group of learners could research a different aspect and record their findings on a section of the Wiki. Learners could compare and contrast these Gabonese traditions to current Scottish celebrations of Halloween and to other, similar traditions across the world.

- www.rebirth.co.za/African_mask_history_and_meaning.htm
- www.heartoscotland.com/Categories/halloween.htm

Eco challenge

Learners could find out about the way in which these masks are used today, and the ways in which they contribute to Gabon's growing sustainable eco-tourism industry.

- www.lonelyplanet.com/gabon
- www.en.legabon.org/index.php?m=3&s=4&a=0

Learners could compare the [tourism industries of Scotland](#) and Gabon.

Slavery challenge

Using the [Education Scotland Abolition of the Slave Trade website](#), to research slavery, practitioners could exploit the [suggested ideas and activities](#).

Possible evidence

'I see, I think, I wonder...'
notes

Participation in French reading activity

Glow Wiki

Participation in class discussions

Research findings