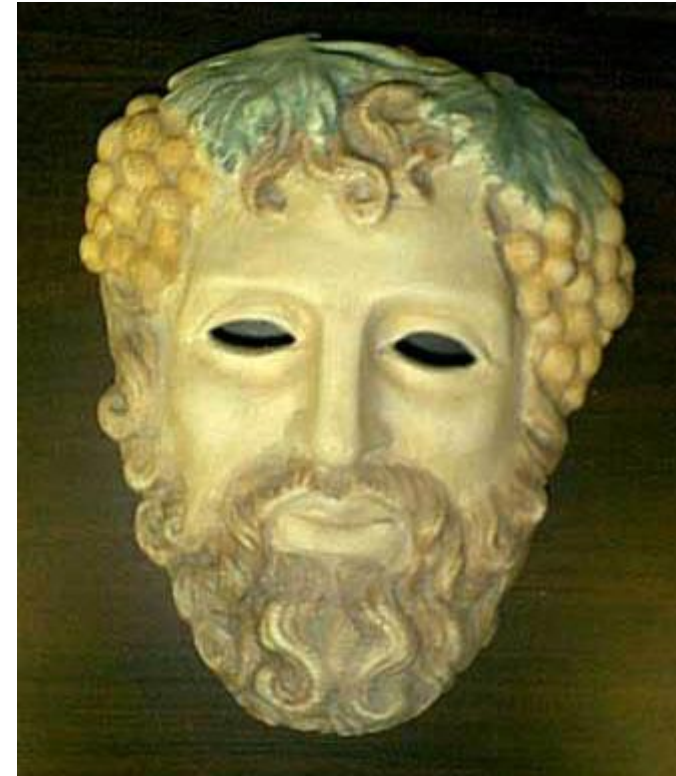


Greek Theatrical Masks

One of the favourite forms of entertainment for the Ancient Greeks was the theatre. It began as part of a festival to the Greek god Dionysus, but eventually became a major part of the Greek culture.



Find out 2 facts about Dionysus...

There were two main types of plays that the Greeks performed: tragedies and comedies.

Tragedy - Greek tragedies were very serious plays with a moral lesson. They usually told the story of a mythical hero who would eventually meet his doom because of his pride.

Comedy - Comedies were more light-hearted than tragedies. They told stories of everyday life and often made fun of Greek celebrities and politicians.



Some of the theatres were quite large and could seat over 10,000 people. They were open-air theatres with tiered seating built in a semi-circle around the main stage. The bowl shape of the seating allowed the actors' voices to carry throughout the entire theatre. Actors performed in the open area at the centre of the theatre, which was called the orchestra.



The oldest theatre is that of Dionysus Eleuthereus on the south slope of the acropolis of Athens which was first built in the 6th century BCE.

What country is this?

The actors wore costumes and masks to play different characters. The masks had different expressions on them to help the audience understand the character. Masks with large frowns were common for tragedies, while masks with big grins were used for comedies. All of the actors were men. They dressed up as women when playing female characters (like in Shakespearean theatre many centuries later).

What expressions are these masks trying to portray?



Facts About Greek Drama and Theatre

The word "theatre" comes from the Greek word "theatron", which means "seeing place." The masks allowed for one actor to play different roles in the same play. The first actor was a man named Thespis. Today, actors are sometimes referred to as "Thespians."





If you can work with another person and ask them to make some faces for you to show different expressions, try to identify what their features are doing to make that face...

Now it's your turn!

Take a piece of A4 paper and fold it in half.

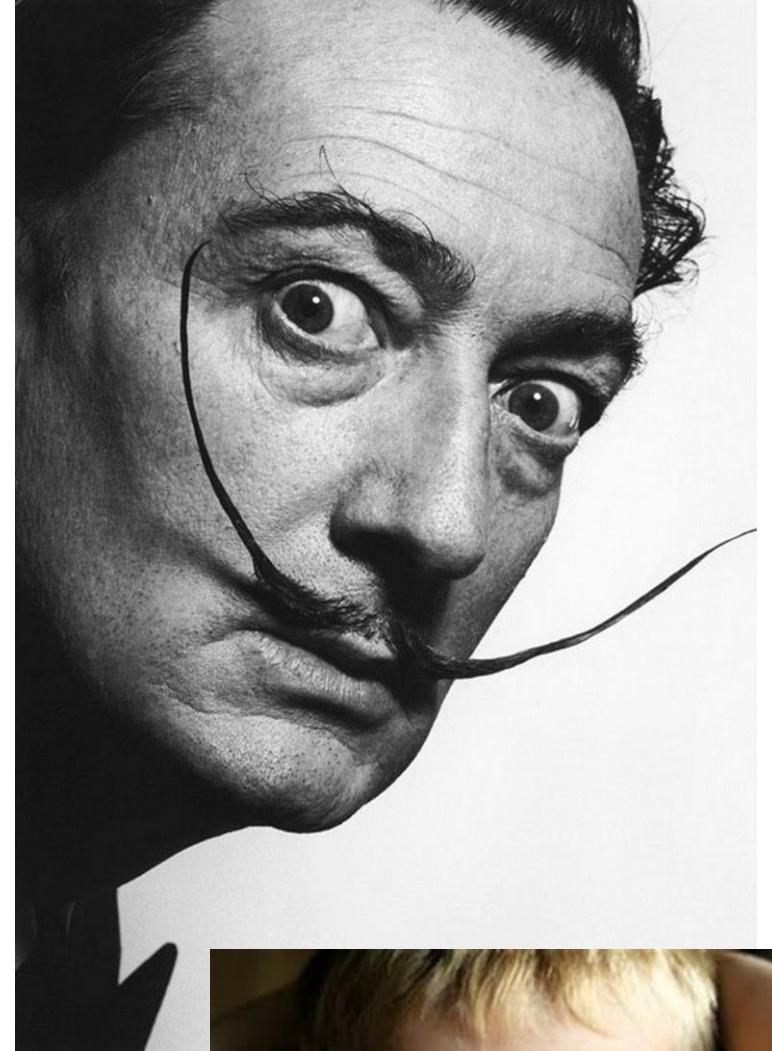
On one half create a basic mask shape – add features so that the mask will show a face which shows 'happy'.

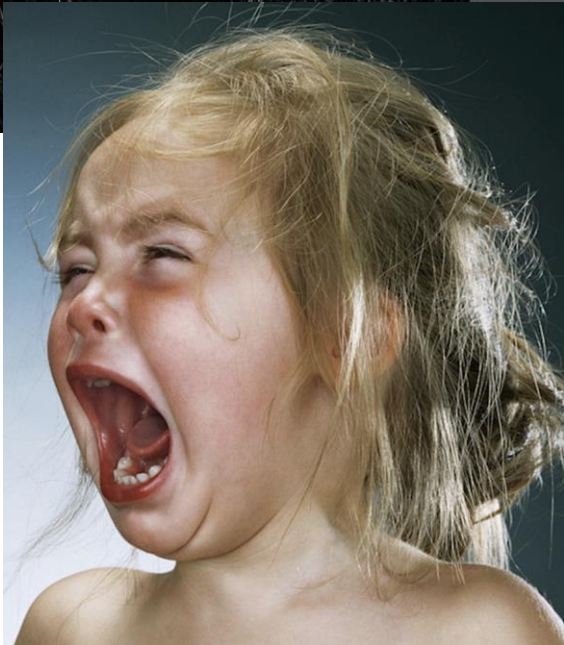
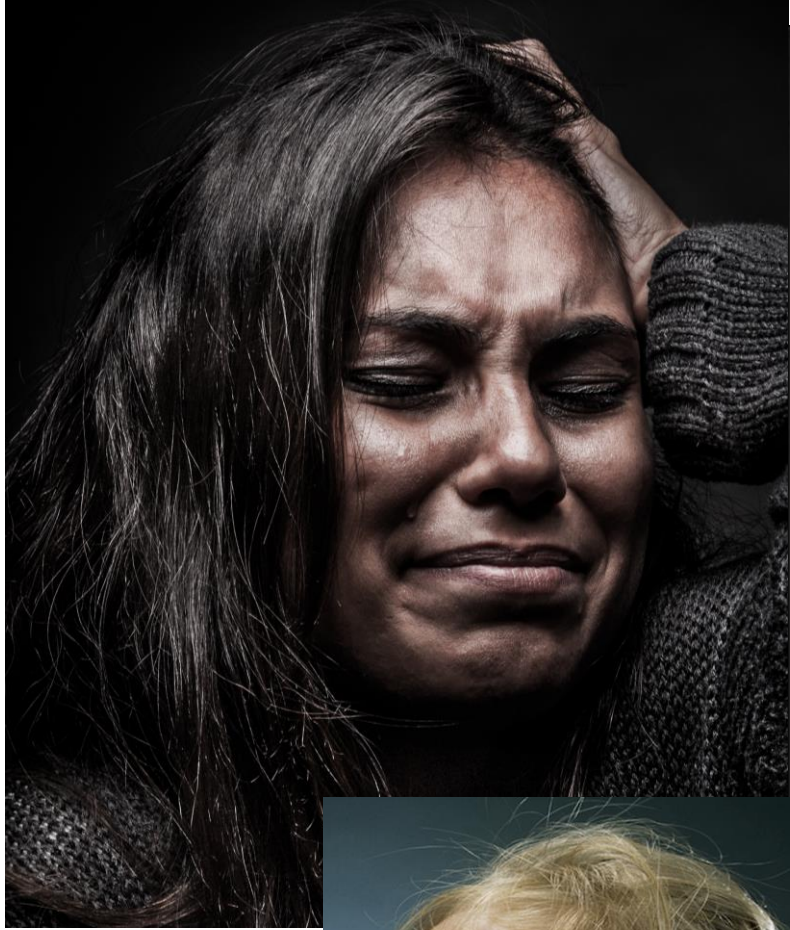
On the other half make the mask shape show 'sadness.'

If you fold each piece in half would that help your design?

Cut out the negative shapes (remember we talked about those when you were drawing Winston Churchill?) and if you make the central crease firm, your 'masks' should become more 2D!

**What do you think
these people are
feeling?
How do you know?
Look really carefully
at they eyebrows and
mouth shapes!**





Do these help?



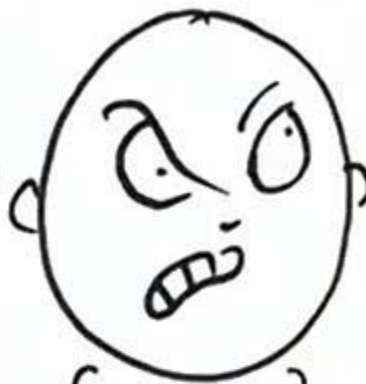
SAD



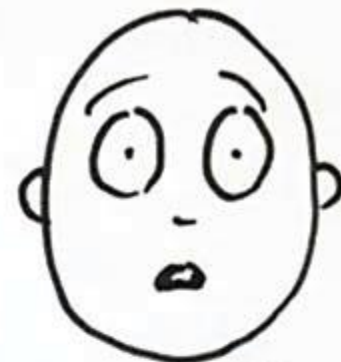
HAPPY



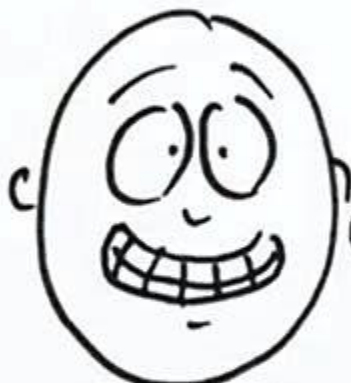
Angry



frustrated



UPSET



Smitten



in love



shy



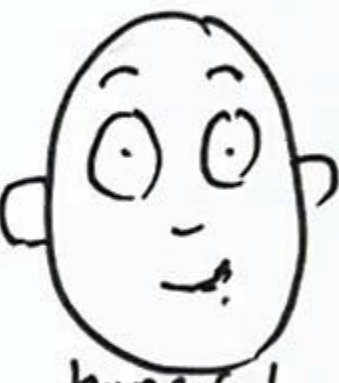
excited



SUSPENSE



intense



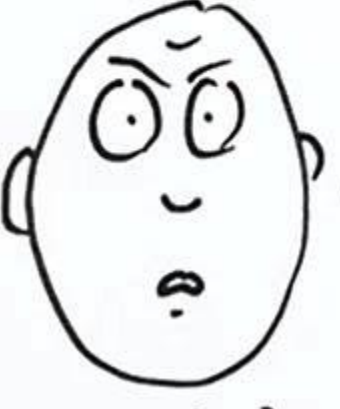
hopeful



Tired



embarrassed



worried



fearful



depressed



ecstatic



Mad!

NOW – you could experiment with other expressions...
When you are happy with your work; select one of your **mock-ups** and think about how you could **embellish** it.



Now make
your mask –
try to make it
as big as the
A4 paper...

**When your mask
is finished
imagine the story
it would have
helped to tell in
the theatre in
Ancient Greece!**

