

## 1.32: We Wear the Mask



### Student Objective

Students will share personal perspectives about their personality.

### Overview

In Stage 4, students will be finalizing the process of elevating trust and honesty to the highest levels. In this activity, students are encouraged to self-examine the false facades that they put on, and, if they are willing, remove their masks. This activity requires a high level of safety and trust to be successful.

### Materials/Set-Up

- Handout:
  - 1.32a: “We Wear the Mask” Excerpt by Paul Laurence Dunbar
- One paper plate for each student
- One rubber band for each student
- One 3” x 5” index card for each student
- One pair of scissors for each student

### Instructional Steps

1. Have students create a mask by cutting out holes in their paper plate for eyes, a nose, and a mouth. Afterwards, have students cut a notch on each side of the paper plate, slide the rubber band into each notch, and then put on the masks by putting the rubber band all the way around their head.
2. Read the excerpt of “We Wear the Mask,” by Paul Laurence Dunbar, aloud to the class. Students can read along from the related handout.
3. Give each student an index card. Ask students, “If you could remove your mask and reveal something about who you really are to this class, what would that be?” Ask students to write a response to this question on their index card.
4. Tell students that this is an anonymous activity, and revealing which card belongs to them is entirely optional.
5. Collect all of the cards from students after they have had a chance to write something down.
6. Shuffle the cards well and keep the writing facing away from the students.
7. Read the first card aloud and tell the class that if they want to reveal that it is them, they should remove their mask.
8. Repeat this process. At the end, there will be a mixture of masked and unmasked students.
9. Close the activity with a debrief, either verbal or written, using a few of the questions from the [Stage 4 Debrief Prompts](#).

### → Extension

- To increase rigor, allow time for students to decorate their masks with visual representations of true and false perceptions that others have about them.

“We Wear the Mask” Excerpt by Paul Laurence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
We wear the mask.

...We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
We wear the mask!