

CELEBRATIONS: CHUGACH CARDBOARD MASK GR: 6-8 (LESSONS 4-7)

Elder Quote/Belief: *Prince William Sound Elders Stepan Briskalov and Makari Chimovitski spoke of three supremely important suk spirits. Lam Sua, who is still known to Elders from the entire Alutiiq area, was the “person of the universe,” who could see and hear everything but was invisible to humans. The second of the three described by Briskalov and Chimovitski was Imam Sua, the “female person” of all sea animals, who lived at the bottom of the sea. Chugach hunters prayed to her when they went hunting in kayaks, asking her to send game. The third was Nanam Sua, who dwelt in the forest and was the mistress of all land animals.ⁱ*

Grade Level: 6-8

Overview: Masks were used in ceremonies to communicate and show respect to the spirit of the animal or someone in the village who has died. ‘The masks helped to transform the dancers into the animal-persons, and portrayed the spirit as having human, animal, or mixed features. The theme of physical transformation, so important in Alutiiq ceremonies, art, and oral tradition, emphasizes that humans and *suk* are also alike in consciousness, intelligence, even language.’ⁱⁱ After the ceremony, the masks were usually burned because it was believed the smoke would help bring messages to those who died.

Standards:

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content Science:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
A3: Culturally-knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community.	F3: Cultural, Social, Personal Perspectives and Science: A student should understand the dynamic relationships among scientific, cultural, social and personal perspectives.	CE4: Students should have knowledge of traditional dance attire: dance regalia, bentwood visors, head dresses, and masks

Lesson Goal: To learn about the significance of a traditional Chugach masks.

Lesson Objective(s): Students will:

- Be able to explain what traditional masks were used for and when.
- Create a replica of a traditional Chugach mask.
- Learn the Sugt’stun/Eyak vocabulary words.

Vocabulary Words:

Sugt’stun Dialects

English:	Prince William Sound:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
Mask	maskaq	maskaq	
Face	ginaq	ginaq	Adiintl’agL
Spirit	suk	suk	
Story			

Materials/Resources Needed:

Elder or Recognized Expert to share expertise on traditional masks and ceremonial usage
Posters from Chugach Alaska Corporation of traditional Chugach masks
Cardboard (flat long pieces)
White sheets of paper, 11x17
Paper bags (big grocery bags are best)
Scissors, Xacto knives
Optional: cutting gloves
Safe cutting surface
Glue
Masking tape
Twig (long, straight and flexible)
Sinew or twine
Acrylic paints- suggest traditional colors of red, blue, and black
Paint brushes

Books:

The [Chugach Eskimo](#)

Alutiit/Sugpiat-A Catalog of the Collections of the Kunstkamera

Looking Both Ways-Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People

Giinaquq: Like a Face, Sugpiaq Masks of the Kodiak Archipelago

Two Journeys- A Companion to the Giinaquq: Like a Face Exhibition

The Etholen Collection

Teacher Preparation:

- Invite an Elder or Recognized Expert to share TEK on Chugach masks and traditional use.
- Review ways to show respect for guest in classroom.
- Display the books and posters around the classroom.
- Gather supplies to make the cardboard replica of a traditional Chugach mask (listed above).
- Make a copy for each student of the step-by-step instructions (attached).
- Create a mask ahead of time to show as an example.
- Determine how many adults to ask for help either cutting out cardboard or supervise carefully!
- Send out Safety Rules and Permission Slip for students to use sharp objects. Have the students turn in signed permission slips PRIOR to class.

Opening: How many of you know about traditional masks used in the Chugach Region? Have you seen any? If so, where? Do you know what the masks were traditionally used for?

The masks were used to enhance the dancers story by helping to transform them into the animal or person the celebration was held. Notice the posters and books with photos of the traditional masks that are placed around the classroom. For this lesson, we will be concentrating on the masks found in the Chugach Region. According to *The Chugach Eskimo* by Kaj Birket-Smith, 1893, “masks were worn on several occasions, for instance at certain feasts and shamanistic performances. They were carved in wood, sometimes in animal shape, and painted. Some had a queer or comical look, with only one eye and a crooked mouth, while others had a knife or a bone carved in the mouth. Eagle down (or feathers?) might be glued around the edge.”ⁱⁱⁱ Photos and descriptions of the seven masks found near Port Etches and are presently located at Chugach

Alaska Corporation (CAC) can be found on page 111 in the *Chugach Eskimo*. Other masks found in the Chugach Region are on the CAC posters and also in books listed.

Activities:

Class I:

1. Introduce the Elder or Recognized Expert if available.
2. Read the Elder Quote, Overview and Opening and hold a discussion with the students regarding the traditional Chugach masks.
3. Show photos of Chugach masks.
4. Display the example of the Chugach mask cardboard replica.
5. Ask the students to review the posters and books for the photos to study.
6. Assign students to research Chugach masks more in depth, decide which mask they would like to replicate and then write a paragraph of the mask description and what traditionally represented. Both mask and paragraph description will be on display at end of lesson.

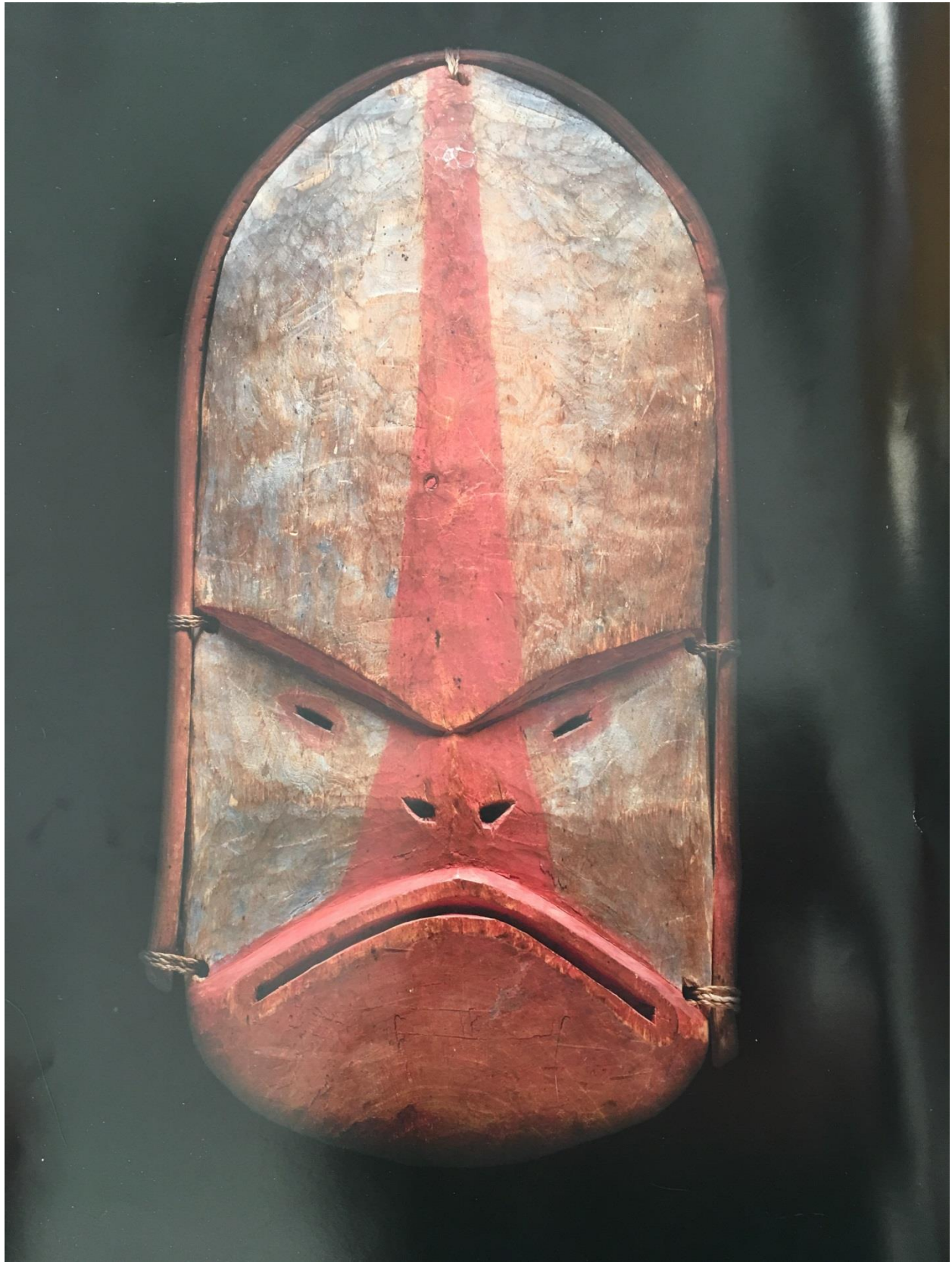
Class II-IV:

7. Hand out the Step-By-Step Directions to make the Chugach mask cardboard replica to each student.
8. Review each step with the students prior to starting.
9. Hand out the supplies to each student; strongly suggest giving out supplies as needed throughout each step.
10. Allow time for students to create their masks.
11. Take a classroom photo of students posing with their masks.
12. Have students display their masks with their written descriptions for the school to enjoy.

Class V (OPTIONAL): Practice the native dance while wearing the masks for the celebration at the end of the week. Perform with the masks.

Assessment:

- Students can explain what the Chugach traditional masks represented and when they were used.
- Students successfully created a cardboard replica of a traditional Chugach mask.
- Students successfully say and know the meaning of the Sugt'stun/Eyak vocabulary words.

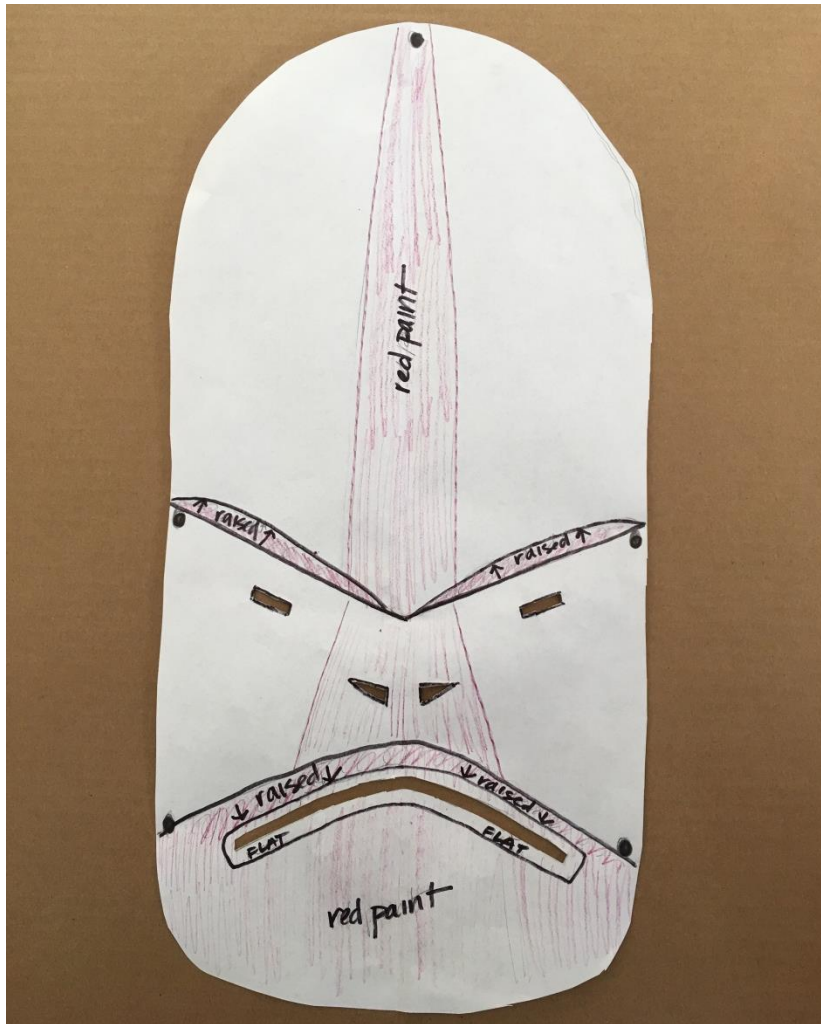


Chugach mask collected in 1890

Step-By-Step Directions to Make a Cardboard Replica of a Chugach Mask

Step 1: Gather Supplies Needed

- Picture of Chugach mask
- Cardboard (flat long pieces)
- White sheets of paper, 11x17
- Paper bags (big grocery bags are best)
- Scissors, Xacto knives
- Glue
- Masking tape
- Twig (long, straight and flexible)
- Sinew or twine
- Acrylic paints- suggest traditional colors of red, blue, black
- Paint brushes
- Pencils, markers
- Safe cutting surface

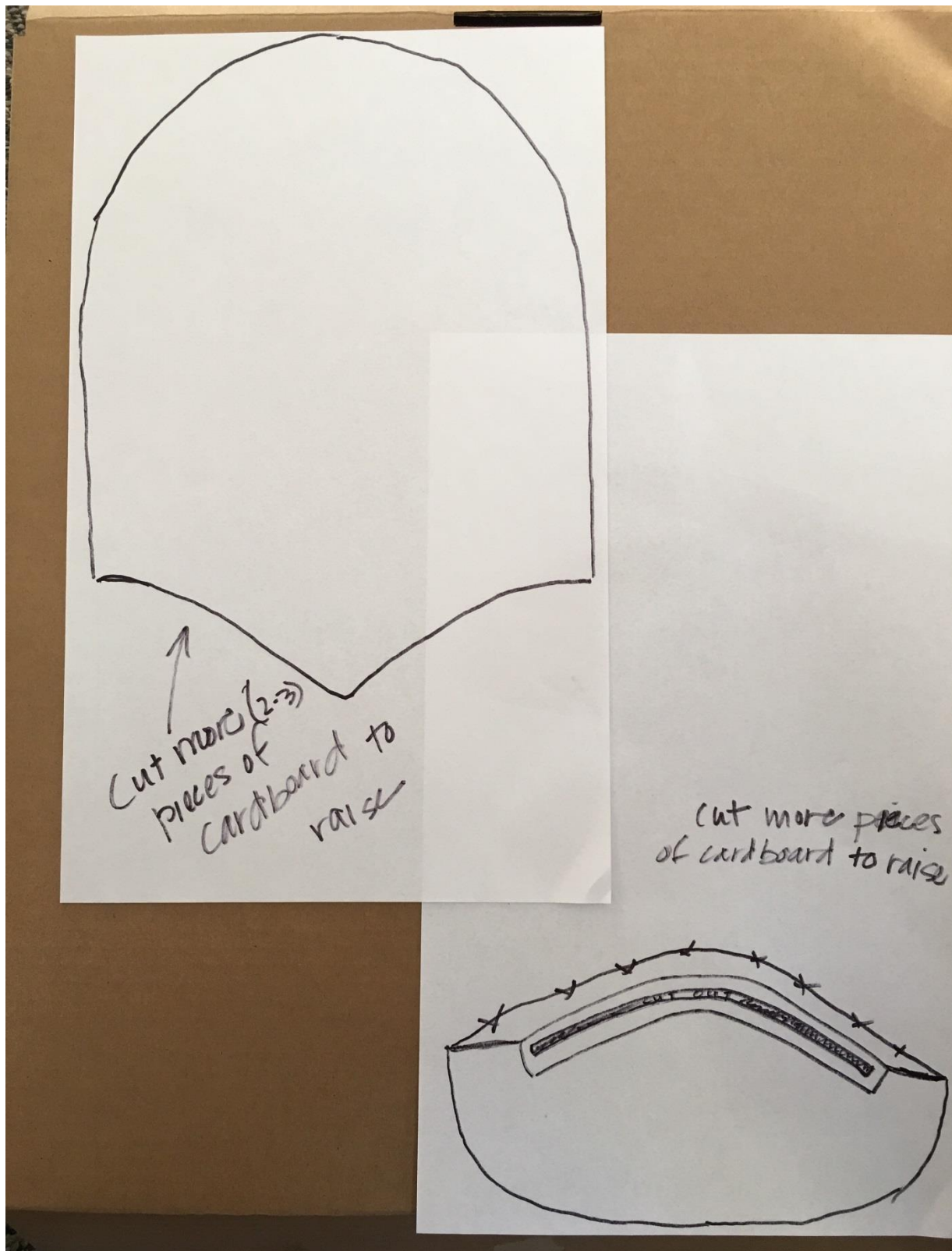


Step 2: Draw Pattern

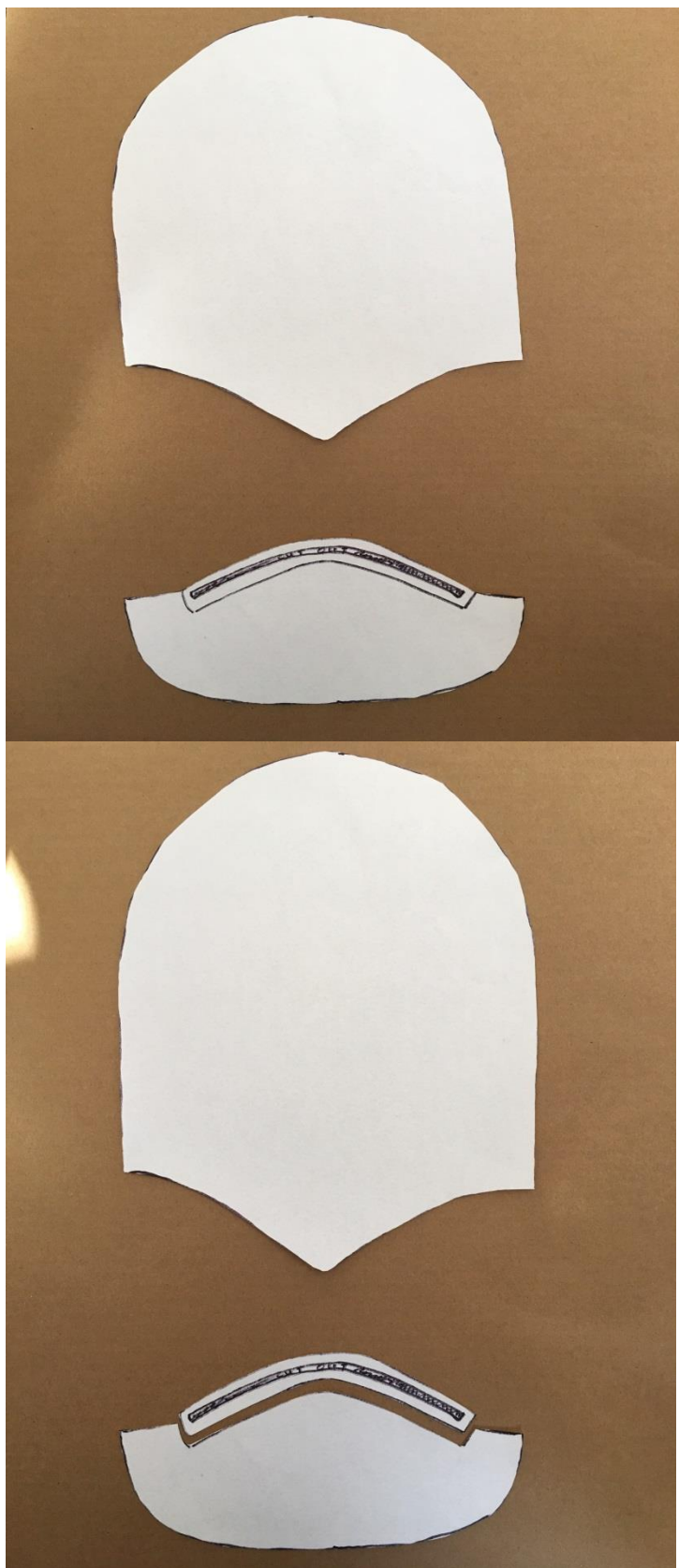
- Using the 11x7 white sheet of paper, draw a copy of the mask on poster or a photo of the traditional Chugach mask to use as a pattern.
- Make notes on the pattern as shown to left.
- Darken the lines and holes with a marker.

Step 3: Trace Pieces

- Using an additional white sheet of paper, trace over parts needed to be cut out more from cardboard to build up on mask and become more 3D. (See below)

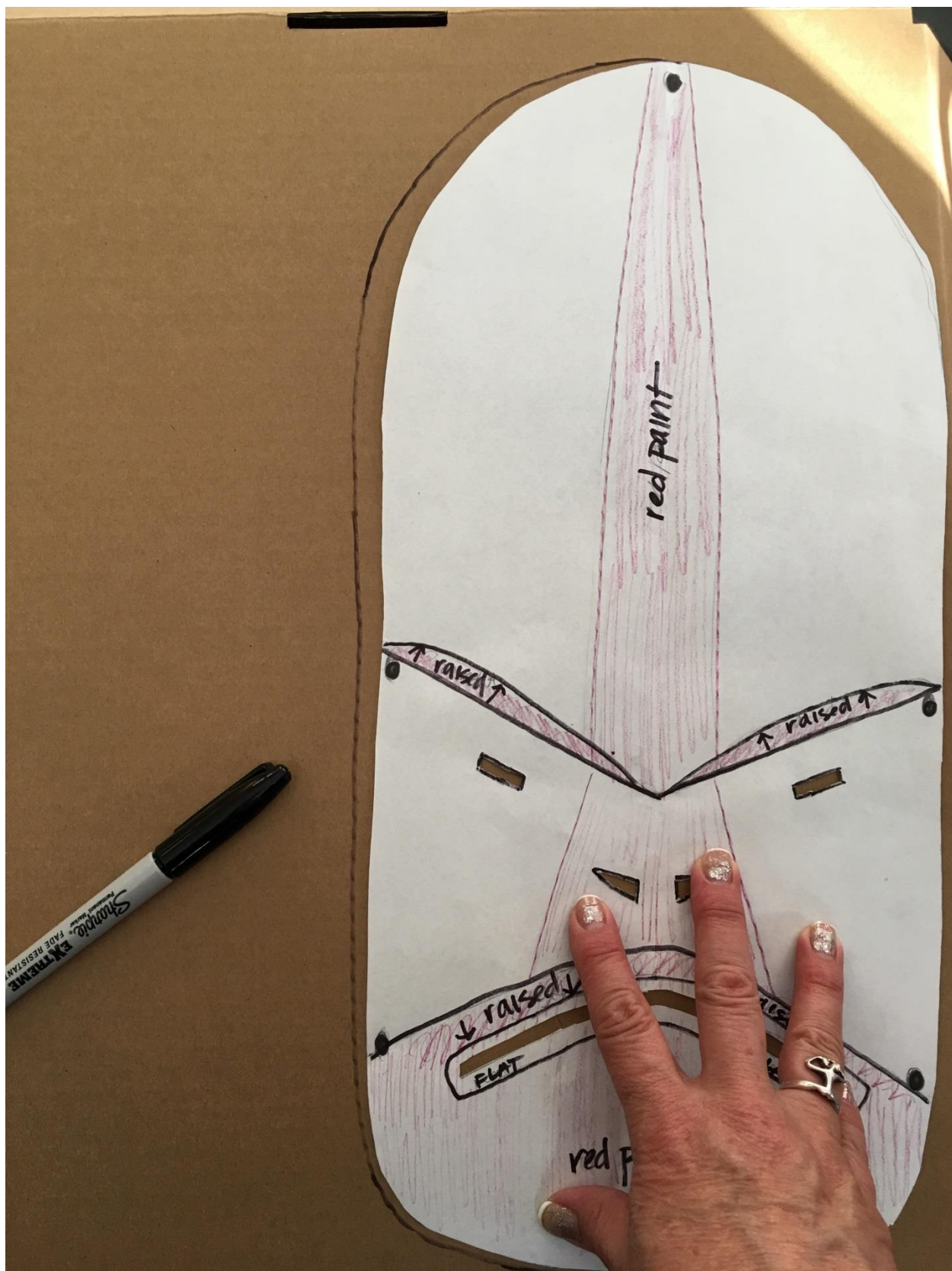


Depending on the height desired to be raised, would depend on how many pieces of the pattern to cut out of cardboard. For this mask, three extra pieces were cut.

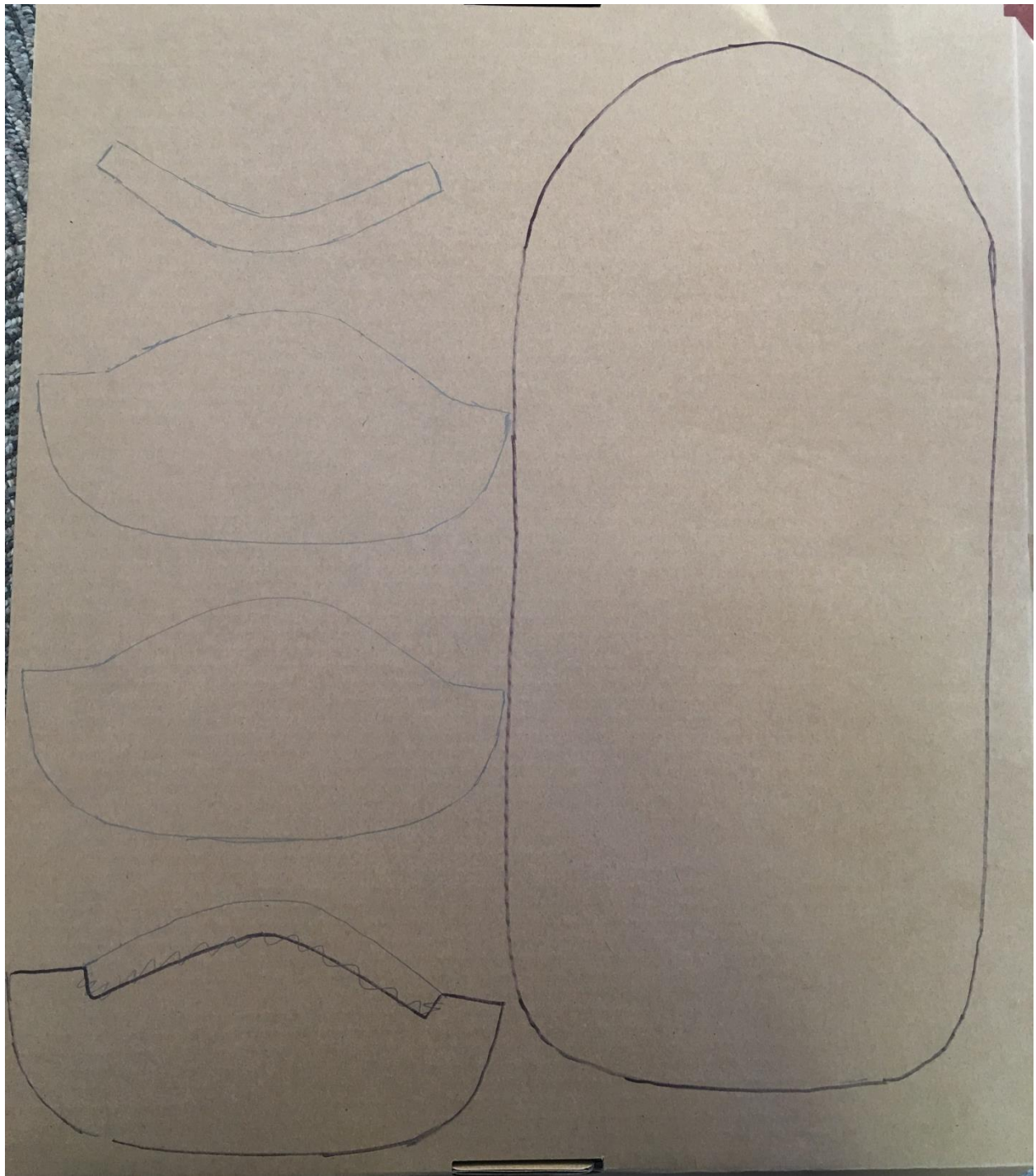


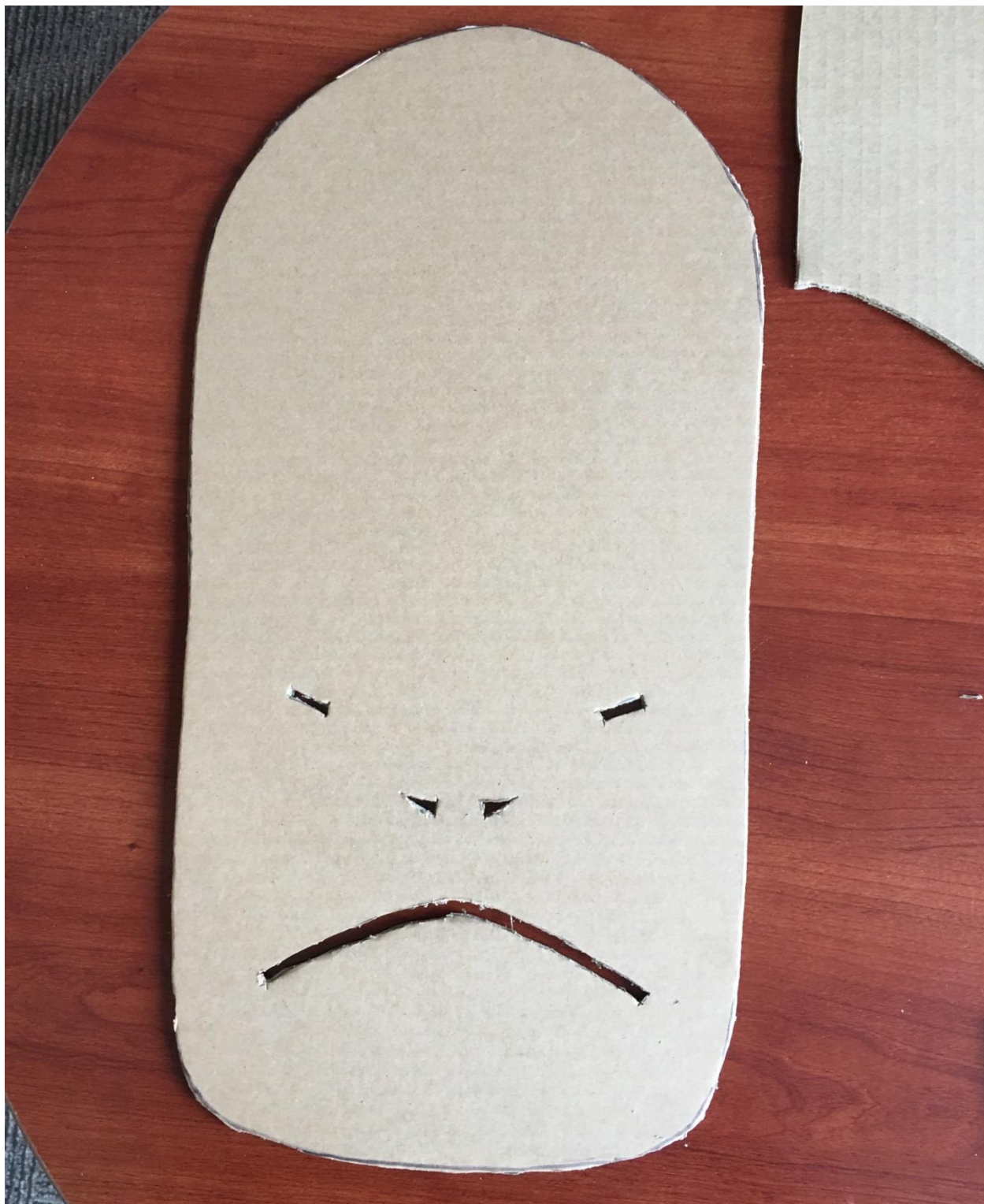
Step 4: Trace and Cut

- Trace the pattern pieces that will be used to trace and cut out from cardboard.
- Cut out the pieces, note here is the forehead, mouth and chin and then another piece with mouth cut out.
- Please see the photos.



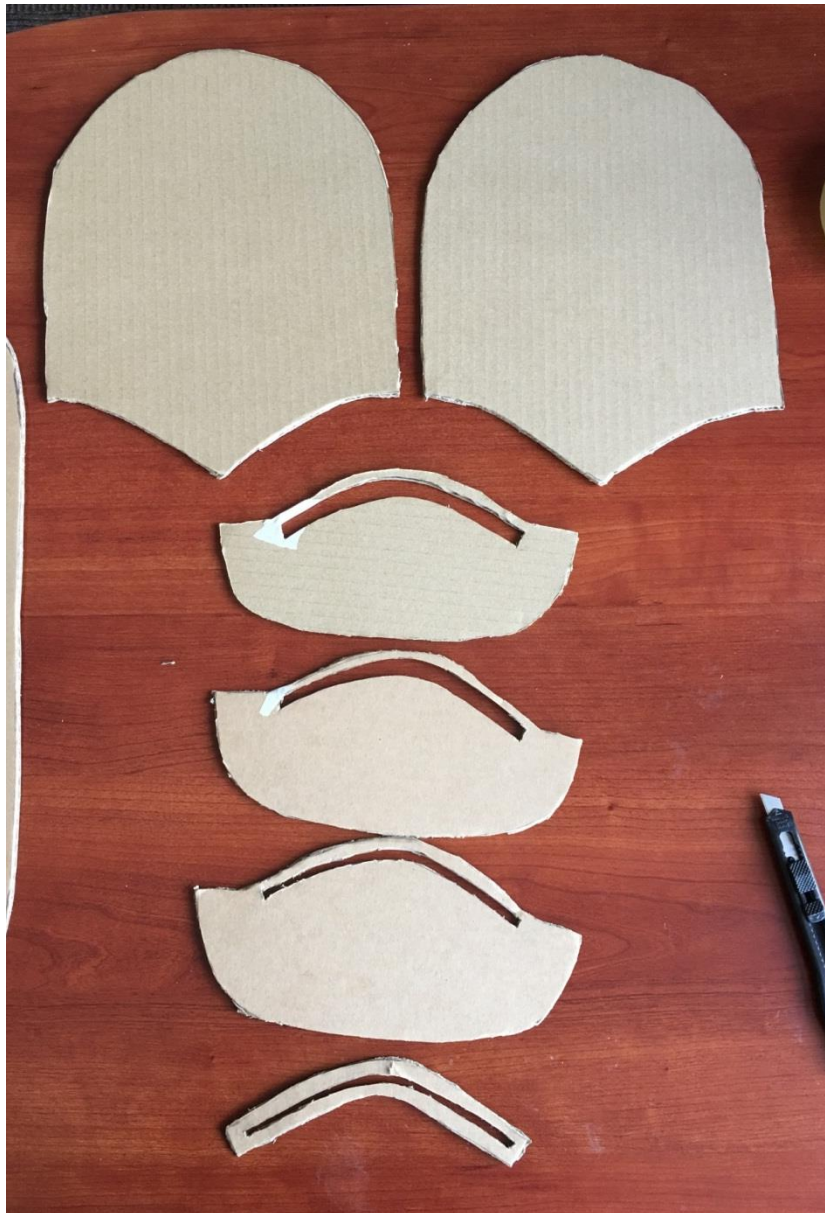
Step 5: Trace All the Patterns Onto the Cardboard!





Step 6: Cut Out All the Cardboard Pieces.

- Using scissors, or a xActo knife, carefully cut out the pieces. Again, be very careful and ALWAYS safety conscious. Cut away from you and on a safe cutting surface. (Younger grades will need adult to either cut out the pieces beforehand or heavily supervised.)

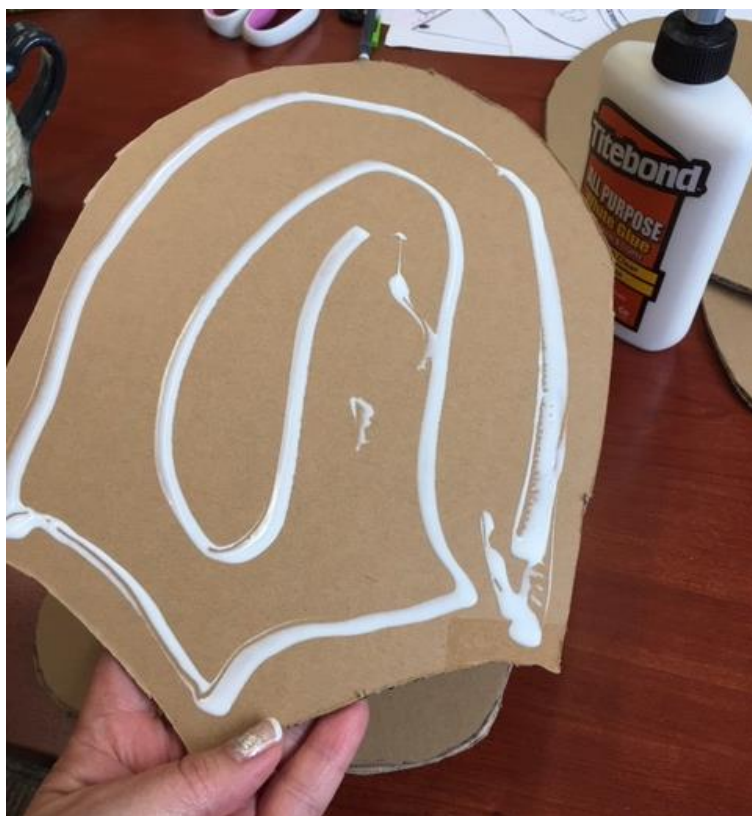
**NOTE:**

- Pay close attention on how to cut out the mouth opening. The bottom piece will have a wider mouth opening and then graduates up to right size mouth opening for the top piece.
- If accidentally cut too far on pieces, just tape it, because it will not show on the final project.



Step 7: Check the Pieces

- Layer the cardboard pieces on a slight slant to look like it was carved out. Make adjustments as needed.



Step 8: Glue Time!

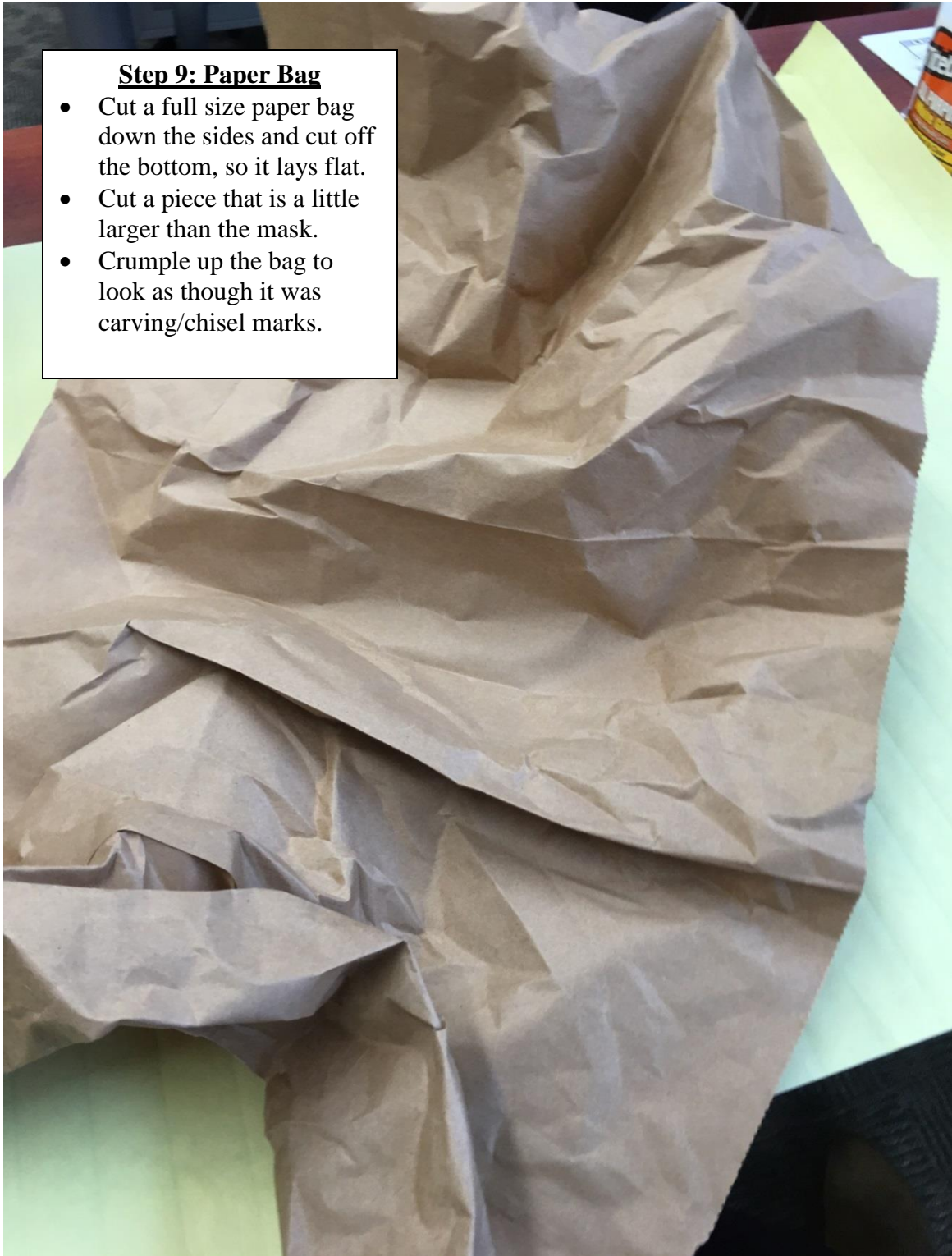
- Using Elmer's glue or an all-purpose glue that dries clear, paste entire piece
- Carefully, place the glued pieces on top of each other, as the pieces are layered, put them as a slight slant as shown in bottom photos.





Step 9: Paper Bag

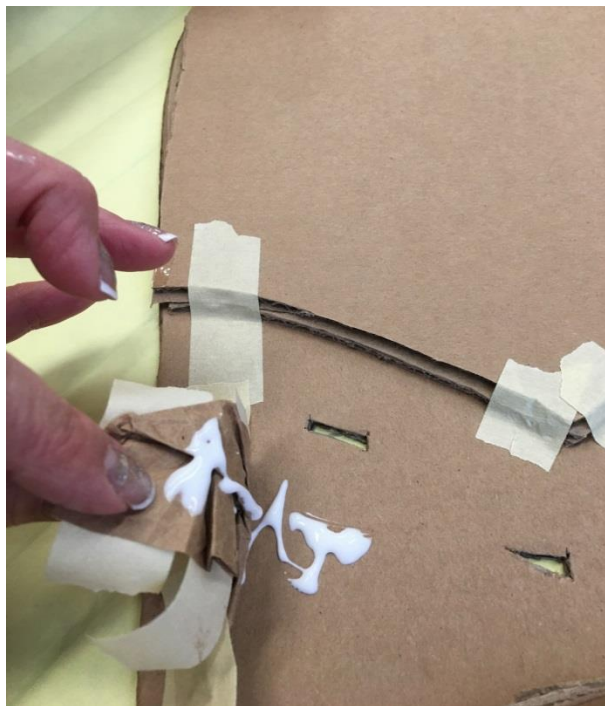
- Cut a full size paper bag down the sides and cut off the bottom, so it lays flat.
- Cut a piece that is a little larger than the mask.
- Crumple up the bag to look as though it was carving/chisel marks.





Step 10: Raised Facial Features

- To make the raised cheek bones, cut a big square from scrap paper bag and crumple it up and form in shape of cheek bone.
- Glue the back side and place on the mask.
- Tape it all down to ensure the glue sets.
- Tape can be left on the mask, to give it more strength.





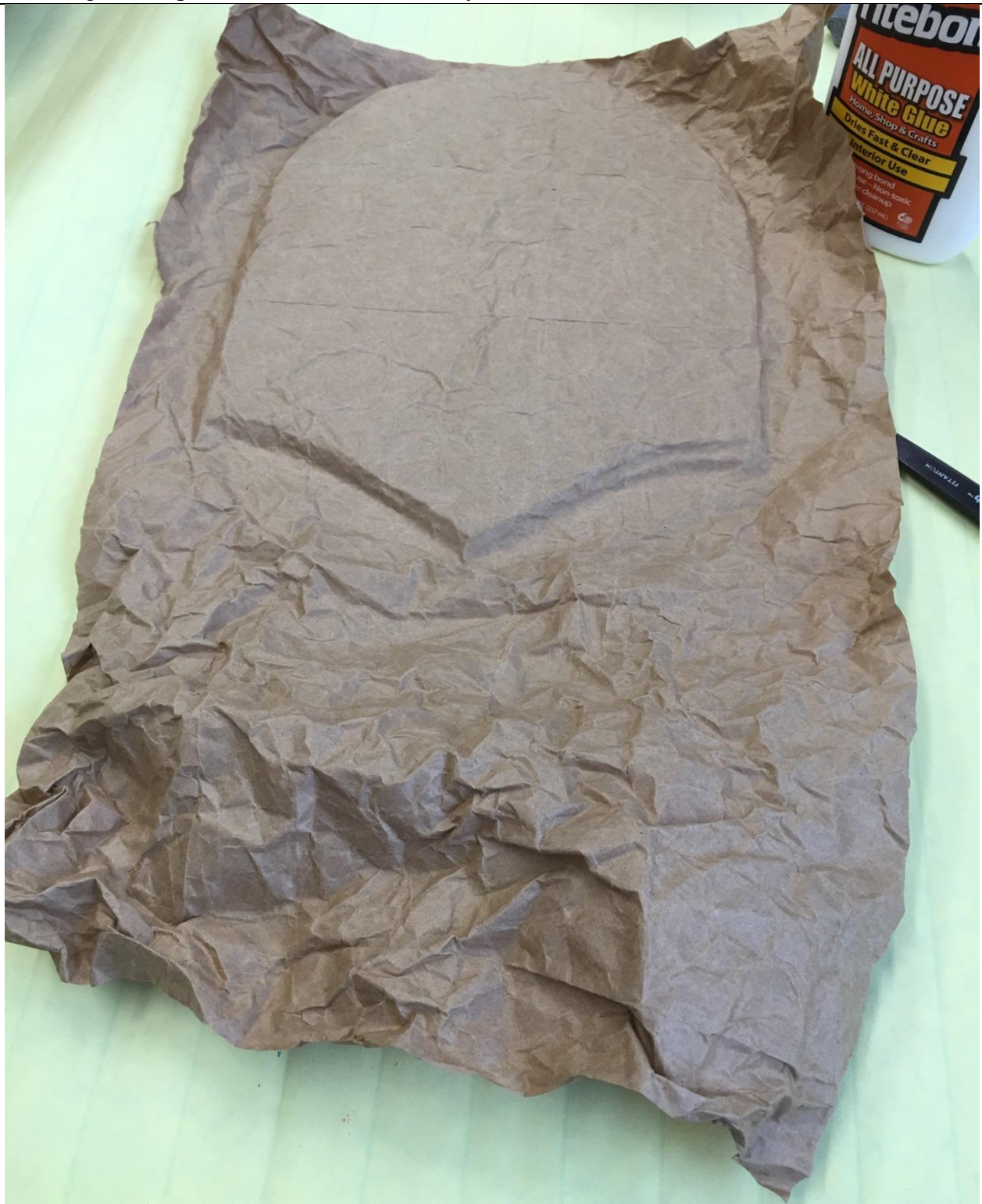
Step 11: Covering the Face

- Glue the entire face, all creases, every surface.



Step 12: Covering Finish with Paper Bag

- Start at the top of the head, start pressing and flattening down the paperbag onto the mask, being sure to press and work around the layers and holes cut out.





- Using a blunt end of something, like scissor handles, press along the raised edges, smoothing it out and taking out the variation of cardboard levels.



- Turn mask over and cut out all the holes that were covered with paper bag.
- Glue all around edge of mask and press the paper bag down over the edges. Tape down on back. Cut off excess after dries.
- Place heavy books over mask to help it dry flat.

Step 13: Hoop Stick Around the Mask

- Find a fresh, flexible long branch that can go around the length of mask.
- Make sure the branch is thin enough to be able to bend.



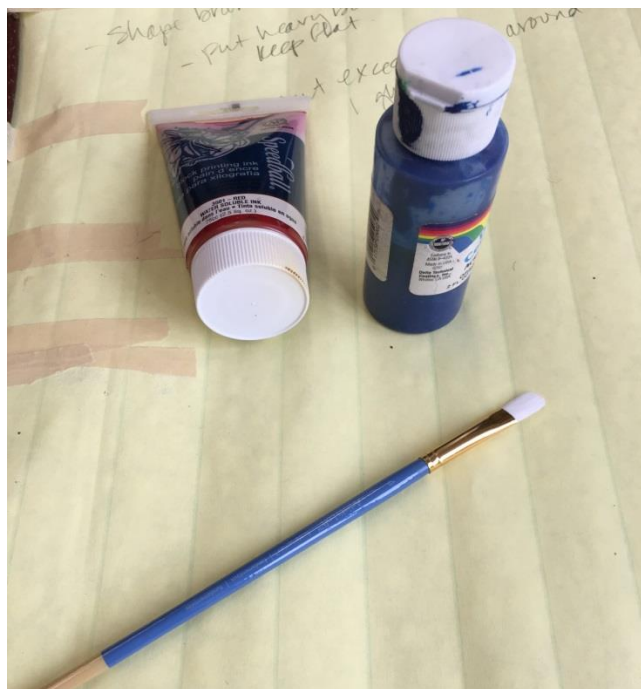


Step 14: Bending the Stick

- Tape down the one side of branch, then slowly bend the branch down around the mask and tape down as go.
- It is fine not to be able to bend the stick right next to mask at first, it takes patience and continually untaping and retaping the new bend. Take time so the branch does not break!



While waiting for the branch to dry....



Step 15: Painting!

- Gather paint supplies (prefer traditional colors of red and blue) but can also use a white-washed out color and then sand down to make the mask look old.
- Lightly pencil draw the pattern on the mask.
- Keep the photo nearby for reference as go.







Step 16: Punching Holes

- Using something sharp, such as an awl or knife, pierce an 'X' shape and then push a pencil through the 'X' to make more rounded.
- Make all the holes needed as shown on the mask. In this case, there were five.







Step 17: Tying the Branch to the Mask

- Using artificial sinew or twine, start at the edge and begin tying the branch to the mask.
- Work from one side at the bottom, go around and end at the opposite side.
- If desired, make ties that can tie around the head to use for dance and can then be used to hang the mask up for display!





Finished Chugach Mask Replica!

ⁱ Crowell, Aron L., Steffian, Amy F., Pullar, Gordon L. *Looking Both Ways-Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People*, Pg.192. University of Alaska Press.

ⁱⁱ Crowell, Aron L., Steffian, Amy F., Pullar, Gordon L. *Looking Both Ways-Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People*, Pg.194. University of Alaska Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ Birket-Smith, Kaj, *The Chugach Eskimo* Pg. 109. Nationalmuseets Publikationsfond København 1953.