The History of Mask
Why do we study Mask in Drama?
What Masks do you see in everyday life?

What do those masks tell you about people’s personalities and reactions?
What masks do you wear?

What do these masks do to your character?

How does your body communicate differently when you are wearing different masks?
What cultures do you know of that wear different masks? Past or Present.
Masks have existed at least since the ancient beginnings of mythology. The elemental forces of our unconscious (subliminal) desires and fears found in masks and mythic stories are the basis of all art. Masks, like myths, use the illusion of metaphor/imagery as a primary way of expressing and examining ultimate mysteries inherent in the human condition.

Cave paintings spanning as far back into the Paleolithic era depict the first “recorded” masks, animal heads probably worn by hunters.

Masks have been worn as a form of disguise, by an actor in a performance, as part of a religious ceremony, as part of membership in a secret society, as punishment for a criminal or in celebration of a holiday.
The symbol of today's theatre -- the tragedy and comedy masks -- comes to us from between 500 and 300 B.C. in Greece. The use of masks, or personas as they were called, first occurred in theatre in ancient Greece.

The design of the mask served as a megaphone for the actor's voice, carrying his words to the audience. The masks wore exaggerated expressions because the audience was often far away from the stage. The masks were important in Greek theatre to aid in disguising actors' genders because men played all roles, including those of women, who were not allowed to perform on stage.

As the use of masks in Greek theatre developed, it soon became customary for all performers to be masked. The chorus would have similar masks, but these would differ in great detail from the play's leading actors.
Egyptians used masks as part of their burial ceremony. The masks that were placed upon the face of the deceased often contained spells intended to protect the spirit on its journey into the afterlife. The masks were usually painted with gold and contained precious stones.
Many of Africa's native cultures used masks as part of their religious ceremonies, as well as part of ceremonial costumes. They often were made to represent the spirits of ancestors or of certain local deities. A dancer wearing the mask was sometimes thought to be possessed by the spirit represented by the mask he wore.
In Japan, China and other parts of Asia, masks had religious purposes or were part of traditional theatre. Many of the masks were influenced by Buddhist, Hindu and Indian literature, and were inspirations in various Asian art forms including theatre.
Native American masks were used for purposes similar to that of the masks in Africa. However, in addition to its spiritual function, the Native American mask was sometimes used for entertainment or for medicinal purposes.
The tradition of Halloween masks and Halloween costumes finds its origins in Celtic culture. Disguises were used to confuse the ghosts that came out on Samhain, a festival at the end of the harvest season. Frightening masks were often used because these were believed to scare away malicious spirits.
What do all of these masks have in common?
Websites for Information
http://www.ehow.com/about_5369538_brief-history-masks.html

Websites for Images
https://www2.bc.edu/~shammom/greek-mask.jpg
http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_hXvkEsNv-Zo/Sre0HV-rXal/AAAAAAAAAApA/Qk1q4KBoq7g/s400/greek_mask.jpg
http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_49_oglSjFeM/SgQAtsykq2I/AAAAAAAABgo/n_AHyvAC3y8/s320/japanese_mask_6-large.gif
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