

# Venice Carnival (Italy)

The Venice Carnival starts ten days before Shrove Tuesday and finishes on the stroke of midnight on this day. The origins of the carnival go back to around 1162 CE to celebrate a battle victory. The Republic defeated Ulrico, Patriarch of Aquileia and a tradition of slaughtering a bull and 12 pigs in Piazza San Marco originated to commemorate the victory.

However, it took another 134 years before the city senate declared the celebrations official and over the years it has gathered momentum and become an internationally known festival. It is famous for its flamboyant costumes and carnival masks.

Each year the carnival establishes a theme, for instance in 2010 the theme was 'Sensation – six senses for six neighbourhoods'.

The two-week festival includes a series of processions, masquerades, music and theatre.



## Venetian Mask Display

### Resources

- Pictures of Venice Carnival
- Plastic masks (or papier mâché balloons cut in half)
- Examples of Venetian masks
- Pictures of the carnival
- Collage materials
- Paint and brushes
- Glue
- Cartridge paper
- Card

### Approach

- 1 Explain to the children that masks have always been a feature of the Venice Carnival. Look at pictures of the carnival and, if possible, at some actual Venetian masks. They can be made in leather or papier mâché, hand painted and embellished with feathers, sequins and gems.
- 2 Give the children examples of Venetian masks to study and ask them to sketch out their own ideas for a mask.
- 3 Demonstrate how to transfer ideas from their design sheets to the mask using poster paint.
- 4 Give each child a plastic mask or they can prepare their own by covering a balloon with papier mâché (dried and cut in half). Ask the children to transfer their ideas onto the three-dimensional shape.
- 5 Stick the mask or half balloon onto a sheet of card and allow to dry.
- 6 Embellish masks with feathers, sequins etc.
- 7 Display the masks with 2D carnival balloons made from cartridge paper.

