

Art Activity

Head for Inspiration through Ife Art

The Yoruba people of Ife (Nigeria) are well known for their finely crafted portrait heads. These heads were made from materials such as terracotta (clay) and copper (metal). These impressive objects tell us about the people of Ife, including kings and queens.

Yoruba rulers are important to their communities and traditionally wear crowns and headdresses designed with intricate patterns, symbols, and markings. Royal regalia decorated with beads, feathers, and tassels. The portrait heads of Ife would have also worn a crown or in some cases, had a crown built in as part of the sculpture.

Many sculptures were found buried in the ground and became damaged over time. Imagine you are an archaeologist and have just found a royal portrait of an Ife king or queen but the headdress is broken or missing. Draw what you think it might look like if you were to attach feathers, beading, or raffia in the designated holes on the portrait to the right.

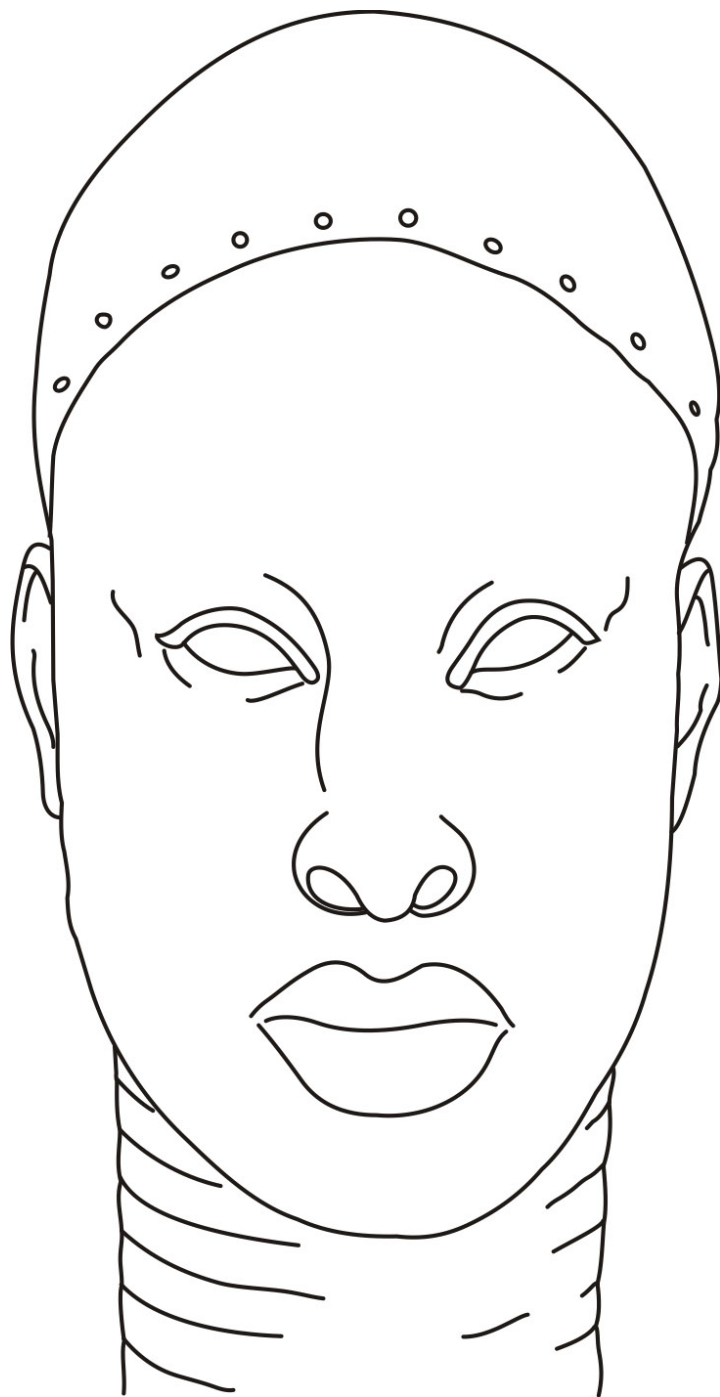
Basic Materials

◆ Colored-pencils, crayons, or markers

More Options

Cut the portrait out and paste it on a separate piece of paper to provide additional space for drawing and decorating. Suggested materials:

- ◆ Paper (plain or decorative)
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Glue
- ◆ Metallic colored-pencil to represent copper
- ◆ Beads, gems, feathers, and other embellishments



VMFA

It's your art.