



Soap Carving

While older students may be ready to take on the challenge of soapstone carving, younger students may be happier to tackle less formidable material: a bar of soap. For subject ideas, look at pictures or books depicting soapstone carvings by Inuit and other Canadian artists. For example, Webster Galleries Inc., a commercial gallery in Calgary, has a Web site displaying numerous Inuit and other sculptures. Go to <http://www.webstergalleries.com/inuit.htm>.

Materials

- Paper and pencil
- Newspaper
- Large bar of white soap
- Plastic knife
- Toothpicks or fine-tipped tool
- Dish of water

Instructions

Choose a carving design. Make a rough sketch of the design on paper. Assemble your supplies - the bar of soap, plastic knife, toothpick or other fine-tipped tool, and dish of water. To make cleanup easy, cover your workplace with newspaper.

Outline your chosen design on the soap, using the toothpick or edge of the plastic knife. Holding the knife and soap as if peeling an apple, slowly shave away the soap to the shape of the design. Carve slowly and gently, as soap is fragile. Dip the knife blade in water each time you shave away unwanted soap. Keep the shavings for use later.

Continue carving until the soap takes the shape of your chosen design. For further definition, smooth the edges of the piece using water, carving tools, and fingertips. Moisten your soap shavings to build onto the sculpture, if desired. Using the toothpick or other fine-tipped tool, add detail such as eyes, whiskers, or other small features. Smooth your carved soap with fingers and water to produce your finished sculpture.