



# Design a Bone Tool

Get inspired by archaeological objects to create your own model bone tool!

## Materials Needed:

Air-dry clay, popsicle sticks, string, paper clips, water, pictures of bone tools, paper, pencil.

*Note:* This activity uses clay to represent bone. Wood (popsicle sticks), wire (paper clips), and string are also used. You can also use other materials you have available, such as rocks or twigs.



## Instructions:

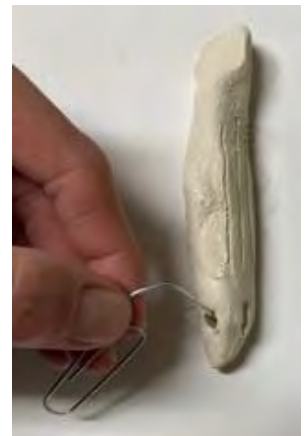
**Step 1:** Look at the pictures of bone tools from the museum's archaeology collection. Decide what kind of tool to make (it can be based on the examples, or something different). What task is your tool designed to do? Examples include catching fish, sewing, cutting, or hammering.

**Step 2:** Design your tool. Sketch a picture of what it will look like. Decide what materials to use; is your tool made entirely of clay, or does it also have wood, string, wire, or other materials? Think about how each piece will be attached.



**Step 3:** Gather your materials. Paperclips and popsicle sticks can be used as both carving tools and pieces of a tool. Make sure to cover your work surface to protect it!

**Step 4:** Mold and carve the clay into the desired shape. You can also carve decorations into the surface of the clay. Be creative!



**Step 5:** Let the clay dry for about 24 hours. After it is completely dry, attach other materials such as wood or string.



**Your clay tool should be used for display only.**

Although clay hardens when dried, it is not the same material as bone. It is not water-resistant and can break easily.

# Discover Bone Tools

People around the world have been making tools from bones for thousands of years. Bone is a hard and durable material, making it ideal to use for a variety of tools. Some tools are made with bone only, and others are made with several materials. When ancient tools are found in archaeological digs, bone is often the only part left, as other materials decay more quickly.



*Adze (antler, bone, jade, rawhide), saw (steel, bone, metal), flint flaker (bone, copper, rawhide).*



*Awl (wood, bone), used to string fish to place them on drying rack.*

**What kinds of tools do you see in the pictures?**



*Knives (bone, steel, cotton cord).*



*Scraper (antler).*

**Tools can have many uses, including building, hunting, sewing, cooking, eating, and more!**



*Comb (bone), used to straighten grass to weave into baskets.*



*Needle (bone).*



*Arrows (wood, bone, feather, sinew).*

**Bone is still used today in many Alaska Native crafts and traditional art.**

**Why is bone often used to make tools?**

**Think about the tools you have in your home. Are any parts made out of bone?**

**What other materials are they made of?**