

# Make A Soap Carving

Use a bar of soap to create artwork inspired by walrus ivory carvings!



## Materials Needed:

White bar of soap, pencil, towel, carving tools such as a butter knife, vegetable peeler, blunt nail, paperclip, toothpick, etc.

**Caution:** Always supervise children when using sharp objects.

## Instructions:

**Step 1:** Draw a simple design on both sides of the soap. Make up an abstract design, or choose a realistic design such as an animal or leaf.

**Step 2:** Cover your workspace with a towel to catch the soap shavings.

**Step 3:** Use your tools to carve the bar of soap. Different tools will be useful for different techniques. Use a butter knife to remove large areas. Twist a toothpick into the surface to make holes. Use a vegetable peeler to make smooth edges. Add lines with a paperclip.

**Step 4:** Turn your soap over and carve the other side.

**Step 5:** Gently brush the soap shavings away, and admire your creation!

**Hint:** Don't be discouraged if your carving doesn't look exactly like what you had planned. It's part of the artistic process, and some of the best artworks come from "mistakes"! Learning to carve takes time, so keep practicing!



# Ivory Carving

**Ivory** is a hard, white substance found in the tusks or teeth of animals such as walruses, elephants, narwhals, and mammoths. People around the world have carved ivory for thousands of years.

Right: Male Pacific walrus. *Image: Wikimedia Commons.*



The Okvik Madonna is a 2,000-year-old ivory carving from the Bering Strait region of Alaska. It depicts a mother holding a child or animal and is an outstanding example of prehistoric ivory carving. You can see the Okvik Madonna on display at the UA Museum of the North.

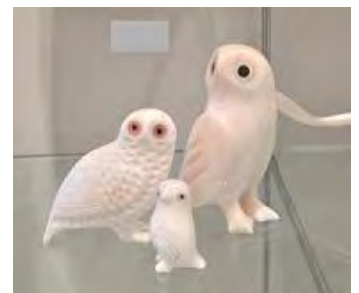
Left: Okvik Madonna, 4-1934-0607-1. *Image: Alaska's Digital Archives.*

Today, artists from around the Arctic still carve ivory, often from walrus tusks. Many indigenous communities depend on walrus for subsistence purposes, and the tusks are often carved into artwork and jewelry. Walrus ivory carvings are an important source of income for many Iñupiat and Yup'ik communities.



Cleaning walrus tusks, ca 1940s. *Image: Alaska's Digital Archives, UAF-1984-31-17*

**You can see many walrus ivory carvings on display  
at the UA Museum of the North!**



Left to right: Walrus Ivory Bracelet by Lincoln Milligrock; Carved Tusk, ca. 1925, Nunivak Island; Ivory Owl Carvings by Raymond Toolie, Don Ungott, and Clemet Ungott: UA81-003-0036, UA81-003-0038, UA82-003-0074.