



Art & Design Project Plans

POLE TO POLE

These project plans are designed to be used alongside the accompanying resource sheets.
(please note: a CD resource does not accompany this resource pack, all resources are provided below)

Art and design Project 1: Scrimshaw time (Key Stages 1 and 2)

Aims of the lesson: To understand and appreciate some of the skills necessary to do scrimshaw.

Activity: Whales have been hunted for hundreds of years and used for many different things. People used the bones from whales to produce beautifully carved objects known as scrimshaw. Sailors in the 1800's made scrimshaw to pass the time. They engraved scenes of activities sea, or copied pictures from books. The **Art and Design Project 1 folder** on the CD includes an Information Sheet on scrimshaw for your own ease of reference.

Tell the class that they are going to produce their own scrimshaw using soap. Before passing out the soap to the pupils, scrape the name off the front with the backside of a plastic knife. This gives the pupils a flat surface to carve on. Have the pupils draw outlined images of various Arctic animals on a separate piece

of paper. Place the soap on a cutting board or flat surface. Lay the scrimshaw outline on the soap. Trace the outline onto the soap using the plastic knife. Remember scrimshaw is worked onto the soap; it doesn't change the shape of the soap. To make the carving stand out go over the work lightly with black water-based paint. Allow drying for a few minutes. Lightly run water over the soap to remove excess paint. The paint should remain in the carved areas. Let the bar of soap dry for at least two hours.

Other ideas: As an extension to this activity, give a writing assignment to the students. For this assignment have them tell why they think arctic people would do scrimshaw work. Whale hunting is controversial, ask the pupils to find out about whale hunting and why it has been banned in many places throughout the world.

Art and design Project 2: Polar carvings (Key Stage 2)

Aims of the lesson: To give the pupils the opportunity to carve one of the polar animals they have been studying.

Activity: One of the innovations in carvings from the Inuit art world is the dancing bear. The Inuit carvers from Cape Dorset in Nunavut sometimes added humour and play into their artwork. They gave animals such as polar bears some human like characteristics. Instead of carving polar bears only in walking positions or other poses often seen in the natural wild, the carvers began to make the bears in upright positions standing on one hind leg. This pose represented the polar bear in a happy state of dancing and celebration.

To further consolidate their understanding of polar animals, pupils can be given the chance to carve an animal of their choice using plaster of paris blocks. The **Art and Design Project 2 folder** on the accompanying CD offer an Information Sheet on how to go about carving animals.

Other ideas: Discuss with students some of the skills needed by a carver to achieve a carving that reflects what he is trying to achieve. Review some of the different materials that carvers would use from the Arctic region.



Pole to Pole

Art & Design Project 1:
Scrimshaw time

Key Stages 1 & 2





Information sheet: Scrimshaw

Scrimshaw is the name given to handiwork created by whalers made from the by products of marine mammals. It is most commonly made out of the bones and teeth of sperm whales, the baleen of other whales, and the tusks of walruses. It takes the form of elaborate carvings in the form of pictures and lettering on the surface of the bone or tooth, with the engravings highlighted using a pigment, or small sculptures made from the same material. The making of scrimshaw began on whaling ships between 1817 to 1824 on the Pacific Ocean, and survived until the ban on commercial whaling. The practice survives as a hobby and as a trade for commercial artisans. A maker of scrimshaw is known as a scrimshander.

The development of scrimshaw took off after the market for whale teeth, which was sought by Chinese traders for use in the Pacific Islands, was flooded with teeth after a narrative by an American sailor, Captain David Porter, revealed both the market and the source of the teeth. Around this time is the earliest authenticated pictorial piece of scrimshaw (1817). The tooth was inscribed with the following This is the tooth of a sperm whale that was caught near the Galapagos islands by the crew of the ship Adam [of London], and made 100 barrels of oil in the year 1817.

Scrimshaw essentially was a leisure activity for whalers. Because the work of whaling was very dangerous at the best of times, whalers were unable to work at night. This gave them a great deal more free time than other sailors. A lot of scrimshaw was never signed and a great many of the pieces are anonymous.

Scrimshaw design

Scrimshaw was a highly variable medium, used to produce both practical pieces, such as hand tools, toys and kitchen utensils, and highly decorative pieces, which were purely ornamental. The designs on the pieces varied greatly as well, though they often had whaling scenes on them. For example Herman Melville, in *Moby-Dick*, refers to 'lively sketches of whales and whaling-scenes, graven by the fishermen themselves on Sperm Whale-teeth, or ladies' busks wrought out of the Right Whale-bone, and other skrimshander articles'.

Scrimshaw collections

Most of the original scrimshaw created by whalers is currently held by museums. Privately held original pieces are very valuable, and a great many reproductions (commonly known as 'fakeshaw') exist in the marketplace.



Pole to Pole

Art & Design Project 2:
Polar carvings

Key Stage 2



Scrimshaw





Information sheet: Animal carving

Materials:

- One pint milk cartons, or equivalent size container, for each pupil
- Plaster of paris
- Sand
- Water
- Carving tools – the tools can be plastic knives, table knives, old dental files, wood working files, etc. Anything that the student can scrape and 'carve' with will work. Need not be very sharp to work.

Procedure:

- Fill each one pint container _ full with water.
- Pour the water into a separate bowl for mixing and add plaster of paris and an equal amount of sand and mix well. Pupils may use their hands for this. Make sure all the material is mixed well. Consistency should be smooth and like thin oatmeal.
- Pour mixture back into one pint container and allow to harden.
- Remove the milk carton paper from block.
- Have student draw one of the animals they have been studying on a piece of paper.
- After the carving block of plaster is hard have pupils trace their pictures onto a side of the block.
- Let the pupils then carve their animal.
- Remember: Turn the animal while carving to get a more accurate carving.
- Finish the outside of the carving by taking equal parts of glue and water mixed together and coating the carving with it. After it dries the animal may be stained, painted, or allowed to remain as it is.