

# Inuit Bear Carving

## (art + social studies)

The Inuit are the aboriginal inhabitants of the North American Arctic, living in a vast area from the Bering Strait to East Greenland. Art is an important part of their history and culture, and has been used to pass legends and beliefs from one generation to the next. As a nomadic people, they created small and easily transported tools, amulets and personal decorations created from bone, soapstone, antler and animal hides.

Perhaps the single most represented subject in Inuit art and legend is the polar bear. Small carvings were carried during hunting expeditions to offer protection from and to give respect to this powerful animal.

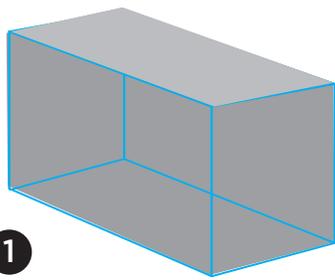
## Grade Levels 5-8

*Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.*

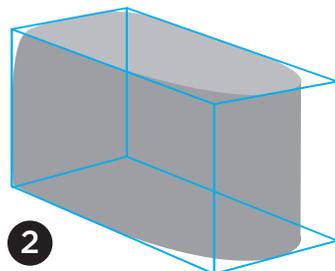
## Preparation

1. Use a ruler and pen to mark the long side of the Carv-Foam block into 3" wide sections. Cut with a fettling knife into 4 pieces, size 4" x 6" x 3". Depending on age and skill level, you may cut each piece in half again, for 4" x 3" x 3" sections (smaller pieces will require more detailed carving).

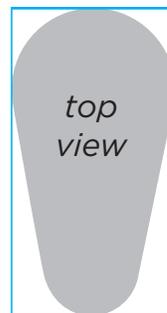
## Process



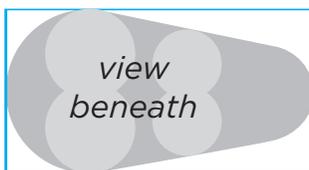
1. Begin with foam block in this position.



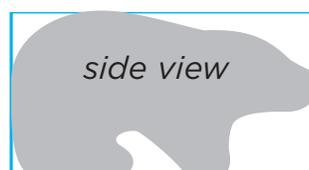
2. Gently round the backside and taper the head area into this shape.



3. Turn to the side, round the back and form the shape of the bear's head



4. Turn to the bottom side. Create 2 figure-8 shapes for front feet and hind feet.



5. View from the side again. Carve into the belly and feet areas to round them and define them. In the head and shoulder area, carve away small curves to suggest a neck, nose and forehead.



**CARVING HINTS:** When carving foam, it's best to work away small pieces at a time, avoiding deep gouges. Use the side of the tool to gently scrape the foam away in thin layers. Tools are not sharp, but may have a point, use with caution. Turn frequently and view from all sides as you carve. Use multi-purpose glue to reattach if too much material is accidentally carved away.

## Materials

### Blick Carv-Foam Block

4" x 6" x 12" (33114-1101), cut into 4 pieces, size 4" x 6" x 3", 1 piece per student

### Student Modeling Tool Set,

7 pieces, (30361-1009), share between 3 students

### Blick Multi-Purpose Glue

16-oz bottle(23872-1066), 1 bottle per class

### Wooden School Ruler 12"

(55427-1012), one for dividing block

### Fettling Knife (30349-1020),

one for cutting block

### Trays (61726-1010), place

beneath sculpture to collect carvings, 1 per student

### OPTIONAL:

### 3M Production Sandpaper

extra fine (34916-1203), one package per class

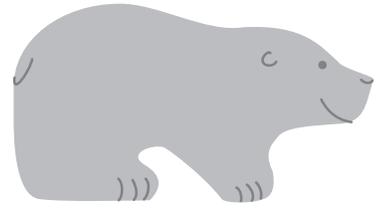
### Blick Student Grade Tempera

white (00018-1006), one pint per class

## Process, continued:

6

Use the edge of the tool to add details; eyes, ears, mouth, nose, tail, etc.



## Finishing Options:

1. Use sandpaper to smooth away carving bits and rough spots.
2. Thin glue by mixing 5 parts glue to one part water. Brush over the foam surface to seal and protect.
3. The gray of the Carv-Foam looks like soapstone, a material often used by the Inuit for carving. If you'd like, you can add white paint in the detail areas to look more like soapstone or, paint the entire surface white to look more like a polar bear.

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## National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

### K-4

Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

### K-4

Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures