

Cultural Connections

Overview: Humans hold special relationships with the natural resources by which they are surrounded. These connections are increasingly being challenged by changing climate patterns, availability of resources, and societal changes. In this activity you will investigate the natural history and cultural importance of an Arctic plant or animal, and use what you have learned to create a soap carving of the Arctic or Antarctic animal and a display card identifying the organism, scientific name, traditional uses, geographic range, and natural history.

Options:

As an alternative to soap carving, you may construct a model using clay, fabric, papier mache' or other media.

Materials and Equipment:

- Carving tools (plastic or wood are recommended; plastic knives and spoons may serve as inexpensive alternatives)
- Bar soap (Ivory is recommended because it is very soft and easily carved.)
- Cardstock
- Markers, colored pencils, and other art supplies
- Internet access or other materials to facilitate the research component of the assignment.

Procedure:

1. Follow the procedure on the "carving" handout to create your model.
2. Prepare a table tent that includes:
 - a. Organism, scientific name, traditional uses, geographic range, and natural history.
 - b. This table tent will be displayed with your carving and should reflect exhibition-level work. You will be evaluated on the following criteria:
 - i. Table tent includes all required information.
 - ii. Table tent is neat, legible, and attractive.
 - iii. Table tent is suitable for display.

Scoring Rubric

Category	Included & Properly Formatted 3	Included; Improperly Formatted 2	Not Included 0
Organism			
Scientific Name			
Traditional Uses			
Geographic Range			
Natural History			
Life Span			
Food Supply			
Role in Ecosystem			
Special Adaptations			
Fecundity			
Current Threats			
	Standard Met 3	Standard Met; Minor Revisions Needed 2	Standard Not Met; Requires Significant Revisions 0
Table Tent			
Required Information			
Neat, Legible, Attractive			
Suitable for Display			
Total Score			

Soap Carving

1. Preparing the Materials
 - a. Gather carving equipment. Carving tools or metal or plastic cutlery work well. Small wooden skewers and sharpened pencils work well for adding details to the carving.
 - b. Sketch an outline of the plant or animal that will be carved. The outline should fit on the bar of soap.
 - c. Place the outline on the soap and use a pencil to trace over the outline. A small amount of pressure will allow the outline to be impressed into the soap surface.
2. Carve around the outline and then add details. Begin with larger details and then work to finer details. Be sure to shave off any logo that may be on the soap.
3. Use a soft cloth to gently polish the carving.

