

Make a Walrus Mask

Explore walruses in art and culture by creating a walrus mask!



Materials Needed:

Paper plate, construction paper (brown, black, and white), tissue paper (brown and white), yarn or string, scissors, glue. *Optional:* Walrus template printable, hole punch.

Instructions:

Note: For younger children, cut out pieces in advance.

Step 1: Hold a paper plate up to your child's face and mark where the eye holes should be. Cut out the holes.



Step 2: Glue brown tissue paper or construction paper to the back of the paper plate. This will be the walrus hide. You can cut one big piece, or layer smaller pieces. Make sure not to cover up the eye holes!



Step 3: Cut a cheek piece from brown construction paper. Use the provided template, or draw your own. Cut a nose piece from black construction paper and white tissue paper strips for the whiskers. Glue them to the cheek piece.

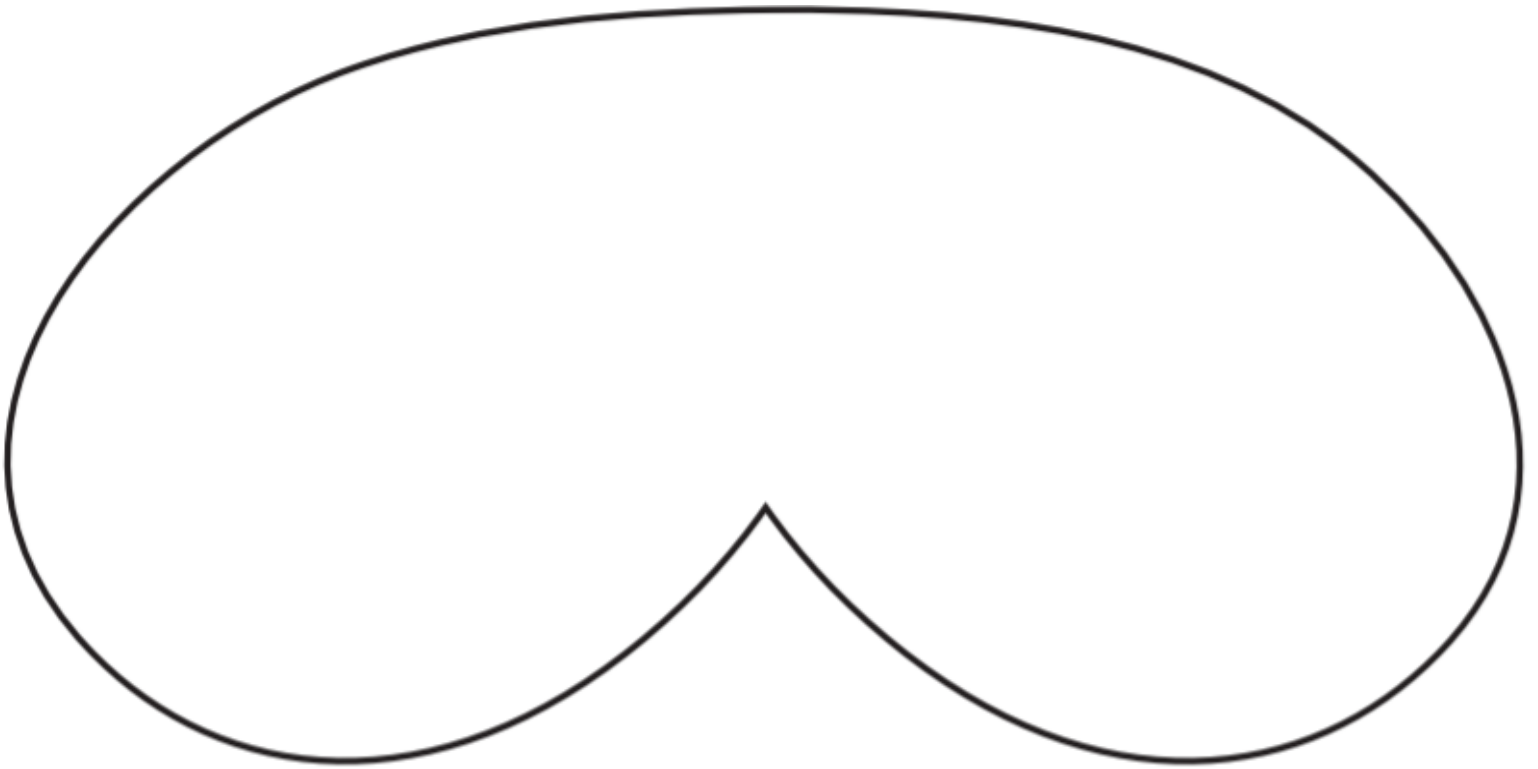
Step 4: Cut out two tusk pieces from white construction paper. Glue the tusks to the back of the cheek piece. Glue the cheek piece to the paper plate.

Step 5: Use scissors or a hole punch to make a hole on each side of the paper plate. Tie a piece of yarn or string through each hole. To wear the mask, have your child hold the mask to their face, and tie the yarn behind their head.



Walrus Template Printable

Note: Templates are sized for a 9-inch (23 cm) paper plate. Adjust sizes as needed.



Walrus: An Arctic Super-Mammal



Image: Jay Ruzesky, Unsplash.com.

Pacific walruses (*Odobenus rosmarus divergens*) live in the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort Seas off the coasts of Alaska and Russia. They spend two-thirds of their life in the water and the rest on floating ice or land. They depend on sea ice as a platform for feeding and resting.

Walruses have many adaptations to survive in Arctic habitats. They have a thick layer of **blubber** (fat) under their skin to keep them warm and provide energy, and **skin** up to 4 inches (10 cm) thick to protect them from injuries and predators. They also have 400 to 700 **whiskers** (vibrissae), to feel their way over the ocean floor and find food. Vibrissae can detect objects as small as a tomato seed! Both male and female walruses have **tusks** to help them climb out of the water, make breathing holes in ice, and defend their territory.

Did You Know? Walruses like to cuddle and to be touched! Walrus caretakers in aquariums will cuddle with walrus calves to help them survive. In Iñupiat and Yup'ik cultures, walruses are powerful and respected animals. The meat, blubber, skin, and organs provide a source of food. Hides are used for boat coverings, the stomach lining is used for drums, and ivory tusks are carved and engraved. Artists make many kinds of walrus masks and other artworks, reflecting the importance of walruses in these cultural traditions.



Walrus Mask by Bernard Tuglamena
Katexac. UA68-007-0002.



Detail from *Untitled* by George Ahgupuk.
UA1981-3-50.



Walrus Mask by Larry Ahvakana.
UA1984-003-032.