

# Clay Sculptures

**Make additive and subtractive sculptures with clay!**

Carving is an example of **subtractive** sculpture: material is removed in order to create a shape. By contrast, the **additive** process involves building up a shape by adding material.



## Materials Needed:

Clay, a canvas mat or small towel to protect your work surface, carving tools such as a popsicle stick, butter knife, or toothpick.

## Instructions:



To make an **additive** sculpture, break the clay into smaller parts. Put the smaller parts together to form your sculpture. Experiment with arranging the clay parts in different ways!



To make a **subtractive** sculpture, start with a single piece of clay. Cut or scrape away the parts you do not need to make your desired shape. Experiment with different tools such as popsicle sticks, butter knives, toothpicks, or anything else you have available!



**Note:** When working with soft clay, you may end up shaping and modeling more than carving. For more of a carving experience, allow the clay to dry out slightly so it is firm and keeps its shape while you carve.

# Carving and Art

**Carving** is the cutting or scraping of a solid material to create a desired shape. Since ancient times, people have carved tools and everyday objects they needed to survive, as well as cultural artifacts and artwork.

Artists carve many kinds of materials, including wood, ice, ivory, stone, bone, and even pumpkins! Depending on the material, they can use different tools, such as chisels, knives, and mallets.



A wood carver at work, 2001



Ivory Carving: *Blanket Toss* by Moses Milligrock, UAMN



Ice Sculpture: *On Guard* by Heather Brice, 2020.

[Image: Icealaska.org](http://Icealaska.org)



Stone carver at work, 1909.  
Image: Library of Congress Lot 7164.



Carved pumpkins.



Bone Carving: Grass Comb, Yup'ik, ca. 1880, UAMN