**What is scrimshaw?**

Scrimshaw—whale teeth, whale bone, and animal tusks carved with intricate designs and pictures—is a truly American art form. It probably originated with certain Native American cultures, and was developed and refined by sailors on whaling ships in the 18th- and 19th-centuries. During whaling voyages, which often took years, many whalers took up hobbies to pass the time. Making scrimshaw was practiced by whalers, navy and merchant seamen while aboard a ship.

President Kennedy had a personal collection of scrimshaw. He even kept some pieces of scrimshaw in the White House's Oval Office.

**Design a Piece of Scrimshaw**

**Materials:**

* Blue paper card
* Bar of soap
* Carving toothpick
* Q-tip
* Paper towels
* Plastic bag
* Black shoe polish
* Clean wipes

**Directions:**

1. Make a drawing on the blue card to practice.
2. Use your toothpick to carve your drawing onto the soap. Trace your design 2-3 times so it is well defined.
3. Ask the table captain for shoe polish and use a Q-tip to rub shoe polish on the soap over the design. Make sure to get the shoe polish in the design lines.
4. Use clean paper towels to wipe off all the extra shoe polish.
5. Place your “scrimshaw” in a plastic bag.
6. Wipe your hands and your work area clean.