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## EC2015 You Can Carve

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# YOU CAN CARVE!



EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COOPERATING  
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

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## WOOD CARVING

Would you like to carve a horse, a dog, a tree leaf, or any one of many other things from a piece of wood? You can do it, and it is lots of fun. It might become a fascinating hobby. It can be done at leisure times when interesting objects may be made very inexpensively. A small piece of wood, a pocket knife, and a whetstone are the minimum requirements for equipment. Special carving knives may be used. However, most people use the pocket knife as it is more convenient to carry and does not require a special purchase.

### WOODS TO USE:

Basswood - The grain is straight and close and does not splinter or break easily. It is easy to cut, so is considered one of the best of woods for whittling.

White Pine - This is one of the most suitable of woods. It is soft grained and can be obtained free from knots. It is easily cut across grain.

Yellow Poplar - It is quite easy to cut and does not splinter or split easily. The heartwood is light greenish to brown.

Yellow Pine - The grain is coarser than white pine, but quite easy to work and easy to secure.

Black Walnut - This is more difficult to cut with a knife, but the finished product takes a beautiful finish. The product may be worth the extra effort to the more experienced carver.

Red Gum Wood - The heartwood has a reddish brown color and it takes a nice finish.

Red Cedar - It is easily obtainable and cuts quite easily. The coloring may vary from light red-brown to white in a single piece.

Cherry - This wood is quite hard and more difficult to cut. It is a reddish brown color and takes a nice finish.

### GETTING STARTED:

Select a piece of soft wood, close grained, and free from knots. White pine or basswood are two of the best. The knife should be kept very sharp at all times. More discouragements are caused by a dull knife than any other one cause. Carry a pocket whetstone and use it often. Watch the direction of the grain of the wood. Cut in this direction to avoid splitting, as a nice piece may be easily spoiled. Safety with a pocket knife should always be practiced. Even small cuts may be avoided. Slips and breaks do occur, and then the knife plunges beyond the place intended. Avoid having fingers or any part of the body in line with the blade where it would be possible to receive a cut.

## PROCEDURE:

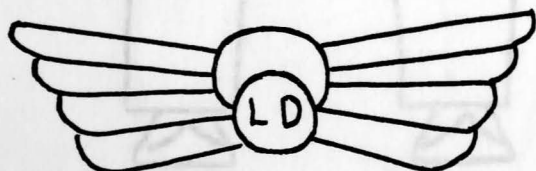
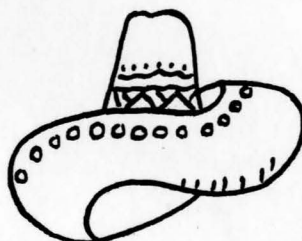
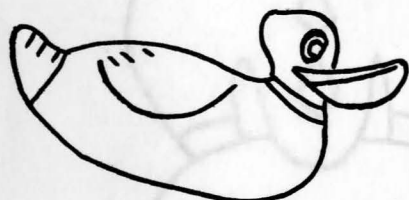
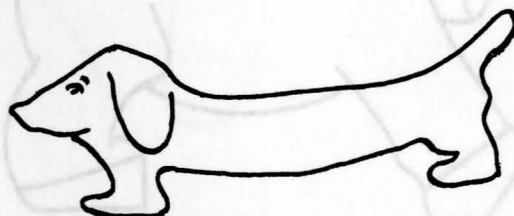
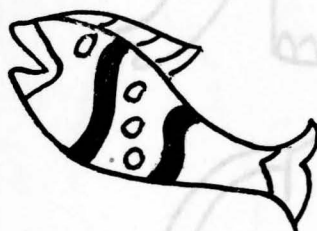
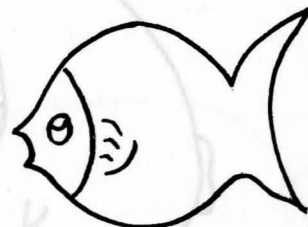
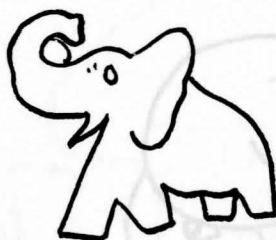
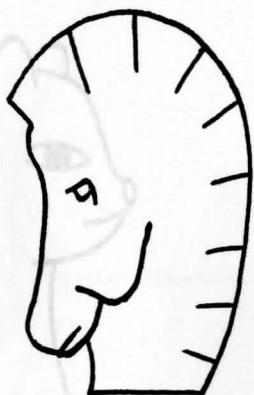
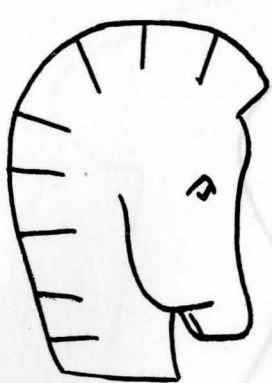
### FLAT WORK: The Decorative Pin.

1. Secure a piece of wood slightly larger than the final object and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick; carbon paper may be used to trace the design on the piece of wood. Another method is to cut out the design and trace it directly on the wood.
2. Cut out the design with a coping saw or whittle it out with a knife.
3. Round the edges. The cuts must be made with the grain of the wood to prevent splitting. Care must also be taken when cutting across the grain to prevent breaking and splitting.
4. Cut in the details with the point of the knife. This is done by making V-shaped cuts.
5. Smooth with fairly coarse sandpaper at first and then with fine sandpaper to make it perfectly smooth.
6. Finishing is a matter of choice. It may be waxed or it may be treated with shellac and sandpapered before waxing. Use color or stain if you wish, but the grain of wood itself, highly smoothed and waxed will make a beautiful article.
7. Attach a clasp to the back of the decorative pin with a good grade of cement. Clasps may be secured at hobby shops or from firms handling handicraft supplies.

### SOLID FIGURES:

Whittling a three-dimension object is more interesting and it offers a greater opportunity to develop your wood carving ability. It takes more time and care, but the finished product may be worth the extra effort. If you wish to start with an animal, choose something where the shape of the body and face may be made quite easily, such as the horse, deer, or dog outlines in this circular. The human face requires fine detail in showing facial expression, and is very difficult, except for the artist.

Start with a thicker piece of wood than for flat work, but, in general, use the same procedure. When drawing the outline on the block of wood, lay the pattern on the wood so the thinnest part of the object will be in the same direction as the grain of the wood. This will help to prevent breaking. After the excess wood has been cut off, draw a line around the long way of the figure. This line is to help keep the object symmetrical. Do not attempt to cut in fine details as it is not necessary for good carving. Round, bold objects are generally considered superior to those having fine detail.



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