

TEACHING STAMP CARVING

Supplies:

- Carving tools – a cheap way is to get cuticle trimmers. If you plan way ahead, you can order them in bulk online. Otherwise, gauge tools are really the best. An even cheaper method is to pull out the eraser on pencil and squish the metal part into a V. However, this results in very crude carving.
- Rubber – there are many erasers out there, but the best ones are very smooth and not super dry and grainy. My best results have been from a rainbow colored pack of 6 that I found at a dollar store.
- Pencils – don't forget to sharpen in advance.
- Samples – have a stamped image to show them so they know what they are trying to accomplish.

Process:

Ask them to watch the entire process first. Once they get into their supplies, they don't listen to you anymore! For my sample, I made a giant B (actually two of them in various stages of the process) so they would see it backward on the stamp.

Draw around your eraser/rubber on a paper (I use index cards or paper scraps) so that you have a rectangle no larger than your stamp.

Draw a SIMPLE design inside the box. Lines must be THICK and DARK. Emphasize this unless your carvers are older and will be using sharp tools. If you are using pencil tops to carve, show examples of a good drawing and a bad drawing. Budding artists will just have to hold themselves back!

Demonstrate how to hold paper on eraser and rub image to transfer. Emphasize that they need to hold the paper still while doing this! Otherwise, many smear it and want a new eraser. Note that the B is now backward.

Show the bottom of the carving tool and point out the V shape. The bottom of the V is what cuts; they should NOT stick the top of the V into the eraser. This is the hardest part for them, especially if you are using small cuticle trimmers.

Show how to SCOOP away from you with the tool, not scratch toward you. Tell them “hold it like a pencil, scoop like a spoon”.

Show how to color it with a marker held sideways (if applicable) and stamp it. Note that the B is now forward again.

THEN let them try it!

Be prepared to clean up all the carving mess afterward.