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Pumpkin Carving How-To's

Before you get started: Remember, pumpkin carving can be difficult and dangerous, and is something that should be done by adults. Small children should not handle sharp or pointed tools and children should always be supervised when they're around these tools. Small children can be enlisted to help select a pumpkin and a stencil, help in set up and cleaning, evaluate your progress, and potentially collecting pumpkin seeds for roasting!

Stencil Key: Many of the PBS KIDS stencils use a two-layer approach. This means that that some areas are to be cut out entirely, while others can be scraped so that the outer, orange skin of the pumpkin is removed, exposing the lighter flesh underneath and allowing some light to glow through from the inside.

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Directions:

Part 1: Prepare your area and pumpkin

1. Pick a comfortable area with space to carve. Kitchen or picnic tables work well.
2. Cover your carving area in newspaper.
3. Carve a hole in the bottom of your pumpkin. This will be used both for your light and to remove the pumpkin seeds and center.
 - The hole in the bottom will ensure your light has a flat surface on which to sit.
 - We suggest an LED light. It will reduce the chance of fire and emits very little heat.
4. Remove the pumpkin's interior using a large spoon.
 - You may want to reserve the seeds for roasting. If you're looking for a recipe, you can find one at PBS Parents Kitchen Explorers (go to www.pbsparents.org/kitchenexplorers and search: pumpkin seeds).
 - You may want to try to scrape the area on the side where you'll be carving a bit more so that the pumpkin wall is thinner. This will make it easier to cut out the design.
 - HOWEVER, don't scrape away too much. You'll need the wall to be at least a half-inch thick to allow you to both cut and scrape the outside of the pumpkin.

Part 2: Carving your design from the stencil

1. Tape your stencil on to pumpkin.
2. Use your toothpicks or the tip of a knife to poke holes through the black areas of the stencil to transfer pattern. Make sure to poke plenty of holes around the edges of the darkened areas so that you can see where you want to cut.
3. Using the saw from your carving kit, or a knife, carve out the black areas.
4. Using the scraper from your pumpkin carving kit or a knife, scrape the grey areas.
 - If you don't have a scraper, you may want to use a knife to cut out the outline of the area to be "scraped" and then "peel" away the area you've cut to reveal the lighter flesh underneath.

Tools: You may have your own favorite tools, but here's a quick list of items you may need:

- Tape
- Pumpkin carving kit or your own knives
- Toothpicks
- Newspaper
- Pumpkin

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