

THE ULU

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DESCRIBE YOUR PROJECT:

WE SHOWED HOW TO MAKE AN ULU STEP-BY-STEP AND WITH WHAT TYPES OF MATERIALS. WE ALSO DESCRIBED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ULU TO THE INUIT CULTURE.

RESOURCES: HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR INFORMATION?

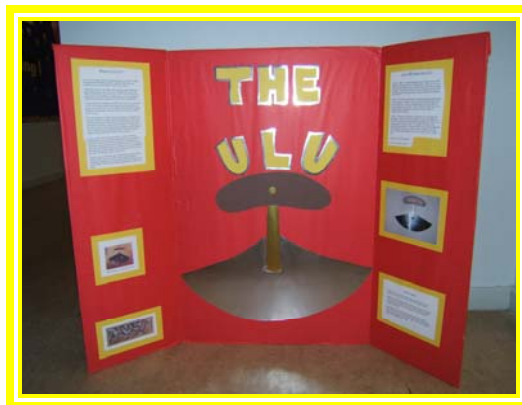
WE LOOKED ON THE INTERNET FOR DIFFERENT STORIES AND USES. WE ASKED AN ELDER TO TEACH US HOW TO MAKE AN ULU IN THE TRADITIONAL WAY.

WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT AS A RESULT OF YOUR RESORRCES?

THERE ARE DIFFERENT STYLES OF THE ULU DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU GO IN THE ARCTIC . ALSO DIFFERENT MATERIALS CAN BE USED TO MAKE AN ULU: SUCH AS IVORY, BONE AND WOOD.

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE PROJECT AND WHY YOU CHOSE IT.

WE WANTED TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE MANY TRADITIONAL TOOLS, BUT THE ULU BECAME OUR MAIN IDEA BECAUSE OF HOW MUCH INUIT STILL USE THEM.



WHAT IS AN ULU?



An ulu is an Inuit woman's all-purpose knife. It is used for things like skinning and cleaning animals, cutting a child's hair and cutting food or meat off of animals that were hunted and killed.

Traditionally the ulu was made with a caribou antler handle and slate cutting surface, due to a lack of metal in the Arctic. The handle could also be carved from bone, and wood was sometimes used when it was available. In certain areas, such as Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories, copper was used for the cutting surface.

The size of the ulu was based on what it was used for. An ulu with a 5 cm. (2 in.) blade would be used as part of a sewing kit to cut sinew. An ulu with a 15 cm. (6 in.) blade would be used for general purposes. Occasionally, ulus can be found with blades as large as 30 cm. (12 in.).

The ulu comes in two distinct styles, the Inupiat (or Alaskan) and Canadian. With the Inupiat style ulu the blade has a centre piece cut out and both ends of the blade fit into the handle by a single stem in the centre. In the western areas of the Canadian Arctic the blade of the ulu tended to be of a triangular shape, while in the eastern Arctic the ends of the blade tend to be more pointed.

Ulus have been found that date back to as early as 2500 BC. Traditionally, the ulu would be passed down from generation to generation. It was believed that an ancestor's knowledge was contained within the ulu and would also be passed on. The shape of the ulu ensures that the force is centred more over the middle of the blade than with an ordinary knife. This makes the ulu easier to use when cutting hard objects such as bone.

Today the ulu is still made with caribou antler but the blade is usually made of steel. The steel is quite often obtained by purchasing a hand saw or wood saw and cutting the blade to the correct shape. These ulus are kept both for home use and sold to others.

HOW WE MADE OUR ULU

Step # 1: When we started making an ulu we had to trace an ulu shape on a cereal box and/or cardboard box. Then we cut it out. Then we put the shape onto a steel plate, then traced the ulu shape carefully. Once that was done we took a cutting tool and cut the ulu shape on the steel plate, then we had to grind the ulu shape to make it right.

Step # 2: We had to go and buy a round brass material and measure it to the length we wanted.



Then we cut the brass and drilled two holes for the pins. Then we pinned the brass to the ulu and used a hammer to pin it tight. Then we filed it to make sure it was smooth and took sandpaper on the brass so that no lines or scratches were showing.

Step # 3: We took a hard piece of wood that was big enough for the handle. Then we traced the handle on a piece of cardboard. Then we cut the shape out and traced the handle on the wood. We cut the handle out of the wood. We shaped it to make it feel smooth when we held it. We had to drill a hole in the middle that was the same thickness as the brass that was pinned on the ulu. Then we pinned the handle to the top of the brass with a 1/8 in. drill bit.

Step # 4: We were finished.

Step # 5: SHOW IT OFF!

ULU FACTS



Originally ulu blades were made with polished slate, and the handles were made with wood, ivory, caribou antler or bone.

Handles were usually made with a deep groove along one edge to hold the blade. Sometimes holes were made through the handle and blade and then sinew or hide strips were used to lash the handle to the blade.

Metal blades were introduced later and became the preferred material because of its hardness and ability to keep a good sharp edge. Old saw blades were preferred because they were made of tough steel and did not dull easily.



