

## How to Carve a Pumpkin

By Mrs. Barnes

Jack-o'-lanterns are a fall must-have. Their bright orange glow invites trick-or-treaters to stop by for a Halloween surprise. Although carving pumpkins can be fun, it can also be dangerous and messy. With these easy and safe steps, you'll be carving your Jack-o'-lantern in no time!

The first step in carving a good jack-o'-lantern is selecting a good pumpkin. Think of the pumpkin as your canvas. You might want to change it up this year and try carving a white pumpkin, a butternut squash or a gourd in place of a traditional orange pumpkin.

After you have selected your perfect pumpkin, then you can begin on the lid. Using a sharp knife, or pumpkin carving tool, you should cut a circle around the stem. The circle should be large enough for your hand to fit through it. It helps to use a back-and-forth slicing motion to cut through the thick, tough skin. Once you have carefully cut the circle, you can remove the lid from the pumpkin. Be sure to scrape away any pulp hanging from the lid.

Now it's time for the messy part. Remove the pulp from the inside of the pumpkin using a large spoon (I prefer to use an ice-cream scoop). You should scrape the inside clean. (This might take a few minutes). The more of the pumpkin you scrape away, the more light will shine through the surface. Place the pulp in a bowl if you plan to roast the pumpkin seeds later. Otherwise, throw the pulp away.

Next, is my favorite part; letting my creativity run free. Choose, and draw a pattern for the face on your clean pumpkin

with a dry erase marker. (The dry erase marker wipes off easier at the end). Be sure to make the eyes, nose and mouth large enough; it's harder to cut out smaller features. Use a paring knife to follow your pattern as you cut all the way through the pumpkin. Push the cut-out features gently from the inside of the pumpkin and throw away the pieces.

Finally you can place a votive candle inside the pumpkin to create an eerie glow. Using these steps and a little creativity, you can make a unique pumpkin easily.