

Southeast Alaska Discovery Center

Art to Go – Bentwood Visor

The bentwood visor or hat is an object of artistic creation, ceremonial importance, and a practical survival tool. These curved wooden visors were an essential tool for Alutiiq hunters when pursuing prey on the water. They helped shield the eyes from sun, kept rain from the face or neck, and helped amplify sound on the water. This improved the hunter's ability to see and hear the animals needed for survival. Each visor, and its decoration, tells a story about the wearer. The shape, patterns, and decorations are individual to regions, Alaska Native culture, and the artist that created it. The use of this type of hat or visor can be found in many of the Alaska Native cultures on the west and southern coasts of Alaska.

Below: An Alutiiq bentwood visor created by Andrew Abyo, on display in the Valdez Museum and Historical Archive in Valdez, Alaska. Abyo specializes in making Alutiiq bentwood visor, full size paddles and other artistic works. Andrew's work is recognized as museum quality and is found in museums around Alaska. Photographer Faith Revell.



Supply List:

- ✓ 12x18 printed copy of Bentwood Visor template
- ✓ Markers, crayons, paint, or watercolors
- ✓ Stapler/staples
- ✓ scissors
- ✓ Two hair ties



Notes:

- ✓ The template used in this art project is courtesy of the Alaska State Museum, 395 Whittier St., Juneau, AK 99801.
- ✓ A printable pdf of this template can be downloaded from:
<https://museums.alaska.gov/PDF/teachersResources/hat/bentwoodVisor.pdf>
- ✓ Print the template on medium weight watercolor paper or heavy cardstock. This allows for enough stiffness in the final project that it can withstand light use by the young artist.
- ✓ For older students consider printing a single copy and using it as a template for the shape of the hat. Then allow students to create designs that reflect themselves and their relationship to nature.
- ✓ If using as part of a play or readers theater experience, consider laminating to ensure multiple uses.

Step by Step Instructions:

1. Gather your supplies.
2. Color or paint the template. Cut visor out using scissors.

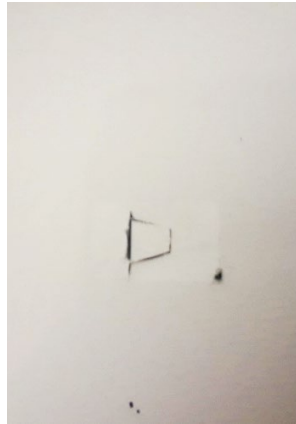


3. Cut out and fold the hat ornament along the dotted lines. Cut a small hole in the visor, pass the tab through the hole.



a.

4. Glue or tape to the tab to the underside of the brim.



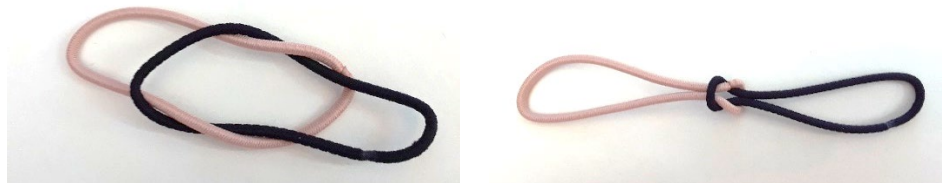
a.

- b. The figure can be glued together at the feet, hands, and hat to form a triangular figure.



c.

5. Knot the hair ties together by passing them through each other and pulling tight.



- a.
6. Fold ends of the template at the dotted lines.
7. Place hair tie loops into the fold and staple securely.



- a.
- b. The size of the hat opening can be adjusted by adding or removing hair ties. Alternatively you can complete the connection by stapling a strip of wide elastic, or paper in place of the hair ties.

