

project beginner

5-Minute

Wizard

Beginner project is a quick and easy introduction to woodcarving

By Tom Hinds

When teaching woodcarving to beginners, it's important to provide a project students can successfully complete in a single class. A simple project gives them a sense of accomplishment and encourages them to continue.

The five-minute wizard is a perfect project for teaching basic carving skills and is also well suited for demonstration purposes. I display carvings at gift shops, festivals, and art fairs; I whittle or carve whenever I get the chance. The actual act of carving will draw onlookers to your booth. The five-minute wizard is a simple project that can be given away to spectators. Children especially enjoy receiving a souvenir. I normally carve the wizards while I'm at the event, then take them home and paint them. The painted ones are given away to onlookers while I carve a supply for the next event.

It may take a bit longer to make your first few wizards, but once you have the steps down, you'll be completing them in about five minutes and can quickly carve a large supply. In addition to drawing attention at public events, they make wonderful little gifts for random acts of kindness. Leave one along with your tip at the local restaurant or give one to your favorite cashier. You can also attach a pin back or turn them into key chains.

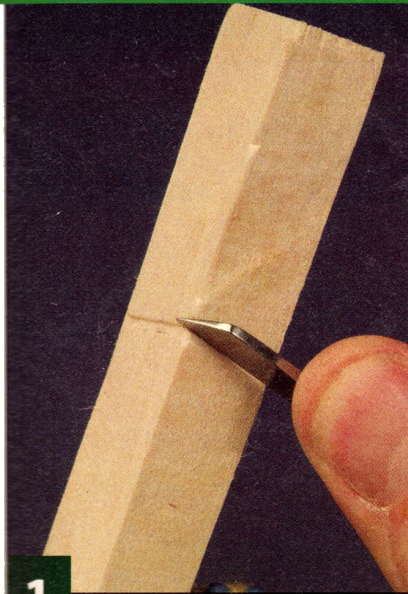
Rather than presenting a step-by-step plan for carving a single wizard, we'll be creating a study stick. With this method, several things are accomplished: you have a study stick for future reference, you have a useful tool for teaching others, the repetition enables you to practice the steps multiple times, and it lets you try out different looks for your wizard.

Use a pencil to divide a 24"-long triangular stock into 4"-long segments. Number each of the segments (1 through 6). Make sure your knife is sharp and strop as necessary throughout the carving process.

This simple wizard is ideal for teaching or demonstrations.



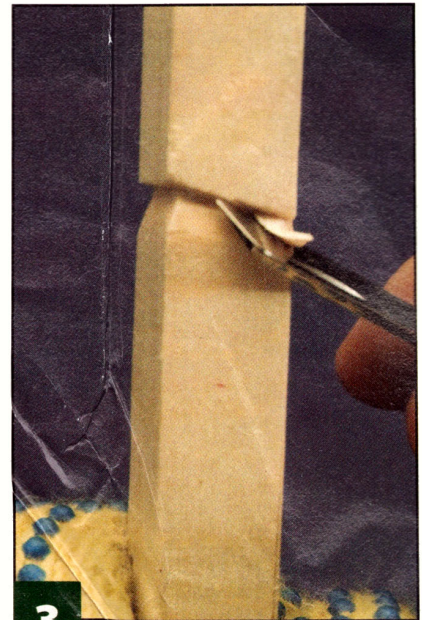
WIZARD: BLOCKING OUT



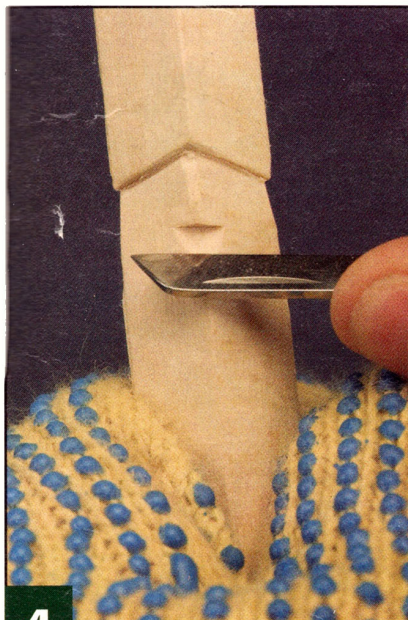
1 **Outline the bottom of the hat.**
Make a mark on the corner, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " up from the bottom of segment 1. Draw angled lines from the mark out to the edge of the blank. Make $\frac{1}{8}$ "-deep stop cuts along these lines with a carving knife.



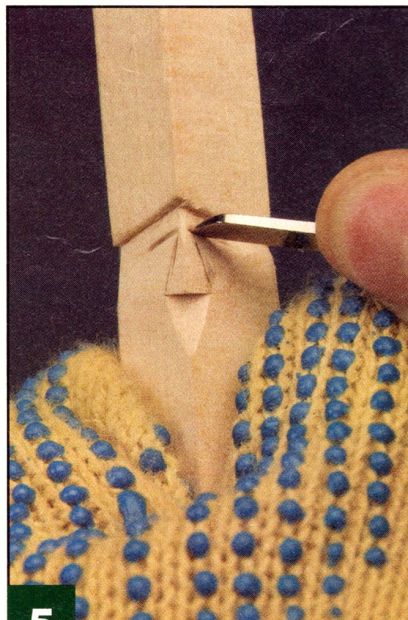
2 **Relieve the face up to the hat.**
Move to segment 2 and repeat step 1. Start a slicing cut $\frac{1}{4}$ " down from the stop cut on each of the flat surfaces. Cut up to the stop cuts to create the surface for the eye sockets and cheeks.



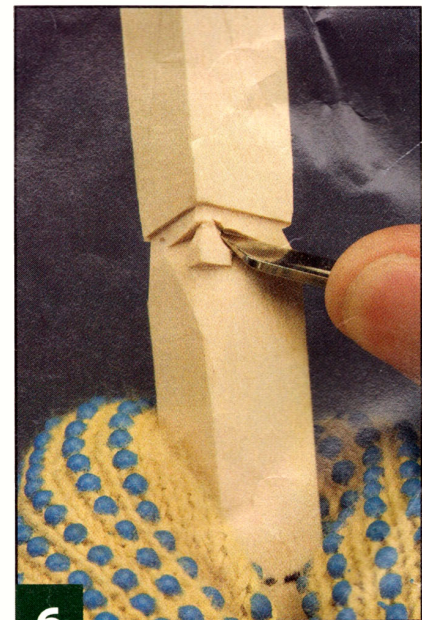
3 **Shape the face.** Move to segment 3 and repeat steps 1 and 2. Position the blade on the outside corner of the blank $\frac{1}{4}$ " down from the stop cut. Cut up to the stop cut to remove about $\frac{3}{16}$ " from both sides of the face.



4 **Define the bottom of the nose.**
Move to segment 4 and repeat steps 1 to 3. Make a deep stop cut on the front corner, $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " down from the bottom of the hat. Cut up to the stop cut from below to separate the bottom of the nose from the mouth and chin.



5 **Outline the nose and eyes.**
Repeat steps 1 to 4 on segment 5. Draw in the nose and top of the eyes. Starting at the inside corner of the eye, plunge the knife tip in and cut to the bottom of the nose. Start at the inside corner, and make a stop cut for each eye.



6 **Shape the nose and cheeks.**
Using the knife tip, cut up to the stop cuts made in step 5 and remove a chip from each side of the nose. The deep area where the cuts intersect will be the eye socket. Remove the corners on the bottom of the nose.

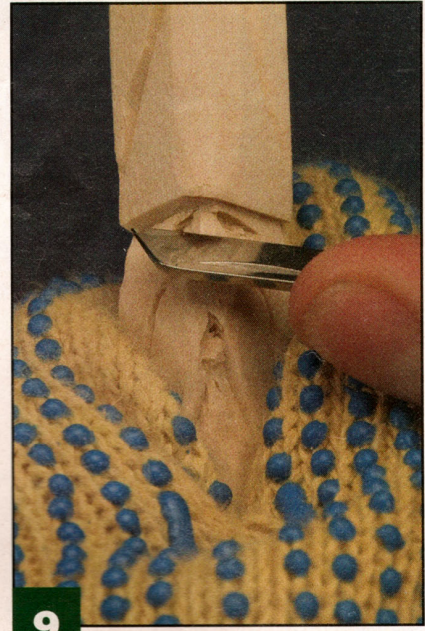
WIZARD: ADDING DETAILS



7 **Outline the mustache.** Repeat steps 1 to 6 on segment 6. Draw in the hat, mustache, and beard. Angle the knife blade toward the mustache and make a stop cut around the mustache. Cut down towards the stop cut to separate the cheeks from the mustache.



8 **Shape the beard.** Cut up to the stop cuts under the mustache. Cut along the beard outline to finish shaping the beard. Go back with the tip of the knife or a small V-tool and add hair lines and texture to the beard and mustache if desired.



9 **Shape the nose.** Give the tip of the nose a rounded or pointed shape. Then shave down the top to create the bridge of the nose. Cut up from the tip of the nose and free the chip by carving down from the eyebrows. Carve in small semi-circles for the eyes.



10 **Shape the hat.** Use your thumb to push the back of the knife blade and roll the blade back toward you as you cut the hat to a point. You can make the hat long and pointed, squashed down, or even folded at the top. Use your imagination and make it your own.

Finishing Notes

I use acrylic paints to finish the wizards. You can paint them with your own color scheme or leave them natural. Whatever you decide, be sure to erase, carve, or sand away the pencil marks. These marks will often show through layers of paint.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

$\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 24" basswood ripped in half
(Makes two blanks. See tip on page 10 for cutting triangular stock.)

Acrylic paints of choice (optional)

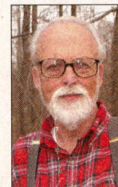
TOOLS:

Pencil
Knife of choice (I use a pocket knife)
Carving glove and thumb guard
Strop
Small V-tool (optional)
Small paint brushes (optional)

BLADE CONTROL

tips

For maximum control, position your thumb on the back of the knife blade and use it to push the blade where you want it to go.



About the Author

Tom Hinde started whittling and carving three years ago. Now retired from a career in technical training development at Ohio State University, Tom lives outside Delaware, OH with his wife of 46 years. He carves Noah's arks, Christmas ornaments, wizards, and gnomes.