



1. There are two ways to transfer your design onto the pumpkin. One is to copy it freehand onto a clean, dry pumpkin with a water-based marker (mistakes can be easily corrected with a paper towel). The other is to tape your template to the pumpkin, then score the design into the skin by poking holes through the template with a nail or plastic poking tool (available in some pumpkin-carving kits).
2. Carve by starting at the center of your design and working outward (this avoids putting pressure on areas already carved). Begin with the innermost and smallest details. As each shape loosens up, gently push it out of the pumpkin with a finger or a dull pencil point (a good job for young kids).  
  
Tip: If you cut something you didn't intend to, perform an ad hoc pumpkin surgery. Stick a toothpick through the flesh side of the piece and fit it back into place.
3. Lastly, put your jack-o'-lantern in a place of honor (away from flammables), and remember to blow out all candles before you go to sleep.