

Bits of boats

It's easy to look at a whole boat and not notice its individual features. Explore the WA Maritime Museum and turn your focus to the details of water craft construction.



Recipe for a kid's canoe, c 1930 (by M Lefroy; canoeist: M Turner)

Take a sheet of roofing iron and fold in two by stamping on the sides. Cut two pieces of wood and slide into each end. Secure the wood with roofing nails and fill the holes with melted road tar. Spread out the sides by putting a wooden spacer bar inside the canoe. Stamp down the bottom of the canoe to make it flatter and more stable. Take a jam tin as a baler, and take to water!

Can you find the canoe pictured in the photo in the Museum?

General discussion points

As you explore the Museum, examine the similarities and differences between different types of watercraft. Consider:

- **What was this boat used for? How can you tell?**
- **What is the boat made from?**
- **How was the boat made?** (Carved? Tied? Welded?)
- **What makes this boat move?**
- **How would you steer this boat?**
- **Can you see anything that helps to make this boat safe?**

In the galleries...

Ask one person to pick a specific part or a feature of a boat, and describe it in as much detail as possible. The rest of your group has to guess what feature is being described.

Back in the classroom...

Develop some criteria by which to test a boat (eg. speed, distance covered). Build your own model boat to test against these. Which boat was successful and why?

The big question

Explore the Museum to find the boats pictured below and compare them to each other. What materials have been used to make each boat? Can you work out what needed to be invented and/or what people needed to learn how to do before they could build each boat?

What makes modern boats faster, safer and easier to use than old rafts and canoes?



Aboriginal raft

Some Aboriginal people made rafts out of two layers of wood, which were joined with wooden pegs or tied together with string. A bed of grass or reeds was sometimes added for comfort. The square, flat shape means that a raft is quite unstable and slow.



Outrigger canoe

This type of a canoe has lateral support floats fastened to the main hull, giving greater stability than a plain dugout canoe. It is common across SE Asia, Micronesia and Polynesia. The stability of the canoe allowed people to spread across the Pacific and Indian Ocean.



Paddle boat

The shape of this type of boat (pointed in the front and back) helps cut through the waves and allows for quick movement forward and in reverse. The V shaped bottom helps to steer the boat so it doesn't go sideways.



Sail boat

A boat may have many kinds of sail, in different shapes and sizes. The type of sail used and the angle at which it is set depends on the wind speed, wind direction and how fast the boat needs to travel.



Steam powered boat

A steam boat has a boiler into which water is fed, and out of which steam is released. The steam turns a propeller which pushes the boat through the water. Nowadays, most steam engines have been replaced by fuel driven motors.