

Sinking Ships for Science

Inches, pounds, minutes... In first grade, your child is learning about different forms of measurement, such as length, weight, capacity, and time. Bring the learning home with this fun activity! Create a boat out of aluminum foil and set sail across the ocean (er...your bathtub) for a lesson on the measurement of capacity. See how many pennies can fit into the boat before it sinks! Your child will have a great time refining his science skills, while mastering the concept of capacity.



What You Need:

- Aluminum foil
- Scissors
- Pennies
- Blank paper
- Pencil
- Paper towels
- Sink, bathtub, or large plastic container to hold water

What You Do:

1. Cut a large piece of aluminum foil out and help your child fold it into a boat shape. It can be big or small, just as long as it's big enough for some pennies to fit into.
2. Before you start your experiment, test the boat on the water to make sure it's seaworthy! If the boat sinks from the getgo, you should construct a sturdier one.
3. Use the blank paper and pencil to help your child make a recording sheet. Come up with a title, like "How Many Pennies Will My Boat Hold?" and write it across the top of the paper.
4. Draw a line down the middle of the paper. Over one column, have your child write "I think it will hold..." and over the other, write "I found out..."
5. Under the "I think..." section, have your child predict how many pennies he thinks the boat will hold before it goes under.
6. Test the prediction! Invite your child to place the boat on the water, and then add the pennies into the middle of the boat one by one. When the boat sinks, count up how many pennies were inside it! Remember, if the boat has 10 pennies in it and sinks when the 11th penny is placed into it, that means the boat capacity is 10.
7. Hand your child the recording sheet and have him write in the second column what he found out from the experiment, and compare the results with his predictions.
8. Redo the experiment, but this time place all the pennies on one side of the boat and record the results. Then place half of them on one side, and half on the other, and test that. Make bigger and smaller boats to experiment with and see if the results are any different!
9. Get the whole family involved. Have each family member make their own boat, then see whose boat stays afloat the longest while holding the most pennies!