

BUILD A NEST

Use materials you find around your house to build a nest to keep an egg safe.



[More STEM at Home](#)

What you'll need

- Eggs, or egg-shaped objects
- A container to hold your nest in (a cardboard box or food container works well)
- Nest building materials from around the house

Duration

40 minutes or more.

Suitable for...

Age 4 and up.

Safety notes

You know your children better than anyone, and you should judge whether

Overview

Birds lay their eggs in lots of different places. Some lay them directly onto the ground or onto rocky cliffs, but lots of birds build nests to keep their eggs safe. You may have seen tiny nests in bushes, or huge nests in tall trees. Birds build nests from the different materials they find in their environments. During this activity you are going to watch a video of a bird building a nest, then see if you can build a nest using the materials you can find around your home.

[Printable version](#)

This page will print, but looks a little funky. Click the button for a PDF version which looks a bit better. This is a stop-gap while we work on a better solution!

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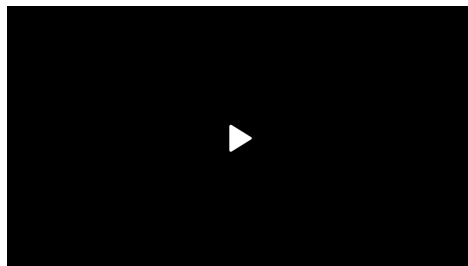
You know your children better than anyone, and you should judge whether they're ready for this activity. You might want to think in particular about:

- Supervision: the activity can involve small parts, so there's a choke hazard.
- Check that materials such as twigs, cocktail sticks and pencils don't have sharp ends.
- If you are using natural materials, make sure that you and your child wash your hands after the activity or before eating.

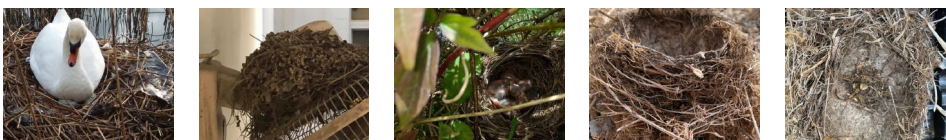
What to do

Step 1

Look at the photographs of different nests below (click or tap the pictures to make them bigger). Try to work out what they are made from. If you have time, [this BBC website shows lots of different birds' nests.](#)



Then watch the film clip of a bird building a nest.



Step 2

Now you will need to find a pretend egg or something egg-sized, such as a stone or rolled up paper, and a container, box, bowl or tray to build your nest on or in.

Talk about the materials that would make a good nest. These might include shredded paper, cardboard and plastic bags, pencils, pens, straws, cocktail sticks, scraps of fabric

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Careers Link- The Ornithologist

Ornithologists are a type of zoologist who study birds. They observe physical appearance, behaviour, songs, flight and migration patterns of birds. They also work on the conservation of birds and their habitats.

Attributes: curious, self-motivated, patient

Identifying birds by their song

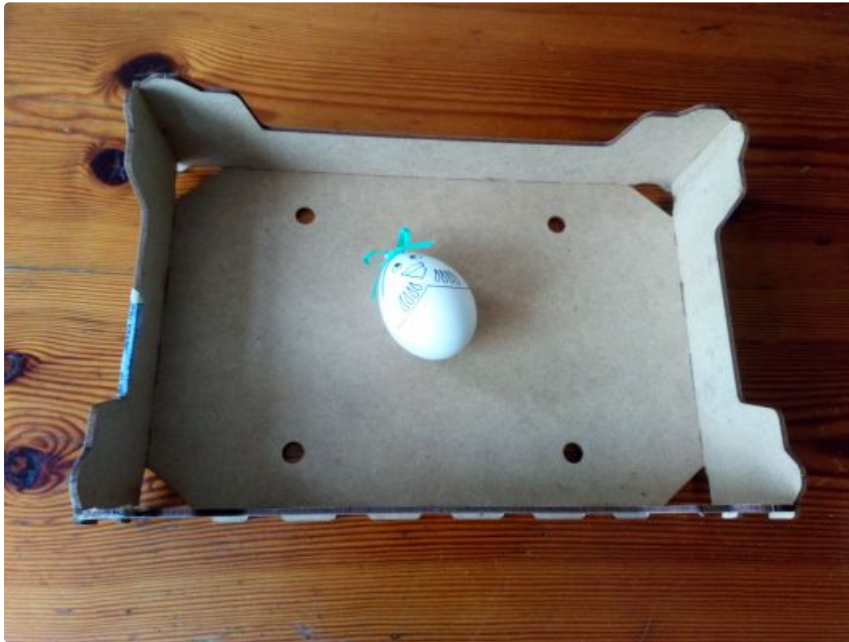
Be like an ornithologist by opening your windows and having a listen to birds singing

paper, cardboard and plastic bags, pencils, pens, straws, cocktail sticks, scraps of fabric or string.

Talk about the properties of each material and what it could be used for. Should it be strong, stretchy, or maybe comfortable to sit on?

listen to birds singing.

Watch this video to learn how to identify the songs of different birds.



Step 3

Next, have a look around your home for your materials.

Be like a bird and collect a small amount of material at a time, and bring it back to your nest site. Birds have to make many trips back and forth to their nests, often carrying one twig or bit of fluff at once!



Step 4

Use your materials to try and build a nest that will be big enough and safe enough to hold your egg.

This is where you need to use your imagination and creativity to try things out for yourself. There are no instructions for birds to follow!



Step 5

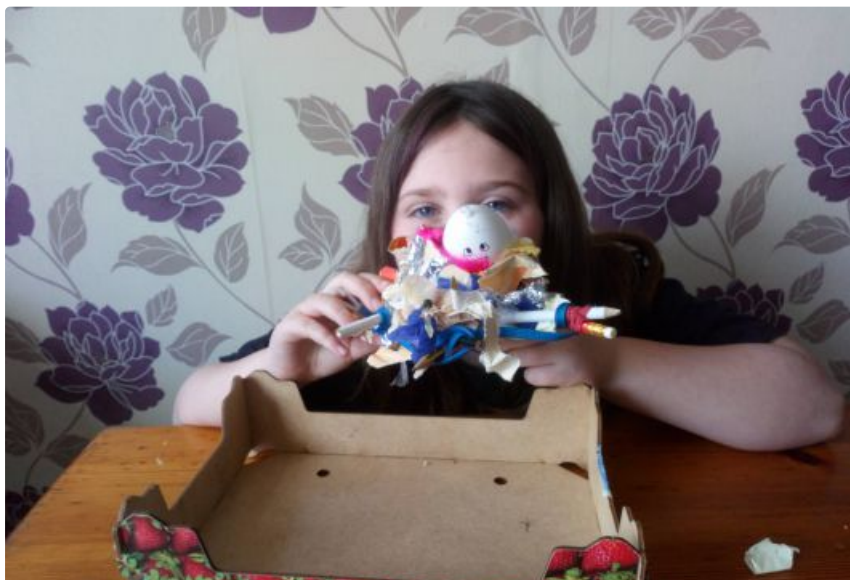
Now you need to test your nest.

First try blowing on it. Does it hold together?

Now try putting your egg in in it. Has the nest fallen apart?

Finally, can you pick your nest up?

If your nest didn't stay together, you could try to make it stronger by weaving the materials together to form a basket, or using a binding material like string or elastic bands to hold the pieces together.





Things to discuss

Which were the best materials for building your nest? What properties (light, heavy, flexible, sticky...) do they have that makes them useful?

Which materials didn't work very well? Why do you think that is?

What could you do to improve your design?

Other things to try



Build an outdoor nest

If you have a garden or outdoor space at home, you could try to build an outdoor nest using natural materials such as twigs, grass, leaves, soil, stones or moss. Follow the steps above to create this nest, but this time use your natural materials.

You could then compare your indoor and outdoor nests.

Which nest passed the tests and is best? Which nest was the easiest to build? Which materials are the most useful for nest building?

Which birds can you see through your window?

The RSPB's [Birds to Look Out For](#) page was intended for the Big School Bird Watch, and is a great resource for helping you identify the birds you're most likely to see from your home.

