



Brilliant birds

★ What do I do?



1. Read the ACTIVITY CARD to familiarise yourself with the activity. Check the Resources List - see overleaf.
2. If necessary, set up extra materials in the outdoor environment before the children start exploring.
3. Set the scene by discussing the news item and the nest building challenge. You could show pictures or videos of birds building nests.
4. Put the children into pairs. Encourage them to talk about the materials birds use to make their nests, what influences their choice and how they use the materials.
5. Give each child a pretend beak to use. **Remind them not to put the beaks in their mouths.** Let them practice using their beaks.

6. Go outside and set the children off looking for materials. Remind them to only use their beaks. You can give extra help by providing small bowls made out of modelling material or by letting them make these by hand before starting nest building.
7. Once all the nests are built, the children can test them.
8. What happens if you pour water over them? Do they fall apart or get waterlogged?
9. Let the children take pictures of their nests and/or present their nest building ideas.
10. How do the students' nests compare with real nests? Get the children to consider this.
11. There are extra challenges on the ACTIVITY CARD that can be used if there is spare time or if children want to carry on investigating at home and earn a bonus sticker.

★ Handy hints

Resources

- ★ An outside environment – playground, school field, shrubby area etc. Enhance this with materials such as wool, twigs, grass, leaves, feathers, shredded paper, pipe cleaners etc (you can hang these in mesh bags)
- ★ Pot of clay or modelling material per team to act as 'glue'
- ★ 'Beaks' (chopsticks, pegs or folded card)
- ★ Small bowls shaped out of modelling material
- ★ A watering can, strong fan, camera (optional)

Safety

- ★ Follow the organisation's policy for outdoor work. Check that the area is free of unsuitable materials e.g. animal faeces, broken glass or tin cans and hazardous plants such as stinging nettles.
- ★ Wash hands after working outdoors and handling nest building materials.

Background information

- ★ Birds use a range of materials to build their nests. The availability of materials and the need to protect their offspring influences the type of nest the birds build. As an extension activity, you can help children to think about this by providing a limited range of different materials to different groups and asking them to also think about what they would do to give the baby birds the best chance of survival.
- ★ Birds often work with each other to build their nests. Children will find it is helpful to collaborate in this activity using their varied skills to construct the nest.
- ★ Not all birds construct nests. The star no-nest builders are probably Emperor Penguins and Fairy Terns. You can find out more about different types of birds' nests at www.britishtscienceassociation.org/creststar/outdoors-active

Things to look out for

- ★ Some children will find this activity challenging. Give them time to try using a beak, but let them use their hands if they are not making progress.
- ★ Make sure children do not disturb natural birds' nests.

