

Activity: What Can You Make of It?

In this activity, students explore alternative uses of a simple paper cup.

Materials

One paper cup and scissors per child (or per pair)

Data sheet (included)

Procedures

1. Hide the cups in a paper bag and tell students you have something to give them. Pretend that you don't recognize the objects. Explain that they are going to be detectives, so they need their pencils to keep track of clues and make sketches.
2. Take out the cups and hand one to each student while playing up that fact that you haven't the foggiest idea what they are. You can even add that each of the objects is different.
3. Give each student a copy of the data sheet (included). Ask them to investigate what the object is and to list all the possible uses for it. They will most likely conclude that the objects are cups, but ask them to investigate further. Which way is the right side up? Why? Could the item be used on its side? How could the shape be changed? Would it float? Does it fly? Does it roll? What tests could be performed to answer these questions?
4. Distribute scissors and ask students to experiment with the object, cutting it any way they like.
5. End the activity by having students share their discoveries. How many uses for the object were they able to come up with?

Extension Activity

Try giving students one more object to use with the cup: a piece of tape, a clothespin, a paper clip, etc.

Fun Fact

The invention of the rubber band happened through this type of exploration. During the 1800's bottles were often made of rubber. A man-made cuts across a rubber bottle and came up with a wide rubber band, which he realized worked well to hold bundles.

Alignment with State Goals

State Goal 11

Understand the process of scientific inquiry and technological design to investigate questions, conduct experiments and solve problems.

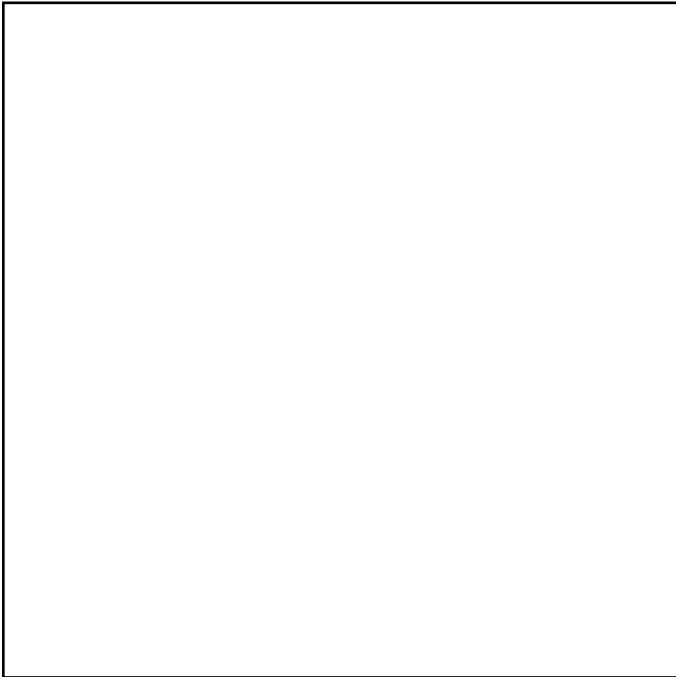
State Goal 3

Write to communicate for a variety of purposes

Object Investigation: What Can You Make of It?

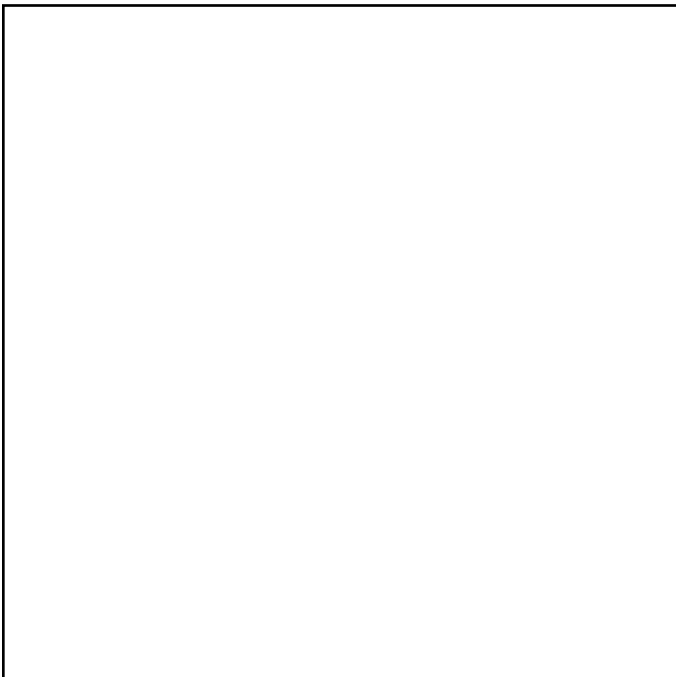
Name: _____ Date: _____

What is this mysterious object that you have been given? It is up to you to solve the mystery by discovering the full potential of this item. Use the following guidelines to help you in your detective work.



Draw a picture of the item you have been given and describe it below.

What are the possible uses for your object?



Determine what you think is the best use for your mystery object and describe it in the space below and with a diagram (drawing).

My object is a _____