



AMAZING ANIMAL ARCHITECTURE: BIRD NESTS

Determine what it takes to make a bird nest.

Materials

- Pencil and paper
- A bucket to carry found items
- Natural materials (*twigs, grass, etc.*)
- Egg or egg-shaped rock

Procedure

- Before the activity, take a moment to look for bird nests outside. If you can't find any outside, do an internet search of bird nests to get an idea of what they look like. Use a pencil and paper to draw what you want your bird nest to look like and to write down what materials you might need.
- Go outside and collect some of the natural items you'll need to build your nest. Don't pick up any man-made material; you want to try doing this the bird's way first.
- Once you've collected all your materials, start building! You may want to build this outside to make clean up easier. Make sure your nest is sturdy on the outside and soft on the inside. When you've completed your nest put your egg inside. Did your nest hold your egg?
- Making your nest from natural materials was a challenge; now you can search the inside of your house for more materials to make your nest with. Which materials were easier to use? Do you think your nest would stay together if you left it outside or tied it to a tree branch?

Results

Using natural materials to make a nest was challenging.



Bald eagle nests can weigh more than 3 tons—that's as much as a large car! Hummingbird nests use spider silk to bind materials together and anchor the nest to branches.



Why?

Birds innately know how to make nests, meaning that they know from the moment they are born. Birds build nests to lay eggs in, raise chicks, and protect themselves from weather and predators. When collecting items for their nests, birds must fly back and forth carrying one item at a time. They weave these items together using their beak as their only tool! Bird nests are built using a wide variety of materials like grass and twigs, mud, and sometimes even saliva! Nests can be found in all different sizes and in many different places. Each species of bird has its own unique nest, though some birds don't make nests at all.