

Build Your Own Bird Nest

Materials

- Small rocks or items you can pretend are eggs
- Assorted natural materials that you find outside such as twigs, grass, leaves, dirt, rocks, sand, etc. The materials you have available will depend on where you live.
- Bucket or other container to collect materials



Instructions

Prep Your Space

- This activity can get a little messy. If possible, do your work outside. If you are working inside, build your nest on a tray to help make cleanup easier!

Observe a Bird Nest

- First, go outside to see if you can find any bird nests nearby. If you find one, observe it carefully from a distance—do not get too close and disturb the nesting birds! Can you tell what materials the nest is made of?
- If you can't find any bird nests outside, search for pictures of bird nests online. How many different types of nests can you find? What are the nests made out of?

Collect Your Materials

- Now, look around for materials you can pick up easily, like twigs and rocks. Think about the purposes different materials could serve.
- What materials do you think would make a good nest? Do any of them match the nests you saw in person or online?
- Use your bucket to gather a bunch of materials. Note: the bucket is a convenient time-saver for you, but birds don't have that luxury. They have to make many back-and-forth trips, often carrying one twig at a time!

Engineer Your Nest

- Now, use your materials to try and build a nest that will be able to safely hold at least one egg. This is an open-ended process—there is no single "correct" procedure to follow.
- "Test" your nest (gently at first!). Can you blow on it (or aim a fan at it), pick it up, or place an egg inside it? Does the nest fall apart or stay together? If it falls apart, what can you change to make it sturdier?
- When you are done with your bird nest, dump all your materials back outside where you found them.

Think about it...

- You might find that building a bird nest can be a little challenging! If you were only able to make a pile of dry materials like sticks or grass, your nest probably didn't stay together very well. It might fall apart if you blow on it or try to pick it up. You can make your nest sturdier by weaving the materials together to form a basket, or using a binding material like mud as "glue" to hold the pieces together. Now the next time you see a bird nest, maybe you will be a little more impressed birds engineering skills!