

Nest Building Challenge

Background Info and Fun Facts

- Nests are usually built in spring and are only used to hold the eggs of birds and to care for the young while helpless. Birds just perch on trees the rest of the year when they go to sleep.
- As a general rule, the smaller the bird the more detailed the nest. In many species the roles of nest building and sitting on eggs are shared. The nest is usually bowl-shaped and made of twigs, grass, leaves, and (when available) bits of cloth and string. Thrushes and blackbirds also line their nests with clay. Swallows and house martins build nests of mud cemented with their saliva!



Curriculum Links

Subject	Strand	Strand Unit
Science	Living things	Animal life

Lesson Content

1. Put the pupils in pairs and lay out the materials in front of them outside on the yard or lawn. The challenge is to build a nest fit to hold an egg securely.
2. Issue the following rules of engagement:
 - Pupils can only use the materials provided.
 - For an extra challenge they can only use one hand each. Birds only have beaks!
 - Have a defined period of time for the challenge.
3. Let each group present their nest to the class.
4. Place a golf ball inside. One pupil holds the nest in their outstretched hand and the teacher blows at it and shakes their partner's arm gently to see how well it can withstand nature's elements!
5. Extra activity - afterwards place cut wool, cotton wool, string, moss or pieces of material out on hedges or fences for birds to take and use for nesting.



Resources

Twigs, sticks, moss, dried grasses, golf balls or small stones. All can be found on lawns or in hedges. Two shopping bags full will be enough for a class.

Web Links

- Click on www.birdwatchireland.ie and the link [Nesting Season](#) for more information.