



# Build a Nest

## **Grade Level**

Grade 2

## **Engage**

This activity is designed to start your students in recognizing themselves as scientists and thinking critically about problem-solving. The goal is to teach concepts through discovery and to encourage using scientific thought processes. As with all lessons provided, please feel free to adapt them according to your students' abilities. Some of your students may be early readers, in which case you may find it more successful to lead activities and discussions as a whole group rather than using individual Research Plan sheets. Certain scientific vocabulary may or may not be appropriate for your students' level of understanding. Take these ideas, make them your own and your students will have a greater chance at success.

### **In what ways do birds change the environment when building nests?**

1. Begin this lesson by telling students that they will be investigating how birds and other living things can cause changes to the environment by building nests.
2. If your students are familiar with brainstorming and recording their ideas, break them into small groups. If your students need more guidance, work with them as a large group. Engage your students in a discussion of what they predict the answer to this question to be. More importantly, why do they think this?

## **Explore**

3. Continue with the above discussion and encourage the group to come up with ways that they could investigate the question and test their predictions scientifically (all suggestions are welcomed). What tools might they need to carry out their suggested explorations? Are there materials that would help them find the answer? Should they be making observations? What kinds of records will they need to keep? What will they do with the information once they have it? And how will they know that they've successfully answered the question? Allow a wide variety of ideas and encourage conversation amongst the students to refine the details of their ideas.
4. Ideas should be recorded on the Research Plan sheets. Small groups can record their own answers or you can record ideas as a group.

### ***Explain***

5. Explain to the group that you have an activity that might help them answer the research question and better understand how birds and other living things cause changes on Earth.
6. Tell the students that they are going to build their own bird nest to discover some of the changes that can occur in the environment when birds create their nests.
7. First share one or several pictures of bird nests with the class, and ask:
  - a. Have you ever seen a bird nest before?
  - b. How do you think a bird makes its nest?
  - c. Where does the bird get the materials to make the nest?
8. These questions should start a conversation about how birds find twigs, grasses, leaves, mud, etc. Birds pick them up with their beaks and then fly to a tree to build their nests.

### ***Expand***

9. Tell students that today they will be building nests using a variety of materials from around their environment.
10. Gather different materials to be used for nest making: Paper plates, glue, an assortment of shredded newspaper, yarn, string, thread, pieces of felt, pipe cleaners, twigs, dried leaves, and small objects such as jellybeans or gum balls (to represent eggs).
11. Place the different “nest building” materials around the classroom, so students can move around in their environment like birds do in order to make their nest.
12. Give each student, or a group of students a paper plate and allow them to begin making their nest. Encourage them to use a variety of materials.
13. After students are done building, they may place “eggs” such as jellybeans or gumballs in their nests.
14. Allow students to share their nests with the class and ask:
  - a. Where might a bird find some of the materials for their nests?
  - b. How long do you think it takes for a bird to build a nest?
  - c. Why is it important for a bird to have a nest?
15. Discuss how birds change their environment when they build their nests by moving materials around. They also change the environment of the tree they choose to build their nest in.

### ***Adjustments for Social Distancing***

Place the “nest building” materials on empty desks or tables in areas around the room where the students can see them. Instruct students to take turns to collect their materials and bring back to their desk, one at a time.

### **Assess**

16. As the students think about what they have just discovered through the activity, have them reflect back on the research question.
17. Was the outcome, or answer to the research question the same as what they had predicted?
18. Discuss other ways animals change their environment. Some examples include beavers building dams and changing the flow of water, or animals building burrows underground, such as prairie dogs. See if students can think of any other examples that result in a change to the environment.
19. If the students are working in small groups, observe their work and review what they are writing on the Research Plan. If working as a whole group, fill in the Research Plan together.

### **Standard**

Ohio Academic Content Standards
Grade 2 Life Science Topic: Interactions Within Habitats Living things cause changes on Earth



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## Supplemental Materials

### My Research Plan

**1. What is my research question?**  
**Is it a good question?**



In what ways do birds change the environment when building nests?

**2. How can I get my information?**



**3. What will I do with this information?**



**4. How will I know I did my job well?**



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Supplemental Materials









