

Lesson Plan: What floats? What Sinks? Why?



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WHAT FLOATS? WHAT SINKS? WHY?

Aim / Description:

The aim of this lesson is to demonstrate what things float and what things sink. After establishing this the objective is to examine why this happens.

Background:

The reason why objects float and sink depends on how heavy the items are COMPARED to the weight of water. Scientists call this “relative density”. See the the Cartesian Diver Experiment for more information.

Materials:

- A bowl of water
- A selection of different types of objects (that won't be destroyed by being placed in water) such as stones, metal spoons, wood, feather etc.
- Pen and paper for recording the results.

Explorer Education Programme



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Activity: What Floats? What Sinks? Why?

Step 1. Discuss with younger children use the terms “heavier than water” or “lighter than water”. If an item is heavier than water it will sink. If it is lighter than water it will float.

Step 2. Ask the students to guess which items will float and sink. Simply place each item in the water one at a time.

Step 3. Record the results making a list of which items floated and which items sunk.

Step 4. Draw a table or graph showing the results.

Step 5. Ask the students WHY?

Outcome:

Students will have developed skills:

- understanding what sinks and what floats – and why.