



SINK OR FLOAT?

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Children develop vocabulary and comprehension as they begin to understand that we can investigate and classify results. Children learn how to observe an experiment and predict results by talking about similarities and differences.

Otis's friend, the calf, sinks and gets stuck in Mud Pond. In this activity, children begin to learn about the concepts of weight by experimenting with various objects that will either sink or float in water.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

A copy of Loren Long's *Otis* | Large, shallow plastic container | Water | Tray for displaying objects to test | Shoeboxes labeled "Floats" and "Sinks" to categorize materials | Objects to test, for example: Small toy calf and tractor, paper clip, rock, sponge, paper, plastic bottle, pencils, marker cap, soda can

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Introduce children to this activity by showing them the page where the calf sunk in Mud Pond. Remind children that Otis's friend, the calf, gets stuck in the mud and starts to sink. This activity asks children to think about what makes things sink or float.

GETTING STARTED

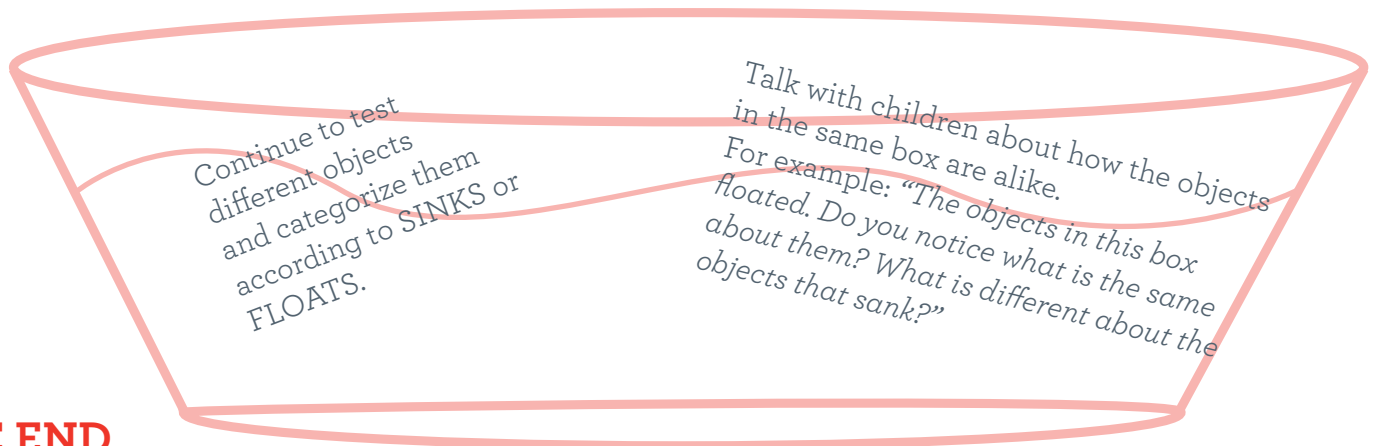
Set up this activity by filling the large, shallow container with water. Place the objects that you will test on a tray. Set up the two shoeboxes with labels for categorizing.

Show children the container of water and talk about how some things in water might float or sink. Tell children that you will do an experiment together to test which objects float or sink in the water.

Read the signs on the shoeboxes (FLOATS or SINKS) and show children the tray of objects. Together, name each object you will test.

HOW IT'S DONE

1. Select an object that will float. Ask children to predict whether or not the object will sink or float.
2. Place the object in the water, and then talk about what happens.
For example: *“That plastic bottle is very light, and it floated. You thought it would float. You were right.”*
3. Place the object in the correct shoebox.
4. Next, choose an object that will sink. Ask children to predict whether or not the object will sink.
5. Place the object in the water, and talk about what happens. Then place the object in the correct shoebox.
For example: *“It can be tricky to know which things will float or sink, but the rock is heavier than the plastic bottle. I think that is a clue that helps us to know whether it will float or sink.”*



THE END

Conclude this activity by reminding children that Otis’s friend, the calf, was heavy and so she sank into Mud Pond. Tell children that if you could test a real calf in your experiment today, that calf would sink too. Heavy things sink and light things float.

VOCABULARY LIST

Category | Dense | Describe | Different | Float | Heavy | Light | Predict | Similar | Sink | Surface area | Weight

TALKING TIPS

When children choose objects to test, engage them in conversations about the materials and ask them to describe specific properties of the object.

Encourage children to think of other objects that may float or sink – including animals or other objects.

Use suggested vocabulary words during discussion in ways that make their meanings clear.

As you test each object, use rich vocabulary and make connections to *Otis* when possible.

For example: *“In the book, the calf began sinking into the mud. The calf was too heavy and began sinking in and then couldn’t get out.”*

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