Name: _____ Date: _____

How to Build a Tin Can Telephone

Circle group

You can make a phone with two cans and a long string. Ask a grown-up to help with the cans. Then no sharp edges are left.

First, a grown-up makes a small hole in the bottom of each can. Next, push one end of the string through the hole in the first can. Tie a big knot inside. The string cannot slip out. Do the same on the other can.

Now a friend holds one can. Walk back until the string is tight. Do not let the string touch the ground.

Speak softly into your can. Your friend holds the other can to an ear. Your friend hears you!

Here is why. Your voice makes the bottom of the can shake. This shaking is a vibration. It runs down the tight string to the other can. That can shakes too. Your friend hears the sound. If the string is slack, the sound fades.

Questions

1. What two things do you need for a tin can phone?

_____

_____

2. Why do you tie a big knot in each can?

_____

_____

3. How must the string be when you talk?

_____

_____

4. What does your voice make the bottom of the can do?

_____

_____

5. Why does the sound fade if the string is slack?

_____

_____

6. Who should help make the holes?

_____

_____

Words to know

vibration: a fast shaking back and forth
knot: a tie made by looping string around itself
tight: pulled straight and not loose
slack: loose, not pulled tight
sharp: able to cut or poke you

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

How to Build a Tin Can Telephone

Triangle group

You can make a phone with two empty cans and a long string. A grown-up should help with the cans, so that no sharp edges are left.

First, ask a grown-up to make a small hole in the bottom of each can. Next, push one end of the string through the hole in the first can. Tie a big knot inside so the string cannot slip out. Do the same with the second can on the other end.

Now ask a friend to hold one can. Walk backward until the string is tight. Do not let the string touch the ground or anything else.

Speak softly into your can while your friend holds the other can to an ear. Your friend will hear you!

Here is why it works. Your voice makes the bottom of the can shake. The shaking is called a vibration. The vibration runs along the tight string to the other can. That can shakes too, and your friend's ear hears the sound. If the string goes slack, the vibration stops and the sound fades away.

Questions

1. What two things do you need for a tin can telephone?

_____

_____

2. Why do you tie a big knot inside each can?

_____

_____

3. What must the string be like when you talk?

_____

_____

4. What does your voice make the bottom of the can do?

_____

_____

5. Why does the sound fade if the string goes slack?

_____

_____

6. Who should help make the holes in the cans?

_____

_____

Words to know

vibration: a fast shaking back and forth
knot: a tie made by looping string around itself
tight: pulled straight and not loose
slack: loose, not pulled tight
sharp: able to cut or poke you

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

How to Build a Tin Can Telephone

Square group

With nothing more than two empty cans and a long piece of string, you can build a working telephone. A grown-up should handle the preparation of the cans, so that no sharp edges are left behind.

To begin, have a grown-up poke a small hole through the bottom of each can. Then thread one end of the string through the hole in the first can, and tie a large knot inside so that the string cannot pull free. Repeat the same steps with the second can on the opposite end.

Next, ask a friend to hold one can while you walk backward until the string is stretched tight. Be careful not to let the string touch the ground or any other object.

Speak softly into your can while your friend presses the other can against an ear. Your friend will clearly hear your words!

The explanation is simple. Your voice makes the bottom of the can shake, and this rapid shaking is called a vibration. The vibration travels along the tight string to the other can, which begins to shake as well, and your friend's ear picks up the sound. If the string goes slack, the vibration stops and the sound quickly fades away.

Questions

1. What two things do you need to build a tin can telephone?

_____

_____

2. Why do you tie a large knot inside each can?

_____

_____

3. What must the string be like while you talk?

_____

_____

4. What does your voice make the bottom of the can do?

_____

_____

5. Why does the sound fade away if the string goes slack?

_____

_____

6. Who should prepare the cans?

_____

_____

Words to know

vibration: a fast shaking back and forth
knot: a tie made by looping string around itself
tight: pulled straight and not loose
slack: loose, not pulled tight
sharp: able to cut or poke you

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: How to Build a Tin Can Telephone

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: How to Build a Tin Can Telephone

Easier · 155 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 0.3

1. Two cans and a long string.
2. So the string cannot slip out.
3. Tight.
4. It makes it shake.
5. The shaking cannot run down a loose string.
6. A grown-up.

Triangle: How to Build a Tin Can Telephone

This passage · 181 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.2

1. Two empty cans and a long string.
2. So the string cannot slip out.
3. Tight.
4. It makes the bottom of the can shake.
5. The vibration cannot run along a loose string to the other can.
6. A grown-up.

Square: How to Build a Tin Can Telephone

Harder · 206 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.5

1. Two empty cans and a long piece of string.
2. So the string cannot pull free.
3. Stretched tight.
4. It makes the bottom of the can shake in a vibration.
5. The vibration cannot travel along a loose string to the other can.
6. A grown-up.