

Home Tweet Home: Why and How Birds Build Nests

Introduction (10 mins):

- Ask the student: "Where do birds live? Do they live in houses like us?" Discuss their ideas.
- Show pictures of different birds and ask, "What do birds need to keep their eggs and babies safe?" Introduce the concept of a nest.
- Ask: "Why do you think birds go to all the trouble of building a nest?" Brainstorm reasons: safety from predators, shelter from weather (rain, sun, wind), a safe place to lay eggs and raise chicks.

Activity 1: Nest Architects (20-25 mins):

- Introduce the nest building challenge! Show the student the container and the variety of 'building supplies' (twigs, grass, mud/playdough, yarn, cotton, etc.).
- Explain: "Different birds use different materials they find around them. Today, you get to be a bird architect! Try to build a cozy, safe nest in your container using these materials."
- Encourage experimentation. Ask questions like: "What material would make the nest soft? What would make it strong? How can you make the sides stay up?"
- Let the student work on their nest. They can use the mud or playdough to help stick things together.
- Optional: Use a magnifying glass to look closely at the natural materials like twigs and leaves.

Activity 2: Exploring Nest Types (10-15 mins):

- While the student builds or after they finish, show pictures of different nest types (cup, platform, cavity, pendant).
- Discuss: "Look how different these nests are! Some are like cups, some are flat platforms, some are inside holes in trees (cavities), and some hang down like pendants!"
- Talk about the materials seen in the pictures. "What do you see this bird using? How is it similar or different from the materials you used?"
- Briefly mention that the type of nest often depends on the bird and where it lives (e.g., eagles build big platform nests high up, woodpeckers use cavities).

Discussion & Wrap-up (10 mins):

- Ask the student to present their nest. "Tell me about your nest. What makes it a good home for a bird?"
- Review the main points: Why do birds build nests? (Protection, warmth, raising babies). What kinds of things do they use? (Natural materials like twigs, grass, mud, leaves, feathers; sometimes human-made things like string or paper).
- Connect back: "Building a nest is hard work! Birds are amazing builders."

Assessment/Drawing Activity (10 mins):

- Ask the student to draw a picture of a bird in a nest. They can draw one of the types discussed or their own creation.
- While drawing, ask them to tell you one reason why nests are important for birds and one material birds might use. (This serves as an informal assessment of the learning objectives).

Differentiation Note: Adjust the complexity based on the student. Younger or less dexterous students might need more help forming the nest shape, while older or more capable students could be challenged to build a specific *type* of nest or only use certain materials.