

Does it float or Sink?



You will need:

- A bowl of water or water tray
- A selection of objects to test

Start by introducing the vocabulary; floating and sinking and explain what this means e.g., if we put this on the water and it stays on top it is floating. If we put this on the water and it goes to the bottom it is sinking.

Ask your child to make a prediction; Will it float or will it sink. It doesn't matter if they are wrong, it's just about having fun predicting outcomes and testing them.

If they can make a prediction, can they offer a reason? "I think it will sink because...."

A great way to extract thinking from small children is to frame a question with "I wonder...." This helps to make it less direct and encourages a natural answer. For example, "I wonder what will happen if we put an orange in?" or "I wonder why that one sunk?"

Key points for adults

- Whether something floats depends on the material it is made of, not its weight.
- Objects float if they are light for their size and sink if they are heavy for their size.
- An object can be light for its size if it contains air, such as a hollow ball.
- Materials with a boat shape will float because they effectively contain air.
- Water pushes up on objects with an upthrust force.