

Build a Gingerbread Man Trap Challenge

Holiday Edition

Goal

Those gingerbread men are always on the run! Can your students catch one? In groups of 2-4, students will create a trap meant to capture a gingerbread man. They should make the trap look enticing to trick the gingerbread men! They should think of what would lure in a gingerbread man...Cookies? Candy? Presents? A gingerbread house?

Materials

Per Group

- Cardboard and/or cardboard boxes
- Construction paper
- Coloring utensils
- Safety scissors
- Decorative materials such as marshmallows, gum drops, tinsel, cotton balls, etc. (*optional*)

Directions

1. Give each group of students the materials needed.
2. Tell each group that they should create a trap that will catch a gingerbread man.
3. Gingerbread men are smart cookies! Tell your students that they will have to trick the gingerbread men in order for them to fall for their trap.

Optional reading materials that supplement the activity:

- [The Gingerbread Girl](#) by Lisa Campbell Ernst
- [The Gingerbread Man](#) by Karen Schmidt
- [The Gingerbread Man Loose In The School](#) by Laura Murray
- [The Gingerbread Man Loose At Christmas](#) by Laura Murray
- [The Gingerbread Boy](#) by Paul Galdone



Build a Snowball Catapult Challenge

Holiday Edition

Goal

In groups of 2-4, students will build a catapult with the given materials that can launch a snowball (marshmallow).

Materials

Per Group

- (1) spoon
- (5) rubber bands
- (5-12) Popsicle sticks*
- tape
- marshmallows (represents the snowballs)
- (2) rules
- tape measure

* Allow students to choose the amount they need)



Directions

1. Pass out the spoons, rubber bands, Popsicle sticks, and tape to each group.
2. Explain to the students that they have to build a catapult that can launch a marshmallow as far as possible.
3. Give the students time to build their catapults.
4. Test out the catapults by having groups take turns launching marshmallows. Measure how far each group is able to launch their marshmallows.
5. Have the students discuss whose catapult launched the farthest and why they think that. What did that group do differently than the others? How did they build their catapult?

Optional reading materials that supplement the activity:

- [Snowball](#) by Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet
- [Snowballs](#) by Lois Ehlert
- [Snowball Fight](#) by Jimmy Fallon

Build the Tallest Shelf for the Elf Challenge

Holiday Edition

Goal

In small groups or individually, students will build a shelf as tall as they can using only gumdrops and toothpicks.

Materials

Per Group

- Gumdrops
- Toothpicks
- Ruler

Per Class

- Toy elf or printed picture of an elf



Directions

1. Pass out the same amount of gumdrops and toothpicks to each group or student.
2. Explain to the students that they are going to build the tallest "shelf" they can out of the given materials.
3. After each group or student has built their shelf, test out the stability of their shelf by placing an elf on their shelf!
4. Measure the shelves that remain standing afterwards to see who created the tallest shelf for an elf.
5. Afterwards, have the students discuss which building strategies worked the best in order to build the tallest elf that was able to hold the weight of the elf.

Optional reading materials that supplement the activity:

- [The Elf on the Shelf](#) by Carol V. Aebersold and Chanda A. Bell
- [How to Catch an Elf](#) by Adam Wallace and Andy Elkerton
- [Elfie the Elf](#) by Cheryl Devleeschouwer
- [The Elves and the Shoemaker](#) by Jacob Grimm and Jim Lamarche

Build the Tallest Snowman Challenge

Holiday Edition

Goal

In small groups or individually, students will build a snowman as tall as they can using only mini marshmallows and toothpicks.

Materials

Per Group

- Mini marshmallows
- Toothpicks
- Ruler



Directions

1. Pass out the same amount of mini marshmallows and toothpicks to each group or student.
2. Explain to the students that they are going to build the tallest snowman they can out of the given materials.
3. After each group or student has built their snowman, have them measure how tall they are using a ruler.
4. Afterwards, have the students discuss which building strategies worked the best in order to build the tallest snowman.

Optional reading materials that supplement the activity:

- [The Biggest Snowman Ever](#) by Steven Kroll
- [Snowmen at Night](#) by Caralyn Buehner
- [Sneezy the Snowman](#) by Maureen Wright
- [The Snowman](#) by Raymond Briggs
- [How to Catch a Snowman](#) by Adam Wallace and Andy Elkerton