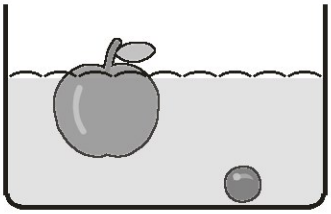
Float or sink? Helping your child look beyond size

Parent page · ages 4–5 · goes with the video "Understand the concept"

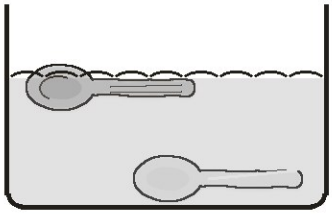
A logical idea

Does your child say "big things sink"? They're putting two observations together: big things often feel heavy, and things you let go of fall. They try that idea in water: it's not random guessing; they're looking for the logic.

The key idea



big apple: floats
little glass marble: sinks



wooden spoon: floats
metal spoon: sinks

Size and weight alone don't tell you whether something floats. What matters most is the material: with the objects tried here, the wooden spoon floats and the metal one sinks. And sometimes the shape: the same modeling clay sinks as a ball and can float as a boat. Careful, "metal sinks" isn't a rule either: a big metal ship floats because its hollow hull pushes aside enough water to hold it up, as long as water doesn't get in.

Questions instead of corrections

- "What do you think: will it float or sink?"
- "How could we find out?"
- "What is it made of?"

After each try: "What did you see?"

Safety

All water play happens with an adult watching the whole time, within arm's reach, who empties the container right afterward. Plastic containers only, nothing sharp or breakable, nothing in the mouth. Small objects can cause choking: keep them away from younger children. If your child still puts things in their mouth, skip the small objects and the clay.

Page 2, to do together (no reading needed)

- Show the two pictures: the object stays on top (it floats) or goes to the bottom (it sinks). Then say: "Nouk thinks big things sink. What do you think?"
- Before each try, your child circles or points to one picture under the question mark. After the try, they circle one under the eye, without erasing their first choice. They can also point, and you circle for them.
- 1. The tub: a big apple, a wooden spoon, a metal spoon, a cork, a rock, a small metal key. Start with two or three objects, and cover the other rows with a sheet of paper.
- 2. The clay: age-appropriate, non-toxic modeling clay that holds together in water and sinks as a ball; check beforehand that the same piece can float as a boat. The same piece, with nothing added or taken away: as a ball, then as a wide boat with no holes and raised sides, placed gently on the water.
- 3. The challenge: a big ice cube, then a metal key with no keychain, one at a time, in a clear plastic container where the ice cube floats without touching the bottom. 4. Your child draws what surprised them.

Before you play, test every object and both clay shapes yourself, and keep the ones that clearly float or sink. Keep this page out of view until after the activity.

For you, after your child has checked (objects you tested first)

- Float: the apple, the wooden spoon, the cork, the ice cube.
- Sink: the metal spoon, the metal key, the rock.
- Modeling clay: as a ball, it sinks; the same piece as a wide boat with no holes and raised sides can float.

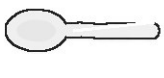
A good sign: they talk about what the object is made of, or suggest trying it to find out. If they still say "big things sink," do the surprise tub again with other objects: it often takes several tries.

A few days later, without making a big deal of it (adult cuts out)



a big apple

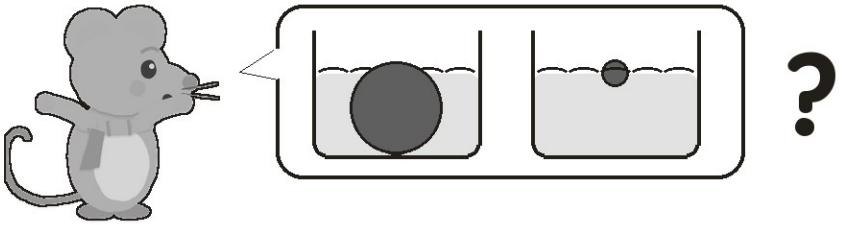


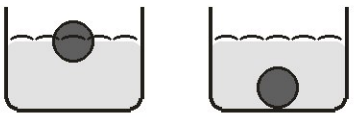


a small metal spoon

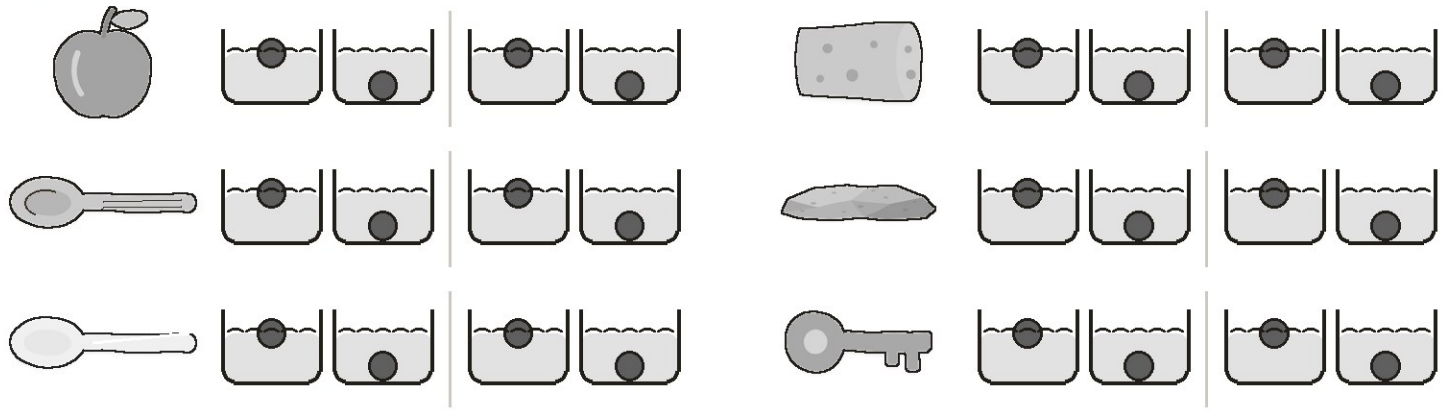


For each object, circle the picture of what you think will happen. Why? Then test together in a plastic container, with an adult watching within arm's reach the whole time. Nothing in the mouth; the adult empties the container afterward.

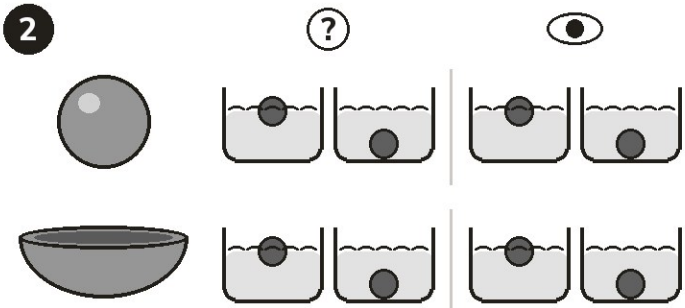




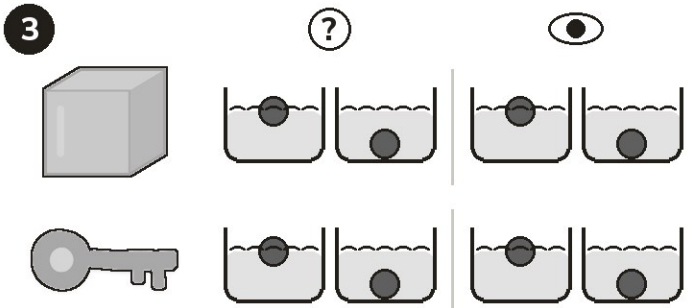
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