For the classroom

STEAM-infused PBL: Quick activities to try now

King Kong Tower
Supplies: hard spaghetti noodles, mini marshmallows, pretend cash coupons and a small stuffed gorilla or other animal

Activity: Give each team of 3-5 students a set value of play money ($5.00). “Sell” spaghetti noodles for 10 cents per stick and marshmallows for 5 cents each. Have each group build a tower in a set amount of time (30 minutes) that can hold the stuffed animal on top for one minute. Give prizes for the tallest, most creative, best design, etc.

Classic Paper Airplane Contest
Supplies: copy paper, scissors and tape

Activity: Everyone knows how to build a paper airplane, right? Have fun in class one day and give each pair of students a piece of copy paper and have them build a paper airplane. Go outside and see how far they can go. After the activity, have the students reflect on their designs. Discuss with the class why some went farther than others, why some went really high and why some didn’t work at all. Give prizes for the highest, farthest, most innovative, most creative, etc.

Soda Geyser
Supplies: 2-liter bottle of diet soda, roll of Mentos mints, safety goggles and a piece of copy paper

Activity: You can do this activity as a lab experiment in small groups or as a class demonstration. Open a 2-liter bottle of diet soda, create a funnel out of paper, drop two Mentos down the slide into the bottle, and then get out of the way as quickly as possible. Watch what happens and have the students reflect on why the diet soda turned into a soda geyser. There are many online resources that can help you turn this activity into a bottle rocket experiment! Warning: This activity can be lots of fun but very messy!

Other Great Projects

• Have your students build a tall structure out of 50 sheets of copy paper with no other supplies.
• Design a bridge that can hold a stack of textbooks with craft sticks and glue.
• Create a protective package for a raw egg and drop it off the stadium bleachers.