

hands-on lessons that

Clothespin Racers

Pack your bags for a travel adventure! Young learners explore methods of transportation as their imaginations soar!

Grade Level: PK-2

Objectives

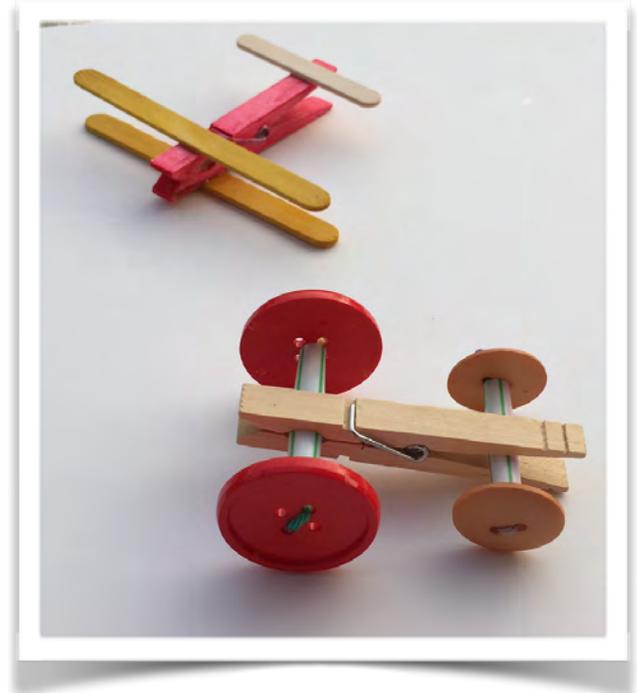
Students will identify different modes of transportation.
Students will understand how various vehicles travel.
Students will build a model of a plane or car.

Literature Selections

Amazing Airplanes by Tony Mitton
Cool Cars by Tony Mitton

Skills

fine motor skills, gluing, painting, transportation



Set up and Prepare

Content Overview

Begin the lesson by asking the students to think of ways that we travel. Write the word “transportation” on the board or chart paper, and explain what it means. Ask students share various modes of transportation, write them on the board. Ask them if they have ever seen or ridden on an airplane. Provide time for students to share personal stories about their experiences. Next, show the students the covers of the two books by Tony Mitton. Ask them to identify the author and discuss how authors often write series of books. Ask them which book looks more exciting. Take a class vote on which book they want to hear first. Simple strategies like this are great to use to hook them before you even begin reading the book. Read the books aloud to the students. The simple rhyming text and silly animal characters present the vocabulary and function of various vehicles in an engaging way. Be sure to share the illustrations and stop occasionally to discuss the story elements and new vocabulary words. How are the two books similar and different?



Materials

Elmer's® Glue-All, clothespins, craft sticks, buttons, straws, yarn, paint, ruler, scissors, ribbon

Preparation

Cut the straws into segments approximately 1" - 1 1/2" long. The buttons should be at least 1" in diameter to allow for enough lift. Ask the students to select buttons. They should have two sets that are the same size for the front and back wheels. (Note: Younger children may have an easier time using bread ties rather than yarn.) Provide paint and brushes for the students to paint the clothespins and craft sticks. Allow time to dry.

Directions for the Car

Thread the yarn through one hole of the first button and through the straw. Use a toothpick to push the yarn through the straw. Then thread the yarn through one hole in the second button, loop it around through the second hole and then push the yarn back through the straw using the toothpick. Finish the “wheels and axle” by threading the yarn through the second hole in the first button and tying the two ends together in a knot. The yarn should be tight enough to keep the buttons upright, but not so tight that the buttons can't turn. Snip the ends of the yarn off close to the button.



Repeat the process for the second set of wheels. The straw segments do not need to be the same size, but if one is longer than the other, the longest straw should be in the back of the car.

Apply a small amount of glue in the front opening of the clothespin to hold the front axle in place. Slide the other axle into the back of the clothespin and decide where the axle aligns with the wheel placement. Apply a small amount of glue to secure the back axle. Let the glue dry completely.

Students may choose to further embellish the car with stickers, markers, gemstones, etc.

Directions for the Airplane

Use Elmer's Glue-All to affix the front wings (craft sticks) to the top and bottom of the front of the clothespin. Add a smaller craft stick for the tail on the back of the clothespin. Allow time for the glue to dry completely.

Lesson Extensions

Ask students to create a propeller on the front of the airplane. What materials could they use that would enable them to create a functional propeller that spins? After making the car, students may discover the use of a button that spins as a possible solution.

Read other transportation books by Tony Mitton to the students. Compare the books in the Amazing Machines series. Provide craft sticks and clothespins for the students to make other vehicles in the books.

Create a track for the vehicles using a large piece of cardboard. Draw and/or paint the roads, grass, houses, stoplights, etc. on the track.

Make a list of the various jobs involved with transportation (i.e., bus driver, pilot, race car driver, bulldozer operator, etc.). Provide age-appropriate books about these occupations for students to explore independently.

Standards

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.