



Curiosity Guide #710

Magical Science

Accompanies Curious Crew, Season 7, Episode 10 (#710)

Pierced Potato

Investigation #4

Description

Show your friend you are stronger than she is with just a little magic science. Or is that science magic?

Materials

- Drinking straws
- Raw potato
- A friend

Procedure

- 1) Challenge a friend to pierce a potato with a straw.
- 2) After your friend struggles, you try it.
- 3) Be sure to place your thumb over the end of the straw and then thrust the other end of the straw into the potato.
- 4) What did you notice?

Results

Explanation

Surprisingly, the straw will not only enter the potato but pierce right through if struck hard enough. The trick is closing the end of the straw with your thumb. There is air inside the straw. You seal off one end. Touching the potato seals off the other end, and the air is compressed in the closed-off straw. As a result, the straw acts more like a solid column and moves right through the raw potato.

Is this magic or science? Hocus Pocus, Abracadabra! Here's a fun magic trick to amaze your family and friends. Take a yellow highlighter and highlight a phrase of text on a piece of paper. Be sure the ink mark is narrower than your finger. Pass your finger slowly over the highlighted text in a single direction while saying some magic words, and watch the words disappear! What your family and friends don't know is that you previously dipped your finger in lemon juice! The acid in the juice affects the pH sensitive highlighter ink and turns the ink clear. Great job!

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