



# Making a Nest

(For ages 5-10)

## **Materials You Will Need:**

1. Brown lunch bags
2. Glue
3. Nesting Materials - sticks, grass, paper, leaves, etc. These can be gathered ahead of time, or the students can take a short trip outside to gather some of the materials.
4. (Optional) Eggs
5. Vinegar
6. Strongly brewed tea or coffee
7. Black or brown permanent marker



## **Directions:**

Cover work area with newspaper. Give each child a lunch bag and instruct them to open the bag, then fold the top edges inward, all the way around, and continue to roll them inward until they reach the bottom. This is the base for the nest. Distribute nesting materials (or have students gather them). Students should glue their materials on the base to make the nest.



## **Eggs (optional):**

Using eggs, carefully pierce a small hole in the top and the bottom of the egg (hole at bottom should be slightly larger). Gently blow out the egg yolks by blowing into the top hole. Carefully dip egg in a mixture of 2 tbsp. of vinegar and ½ cup of strong brewed (very dark) tea or coffee. Using black or brown permanent marker, place random dots on eggs and place them in the nest.

**Ask:**

1. Where do birds build nests? (Answer: in trees, under roof awnings, on rock or building ledges, in bushes, reeds, etc.)
2. What kinds of materials can they use? (Answer: Twigs, grasses, leaves, hair, feathers, mud, string, etc.)
3. How do the eggs stay warm enough to hatch? (Answer: One or both of the adults carefully sit on the nest and cover the eggs with their feathers to incubate the eggs. See Interesting Facts below.)
4. How long does it take before the eggs hatch? (Answer: It varies. See Interesting Facts below.)

**Interesting Facts:**

Once laid, an egg must be consistently incubated at a warm temperature in order for the chick to grow inside. The parent(s) must spend hours, days, or even weeks sitting still. This can pose a hazard to the adults since they typically do not feed during this time. Predators searching for an easy meal can also be a hazard to the parent(s) and/or the eggs.

Among the songbirds, most incubation is done by the female but the male sometimes take turns. With hawks and owls, the female is responsible for all of the incubation and the male stands guard and brings food. In a few species, the male does all the incubation (See movie: March of the Penguins by Warner Independent Pictures and National Geographic, [www.marchofthepenguins.com](http://www.marchofthepenguins.com).)

Incubation can last from 1½ weeks to 1 month in most species. Larger birds may take longer. In the extremely cold Antarctic weather, the male Emperor Penguin incubates a single egg for nine weeks, keeping it warm enough to develop and hatch. The bird does not feed during this time. It lives only on stored body fat. The Wandering Albatross incubation lasts even longer, but it is shared by both parents.