

# D.I.Y. STEM: EAT LIKE A BIRD

This activity was adapted from <http://www.pbs.org/parents/etch/activities/act/act-eatlikeabird.html>

## SUPPLIES

- plastic cups (one per participant)
- 2-4 kinds of bird “food”
  - “insects” (long, narrow beads; grains of rice; raisins; or toothpicks)
  - “fish” (small plastic fish, Styrofoam pieces, or glass marbles in a pan of water)
  - “algae” (tea leaves floating in water)
  - “nectar” (tall vase of water)
- 2-5 different bird “beaks”
  - tongs or tweezers
  - spoons
  - turkey baster or eyedropper
  - chopsticks
  - strainer
- data sheet (one per participant)
- pencil (one per participant)
- stopwatch or timer

## DIRECTIONS

### Step 1: Hypothesize

- In this experiment, you’ll learn how bird beaks have adapted to diet. Which beak do you think works best for each type of food? Record your guess on the data sheet.

### Step 2: Set Up Your Experiment

- Lay out the food in the order that you will test it.
- Lay out the beaks in the order that you will test them.
- Prepare your data table. Identify the kinds of food that you will test in the first column, and note which beaks you will be testing in the first row.
- Choose a plastic cup. This is your bird’s stomach.

### Step 3: Eat Like a Bird

- Set the timer for one minute.
- When the timer begins counting, collect food #1 with beak #1. Place the food in your bird’s “stomach.”
- When time is up, count the pieces of food in your cup and record them on your data table.
- Repeat for each kind of food and each kind of beak.

### Step 4: Draw a Conclusion

- Review the data. Do some beaks work better than others? Why or why not?

## Questions for Discovery

- Research different birds. How have they adapted to their environment?
- How is a bird beak like a tool?
- Look at pictures of different birds. Can you guess what they like to eat just by looking at their beaks?

## Further Reading

- Kalman, Bobbie. *How and Why Do Animals Adapt?* Crabtree Publishing, 2015. (gr 2-3)
- Rockwell, Lizzy. *A Bird is a Bird*. Holiday House, 2015. (preschool - gr 2)
- Russo, Monica. *Birdology: 30 Activities & Observations for Exploring the World of Birds*. Chicago Review Press, 2015. (gr 4-6)



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# DATA SHEET

## *Hypothesis*

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## *Data Table*

Food	Beak 1	Beak 2	Beak 3	Beak 4	Beak 5

## *Conclusion*

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