

Thaumatrope



A **thuma-what?** Say "THO-ma-trope" and you've got it right. A thaumatrope is an optical illusion toy from the 1800s.

What You Need

- 3" by 5" white, unlined index card
- markers
- plastic straw
- clear tape

1 Draw one part of a picture on one side of an index card.

2 Then draw the other part of the picture on the other side. The pictures should be connected (like a fish and a bowl or a flower and a pot).

3 Tape the card to a straw.



4 Spin the straw between your hands. What do you **see?**

Sent in by kids from the St. Pierre School in Quebec, Canada

Try It Out!



Now it's time for you to **experiment**.

What happens when you spin the straw more **quickly** or more **slowly**? Try drawing **different pictures**. What kinds of pictures work best?

Choose **one thing** to change (that's the variable) and make a **prediction**. Then **test it** and send your results to ZOOM.

Science Scoop



When you spin the thaumatrope, the pictures move so quickly that your eyes and brain can't see them separately. Your brain **holds on** to each picture for a fraction of a second. This is called **persistence of vision**. So, while your brain is still holding on to the first picture, the second picture comes into view. As a result, your brain **blends** the two pictures into one.



ZOOM is produced by WGBH Boston. Funding for ZOOM is provided by the National Science Foundation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, and public television viewers. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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