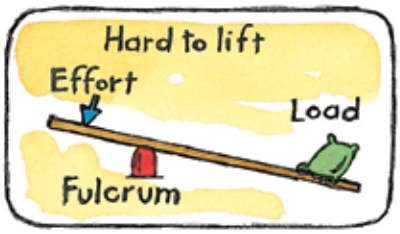
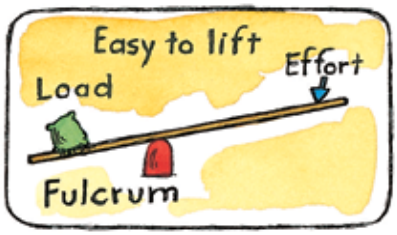
Clever Trevor





Do you know what a *simple machine* is? Simple machines make difficult jobs easier. For instance, a lever helps lift something. Think of a seesaw as a lever. The fulcrum (the point the lever pivots on) of a seesaw is often positioned at the middle.

Moving the fulcrum away from the center and close to the heavy load makes it easier to lift the load when you press down on the other end of the lever. The effort needed to lift the load depends on the location of the fulcrum.

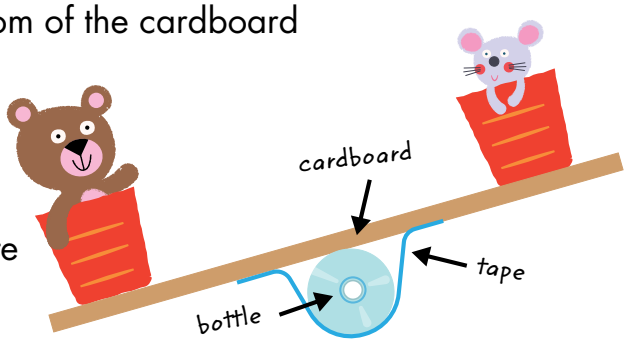
SEESAW FOR TOYS

A seesaw is a simple machine that's also fun to play with! Make a seesaw for your toys.

Supplies: a piece of sturdy cardboard, a small plastic bottle, measuring tape, masking tape, large recyclable cups, glue, and a few stuffed toys, action figures, or dolls

1. Ask an adult to cut a long strip of heavy-duty cardboard (roughly 6–8 inches wide and about 24 inches long).

   Hint: If the cardboard isn't thick enough, cut two strips and secure them together around the edges with heavy-duty tape.
2. Measure the strip of cardboard and make a mark halfway.
3. Use masking tape to secure the bottle to the bottom of the cardboard at the halfway mark.
4. Glue one cup to each end of the seesaw.
5. Set your seesaw on the ground. Carefully place one toy in each cup. What happened?
6. Swap the two toys and place them in the opposite cups. What happened now? Why do you think that happened?
7. Test a few different sets of toys. Can you predict what will happen with the seesaw before putting the toys in the cups?



Now try this! The plastic bottle acts as a fulcrum. Move the bottle to a point nearer to one of the ends. Retape the bottle to secure it. How does moving the fulcrum change your results?