
LAB 22. DRINKING BIRD

Supplies

Drinking birds, cups of water, investigative equipment as available

Procedure

1. Get in groups of three or four students.
2. Have your group come up with a guess of how the drinking bird works. Make sure you agree. If you don't all agree, identify the primary differences in your explanations.
3. Devise a test that will check your guess. Carry it out. Revise your guess and make additional tests if appropriate.
4. Share your findings with the rest of the class. In class discussion, try to formulate an explanation that is consistent with all your observations and tests. Make additional observations and tests if necessary.

For the purposes of this activity, don't look up how drinking birds work. Part of the point of this activity is to figure it out for yourself, and to cope with the uncertainty born of incomplete knowledge.

Questions to Consider

- Did your idea of how the drinking bird operates change during this activity?
- Did you consider more than one explanation at any point in this activity? If so, what evidence allowed you to choose between them?
- Describe an experiment performed on a drinking bird and identify what it showed.
- Describe an explanation that you rejected and explain why you rejected it.
- What are the crucial design features of the bird that cause it to "drink?"
- What external conditions must be present for a functional drinking bird to drink?
- Is there anything about how a drinking bird operates that you still don't know?

Lab Report

Explanation

Explain how the drinking bird works, based on what you observed about it. If you have questions about how it works that you weren't able to answer from your experiments and observations, what are they? Can you think of an additional experiment or observation that would answer a question?

Narrative

Tell me what you and your classmates did in this activity. What did you do? Why? What did you learn? How did what you observed influence what you did? Recount the story.