

“Why Does the Top Fly Off of the Teapot?” (Reinforcement Activity)

Materials

- A plastic teapot with a lid

Steps

- Have students watch as you blow into the spout of a plastic teapot. After a few moments, the lid should pop off. Draw the students’ attention to the downward direction of the spout. Ask, “Why does the top fly off the teapot?”
- Ask, “What does this demonstration suggest about the direction or directions that air pressure pushes? Does it support the commonly held idea that air pressure only pushes down? Why or why not?”
- Gather ideas. Help the students connect what they learned in this section to what they have just observed.



Note to Teacher: You may also want to have the students draw models of what they think is happening. Some students may think that the top pops off because the force of blowing moves air that somehow bounces off the bottom of the teapot and is deflected to push the top off. If students raise this possibility, be sure to discuss it as a possible explanation and try variations on the activity with different containers where the hole that you blow into is located in different spots.