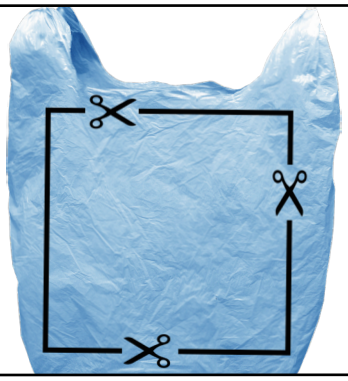
Creative Families @ Home

Make a parachute

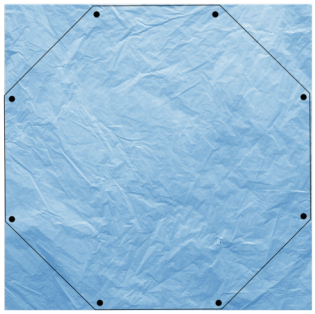
LEARN ABOUT AIR RESISTANCE BY MAKING A COOL PARACHUTE. MAKE A DESIGN THAT CAN FALL SLOWLY TO THE GROUND, MAKING MODIFICATIONS TO ALTER THE SPEED IT TRAVELS.

You'll need a plastic bag or some light material, scissors, string or cotton and a small object to act as a weight. A small action figure would be great for this.

1. Cut out a large square from your bag or material.



2. Trim the corners to create an octagon (eight sided shape). Cut a hole near the edge of each corner.



3. Attach eight pieces of cotton or string (equal length), to each of the holes. Tie the pieces of string to the object you are using as a weight.

4. Find a chair or a high place to drop your creation and test how well it works (be careful not too high). Remember, it needs to drop as slowly as possible.

What happened?

Hopefully your parachute floated slowly to the ground, allowing your weight a comfortable landing. When you release the parachute, the weight pulls down on the string and opens up a large surface area on the material. The larger the surface area, the more air resistance and the slower the weight will drop. Try cutting a small hole in the centre of your parachute. This allows air to slowly pass though and the weight should fall straighter.

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