Activity Sheet

Make Your Own Rain Gauge

Studying Weather

When scientists study weather they look at precipitation (rain, snow), wind direction and speed, temperature and many other things. Here is a simple tool you can make yourself to measure rain.

Make your own Rain Gauge

All you need is:

- a cylindrical-shaped container. A clear pill bottle works best but you can also use a straight-sided tin can, coffee cup or other container (with a grownup's permission, of course!)
- a ruler
- a marker, grease pencil or other way of making marks on your container (remember - the rain will wash away your marks unless they are waterproof)
- a stick and fastener (a Popsicle stick and elastic will work for a pill bottle but you may need something larger if you use a different container).

Measuring from the container bottom, mark every 1 or 2 cm. Fasten the container to the stick to hold it upright. Push the stick and container into the ground in an open area where it won't be disturbed and where it is not protected by bushes or trees. Check and record your findings after any rain especially if your gauge is in a place where the sun will cause the water to evaporate.

Weather and climate are different.

Weather is measured day-to-day while climate looks at the bigger picture, over much longer periods of time. That's why you can't say the world is heating up based on one really hot summer or why a stretch of cold weather can't be used to tell us that global warming has stopped.

Parks track the weather and some post this information for their visitors. It is particularly important to watch for storms or weather conditions that might increase the risk of forest fires.