



Quick guide

Age range

7+

40 mins



Outside activity



(Ideal for a camping exercise)

Covers topics on:

Problem-solving
Agility
Environment

Group activity



Build a butt

Task

A problem-solving and teamwork exercise to build a structure to collect water.

You will need

- Plastic sheeting, bin liners or carrier bags (no holes)
- Poles or canes (six per group)
- String etc

What to do

Groups are given a set time (30 minutes) to use the materials provided to build a structure that will hold water.

You may suggest a volume such as four litres.

When the time is up, it rains (using a watering can).

A prize can be given for the container which holds the most water.

Extension activity age 10+

Using poles and ropes, groups have to devise a way to support a store of water (eg. a box lined with plastic) off the ground. Use a length of hose to siphon the water and make a shower (see diagram on reverse).

Extension activity age 14+

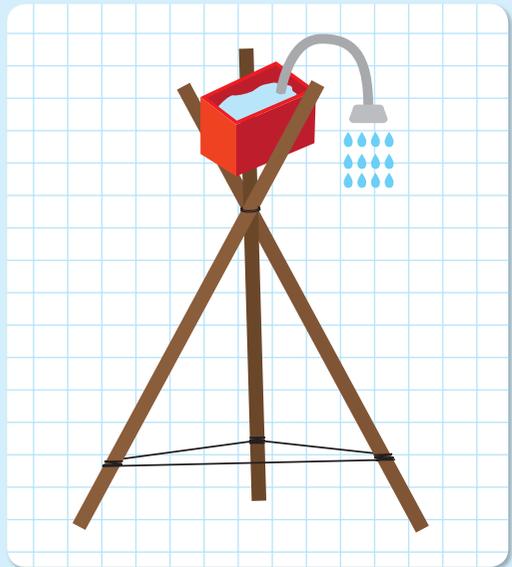
See how big a butt you can build using pioneering poles and lashings.



Fun fact

The ancient Egyptians treated water by siphoning it out of huge jars after allowing the muddy water of the Nile to settle

Extension activity diagram



Leaders' notes:

Through this activity, participants will consider how rain might be collected and stored.

This is a useful survival skill and camping exercise and can also be applied in the home by fitting a water butt to drainpipes to collect rain.

The average roof collects enough water to fill hundreds of water butts every year. You can use this for your garden, house plants and washing your car.

A garden sprinkler can use as much water in one hour as a family of four uses in a whole day, so swap your sprinkler for a watering can. Grass does not need regular watering in summer. It may go brown but will grow back again as soon as it rains. Not watering grass in summer encourages stronger root growth.

Using a bucket and sponge to wash your car uses a 10th of the water you would use compared with washing it with a hosepipe.

Plants prefer rain to tap water which has been disinfected with chlorine to make it safe to drink.

