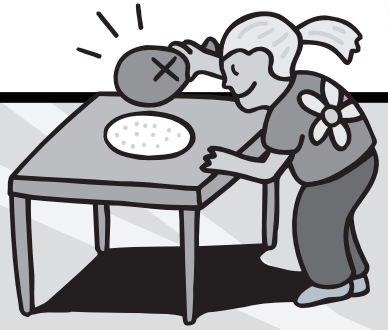
Electric Gelatin



What You Need

- packet of unflavored gelatin powder
- paper plate
- balloon
- marker
- wool sweater

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1 **Pour** some gelatin on a plate.

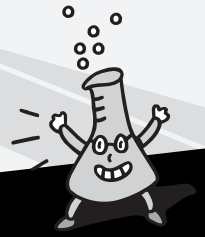
2 **Blow up** the balloon and **tie** the opening shut. Use the marker to **draw** a small **"x"** on one side of the balloon.

3 **Hold** the "x" side of the balloon. **Hold** the balloon about **one inch** above the gelatin. Don't let the balloon touch the gelatin. **What happens?**

4 Still **holding** the "x" side of the balloon, **rub** the other side on the wool sweater for ten seconds. (If you don't have any wool, rub the balloon on your hair.) **Hold** the balloon about an inch above the gelatin. **What happens?**

5 Slowly **raise** the balloon. Now, what happens?

Sent in by Devin F. of Dacula, GA



Science Scoop

When you rub the balloon on the sweater, you **charge** the balloon with **static electricity**. Static electricity is what makes your **hair stick up** when you take off your sweater, or what makes **socks stick to other clothes** when you take them out of the dryer. When the charged balloon is brought near the gelatin, the gelatin's surface becomes **oppositely charged**. Things that are oppositely charged **attract**. That is why the gelatin **moves toward the balloon**.

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Now it's time for you to experiment. What happens if you use **flavored gelatin** instead of unflavored gelatin? Or, what happens if you use **salt**? What happens if you rub the balloon on a different material, like a **paper towel**? Choose **one thing** to change (that's the variable), and **predict** what you think will happen. Then **test it** and **send** your results to ZOOM at **pbskids.org/zoom/sci**

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