



STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION—POST-VISIT MATERIALS

We hope you enjoyed your recent field trip to the Long Island Children's Museum! To help you get the most out of your visit, we have created post-visit activities for you to do with your class. These activities will help you to reinforce the concepts that the children explored while they were here.

1). Become an Inventor

Activity goal: Children will better understand the relationship between structure and function by inventing a tool or machine that makes life easier in some way.

Activity time: 25-45 minutes

Materials

Paper and pencils

Procedure:

An inventor is someone who comes up with a new product, device, or idea that helps accomplish a task or makes something easier to do.

Ask students to think of an invention that would make their life easier. It might be something that helps them eat, move, do homework or play. Discuss the structure of the invention. It's not easy to talk about how something will look before you decide what it will do! This is what we mean when we say that *structure follows function* – how something looks usually depends on what it does. Once you decide on what you want something to do, then you can start developing a plan of what it will look like and how it will work. A lot of new inventions are adaptations or improvements of old inventions, like the cellular phone or the electric wheelchair. Applying knowledge of how things work to create practical tools, objects or projects is called **technology**.

Have students write two paragraphs on their invention. In the first paragraph, describe the invention. In the second paragraph, have them tell how the invention will make life easier for them. Students may want to spend some time brainstorming this topic before starting, so that you don't have two inventions that do the same thing. Students should make a drawing of their invention and attach it to their paragraphs.

Vocabulary:

Inventor
Technology

Extension:

Have students brainstorm ideas of how they would actually go about creating their invention for real. What materials would they need? How much would it cost? If you have lots of materials and objects around for them to use, have children construct a model of their invention. We recommend the Materials Resource Center in Holbrook (Central Long Island) – they have lots of great (and inexpensive!) things you can use for this project!

<http://www.materialresourcecenter.org/>

