

# Challenge Box

## Description

A challenge box is a container for resources and construction materials you collect that are related to a topic or theme. It provides the user with a variety of learning tools and challenging activities to help them learn more about the topic or theme. As you make the challenge box, you will have to think about the important ideas you have learned about your topic and be creative in connecting those ideas to activities and objects that others will interpret and learn from.

The challenge box can be any type of container, ranging from a file box or pizza box to a paper shopping bag or ice cream barrel. Sometimes manila envelopes and file folders can work as well. Items to place in the challenge box could be:

- reference books
- magazine articles
- pictures
- maps
- posters
- specimens
- DVDs/tapes/videos
- artifacts
- experiments
- brochures
- manipulatives
- charts/graphs/diagrams
- newspapers/catalogs
- models, puzzles
- games
- photographs

Also to be included are the instructions with descriptions of challenging activities that will help users learn more about the topic.

## **Planning**

1. Once you know the topic or theme for the box, go on a “resource hunt” to locate as many different items as possible for the box. These items will serve as springboards and references for learning more about the topic. Each resource item in the box should be tied to a specific task outlined on the list of suggested activities.
2. After gathering the resource items, develop a list of activities that can be completed by students who are using the challenge box as a tool for learning something about the topic. Each activity should include the following sections:
  - a. A materials list of specific items from the box to be used in the activity
  - b. A set of directions about what to do
  - c. Recording or assignment worksheets for students to write responses on
  - d. Simple assessment/feedback form asking for input on how the activity turned out and what the students learned from it
3. Decide on the shape and size of the container for the challenge box items. The packaging depends, of course, on the size and extent of the resource items included as tools or references for completing the activities.
4. Write the subject area concept and/or an objective to be emphasized for each resource item in the box. What will it be used for, and how will it contribute to the learning process?
5. Write the subject area concept(s) and/or objective(s) for each activity specified in the challenge box. How do they match up with the resource items? Do they reinforce one another’s purpose?

## **Assessing**

Create a simple pre- and post-test on the topic that could be included in the contents of the challenge box. As students fill out the forms, modify the contents of the boxes based on the results.