Science magic tricks for kids

Peabody · checked 2026-10-28

Peabody's Potion Lab has 10 science magic tricks for kids, all of them real experiments that happen to look like magic. Each page carries a "science behind the spell" box that says what is actually going on — surface tension, air pressure, static electricity, an indicator dye — so a child who asks gets the true answer. Everything used is food-safe, and a potion is always for looking at, not for drinking.

All 10 science magic tricks for kids

- Trick: The Pepper and Soap Trick · What they see: Transformation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · You need: bowl, water, pepper, dish soap · To learn: 2 minutes
- Trick: The Arrow Flip Trick · What they see: Transformation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · You need: glass, water, paper, marker · To learn: 2 minutes
- Trick: The Disappearing Coin in Water · What they see: Vanish · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · You need: glass, water, coin, saucer · To learn: 2 minutes
- Trick: The Glowing Water Trick · What they see: Transformation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · You need: glass, water, tonic water, UV light · To learn: 2 minutes
- Trick: Invisible Ink · What they see: Production · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · You need: white paper, baking soda, water, cotton swab, grape juice, paintbrush · To learn: 10 minutes
- Trick: The Upside-Down Water Card · What they see: Levitation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · You need: glass, water, index card · To learn: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Balloon Static Wand · What they see: Levitation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · You need: balloon, paper strip · To learn: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Colour-Changing Potion · What they see: Transformation · Level: 2 Conjurer · Ages: 6 to 11 · You need: grape juice, baking soda, glass, water · To learn: 10 minutes
- Trick: The Obedient Egg · What they see: Levitation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · You need: egg, glass, water, salt · To learn: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Floating Paperclip · What they see: Levitation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · You need: paperclips, bowl, water, dish soap · To learn: 5 minutes

Start with these

- The Pepper and Soap Trick. Pepper floats all over a bowl of water. 2 minutes to learn, for ages 5 to 9.
- The Arrow Flip Trick. You draw a fat arrow pointing to the right and stand it up behind an empty glass. 2 minutes to learn, for ages 5 to 9.
- The Disappearing Coin in Water. A coin sits on the table with an empty glass standing on top of it, and everybody can see it through the side. 2 minutes to learn, for ages 5 to 10.

What you need, and what a grown-up does

- Trick: The Pepper and Soap Trick · You need: bowl, water, pepper, dish soap · A grown-up does: nothing
- Trick: The Arrow Flip Trick · You need: glass, water, paper, marker · A grown-up does: nothing
- Trick: The Disappearing Coin in Water · You need: glass, water, coin, saucer · A grown-up does: nothing
- Trick: The Glowing Water Trick · You need: glass, water, tonic water, UV light · A grown-up does: a hot or bright-light step
- Trick: Invisible Ink · You need: white paper, baking soda, water, cotton swab, grape juice, paintbrush · A grown-up does: a bit of setting up
- Trick: The Upside-Down Water Card · You need: glass, water, index card · A grown-up does: nothing
- Trick: The Balloon Static Wand · You need: balloon, paper strip · A grown-up does: a hot or bright-light step
- Trick: The Colour-Changing Potion · You need: grape juice, baking soda, glass, water · A grown-up does: nothing
- Trick: The Obedient Egg · You need: egg, glass, water, salt · A grown-up does: nothing
- Trick: The Floating Paperclip · You need: paperclips, bowl, water, dish soap · A grown-up does: nothing

The science in each one

- Trick: The Pepper and Soap Trick · The science: Water has surface tension: the top layer behaves like a stretchy skin, and the pepper is light enough to sit on it.
- Trick: The Arrow Flip Trick · The science: Light bends when it crosses from water into glass into air.
- Trick: The Disappearing Coin in Water · The science: This is called total internal reflection.
- Trick: The Glowing Water Trick · The science: Quinine soaks up ultraviolet light, which human eyes can't see, and hands it straight back out as visible blue light.
- Trick: Invisible Ink · The science: Grape juice has a natural dye in it that changes colour depending on what it touches.
- Trick: The Upside-Down Water Card · The science: The air around us presses on everything, quite hard, from every direction.
- Trick: The Balloon Static Wand · The science: Rubbing the balloon on your hair scrapes tiny electric charges off it, and the balloon keeps them.
- Trick: The Colour-Changing Potion · The science: Grape juice and red cabbage contain a dye that changes colour depending on what it is mixed with.

- Trick: The Obedient Egg · The science: Whether something floats depends on how heavy it is compared with the water it pushes out of the way.
- Trick: The Floating Paperclip · The science: Water molecules pull on each other, and at the top there is nothing above them to pull back, so the surface pulls itself tight into something like a skin.

For a classroom

These double as demonstrations: they use nothing a school does not already have, they take a few minutes each, and the explanation is on the page in a child's words. The 16 tricks in the Mind Reader's Corner do the same job for arithmetic.

Safety

Every step that uses something hot or a bright light is a grown-up's step, whatever the child's age, and Flick says so out loud before it. There is no fire, no flame and nothing sharp in a child's hand anywhere in the shop: scissors cut paper, card and string only, and a cutting step says to ask a grown-up. No trick asks a child to put anything in a mouth, a nose or an ear. Tricks with coins, dice, paperclips or pom-poms carry the AAP's choking note for brothers and sisters under 4, and none of them is offered below kindergarten. The kitchen-science tricks use only food-safe things, and a potion is always for looking at, not for drinking.

The Magic Shop is free, with no ads and no sign-up. What your child has, has learned and has performed stays on their own device and is never sent anywhere, so there is nothing to lose and no account to make.

More: all 80 magic tricks for kids, Magic School and how to put on a magic show.

Free at peabody.kids/science-magic-tricks-for-kids