



Children's Museum of Houston

The Snake Charmer

Become a snake charmer by creating a tissue snake to follow your wand.

What you need

- Tissue paper
- Scissors
- Plastic wands
- Tin plates
- Wool/Fur

What to do

1. Cut a 'snake' (stripe) out of the tissue paper. Place the snake in the tin plate. Bend the 'head' of the snake slightly upwards, so that it is off the tin plate.
2. Charge your wand by vigorously rubbing it on the fur.
3. Put the wand near the head of the snake. (What happens when the wand is near the snake?)
4. Slowly move the wand upwards. (How long does the "snake charming" last? What happens if you charge your wand more/less before charming the snake?)

Learn More Together

When your wand is rubbed against the wool, you are creating *static electricity*, the electrical charge that accumulates on an object rather than flowing through it like a current. Static electricity forms especially when two objects that are not good electrical conductors are rubbed against one another. The electrical charge created on the wand and the charge of the tissue paper snake, are opposite charges, so they are attracted to each other. Because the paper is so light, the electrostatic energy is enough to pull the snake up towards the wand as if it was being charmed.

Try brushing your hair over and over. Both your hair and the brush are poor electrical conductors, often causing your hair to collect static electricity (and stick up on ends!)