The Stubborn Ping-Pong Ball

Anyone can blow a ping-pong ball a few inches. Or can they?

What to do: Wash the funnel carefully to make sure it is absolutely clean. A funnel used around: the kitchen is the only kind to use for this experiment. Don't use a funnel that has been used around oil and gasoline in the garage.

If you don't have a funnel, it takes about ten seconds to make a paper cone. Roll a sheet of paper into a cone that is large at one end and 1/4 6 mm) across at the other. Tape the loose end so your cone looks like this:

Drop the ping-pong ball into the paper cone or funnel. Hold the funnel directly over your head and blow into the small end. The drawing shows how.

The object is to blow the ball out of the funnel. Blow hard, but steady.

What happens: Unless you are using a very small funnel, you'll find it is impossible to blow the ball out of it.

Why: The passage of air around the ball makes it jump and bounce, but it will not fly out of the funnel. This is because the fast-moving air flows all around the ball instead of pushing it upward. The ball tends to jump up (even higher at times than the rim of the funnel) but it won't jump to one side.

Tip: To make the flow of air last longer, try using a balloon:

YOU NEED

• large funnel
• ping-pong ball
• sheet of paper and tape (if you do not have a funnel)