**Pickup!**

**Purpose**
To demonstrate one of the uses of a primate's thumb.

**Materials**
Pencil  
Coin

**Procedure**
1. Using your index and second fingers, try to pick up the pencil. Then try to pick up the coin.
2. Repeat step 1 using your index finger and thumb.

**Results**
You can pick up the pencil without your thumb but generally cannot pick up the coin. But it's easier to pick up the objects with your index finger and thumb than with your index and second fingers.

**Why?**
Mammals are animals that have hair and feed their young on milk. Primates are a category of mammals that includes people, monkeys, apes, and chimpanzees. Most primates have thumbs that are opposable, meaning that the thumb can be positioned opposite the fingers, as when you pick up a coin. The thumb and fingers can touch at the tips. Your index and second finger are not opposable, but can be used to lift some things, such as the pencil. Some primates, including chimpanzees, koalas, and lemurs, also have opposable toes. The panda has a wrist bone that acts in the manner of an opposable thumb. With opposable thumbs and toes, animals can more easily pick up small objects.