

Tin Can Barometer Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative

Make a tin can barometer and observe how it indicates changes in air pressure. Record these changes on your weather calendar. Here's how:

Materials:

- empty and cleaned out tin can (14.5 oz works well)
- balloon
- rubber band
- plastic straw (can substitute using a very light stick)
- index card or paper
- scissors
- tape
- pen



Instructions:

- ask for an adult to help you
- cut the end off the balloon as shown
- carefully stretch the round part of the balloon over the top of the can. This might take two sets of hands. Watch for sharp edges. Try to stretch the balloon so it is super smooth over the can like a drum (AND to make this work right, don't play with or push on the balloon once it's on)!
- secure the balloon around the edge of the can using the rubber band
- cut the straw in half; cut the tip at one end to make a pointer
- gently secure the cut straw to the balloon top using a couple pieces of tape. Make sure the pointer end sticks out.
- attach the index card to the back of the can with tape
- use the pen to make a mark on the card that lines up with the straw pointer

How it works:

Barometers are used to indicate weather changes (because of changes in air pressure).

You have now "trapped" a certain pressure of air (atmosphere) inside the can. Each day, look close at the small up or down changes the balloon makes by observing the tip of the straw and the mark on the index card. The tip may have moved up slightly (high pressure) or moved down slightly (low pressure). High pressure usually means fair weather. Low pressure usually means weather changes and storms.