

Classroom Activity:

Build Your Own Rube Goldberg Machine

1. Select the basic task you want your machine to accomplish. For your first attempt at a Rube Goldberg machine, your task can be getting a ball from one end of your machine to a bucket at the other end. As you get more experience, the task can be things like turning on a light or closing a door. (Tip: Remember that with a Rube Goldberg machine you cannot use your hands at any point along the way to “help” your machine along.)
2. Look around the room for things you may use to create your machine. Do you have dominos? Books? Springs? Table? Boards? Magnets? Marbles? Toy cars? Something else? Be creative!
3. Draw a sketch of what you might want to build to start thinking through the steps for your machine.
4. Experiment with how your materials work. Set up a few trial sections of your machine to see if your ideas will work the way you want them to and learn from your mistakes to recreate these sections.
5. Build your machine.
6. Test your machine.
7. Revise your machine.
8. Repeat testing to make sure your machine is reliable several times in a row.
9. Show off your creation!