

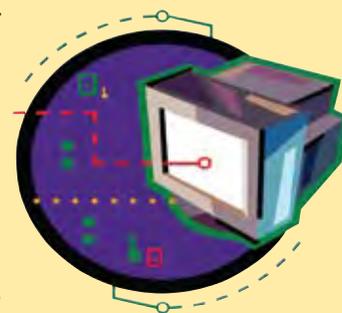
AMUSEMENT

1. Take a lesson from Slowpoke (pages 162–163) and **invent another event for your “Backyard Olympics”** (pages 130–131). In your new event, make sure that the player who clocks the slowest time wins.

2. Documentary filmmakers often use a technique called storyboarding. You can learn how it's done at <http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/reporting/starttofinish/storyboarding/> **Make a series of storyboards** to turn Slowpoke's story into a documentary film.

3. **Draw a comic strip** to tell the story of Philo T. Farnsworth, the kid who invented TV (pages 164–166).

4. **Conduct an interview survey** of your friends and family. Ask your subjects if they think that it's possible to get rich without doing any work. If they answer “yes,” ask them how. Record the responses. How do the answers compare with the list of superstitions on page 167? Can you take any of the ideas you hear seriously?



5. The *English sonnet* is a poem of 14 lines and four stanzas, with the end words in the lines rhyming in this pattern: abab cdcd efef gg. Sonnets are often composed as love poems. **Write a sonnet about Sylvester** (“The Toughest Cowboy,” pages 168–169).

6. **You can get an idea about how Sylvester became a mummy** by using this simple experiment. Cut two slices of about the same size from an apple. Put one in each of two small paper cups. Cover one of the slices with a mixture of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup salt and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup baking soda. Leave the other slice as it is. Put both cups in a dry, dark place for several days. Then dig up the covered slice and compare it with the uncovered one. If you have access to a very accurate scale or balance, you can weigh the slices before and after the experiment to see if their weights change.

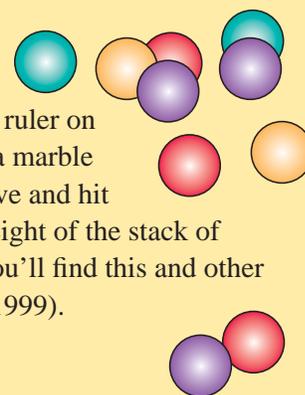
7. Using the tune of “Bah, Bah, Black Sheep,” **write and sing a song that honors Bigfoot** (pages 170–173). Try to include some of Bigfoot's other names in your lyrics.

8. **You can tell a lot about people (and creatures) from the footprints that they leave.**

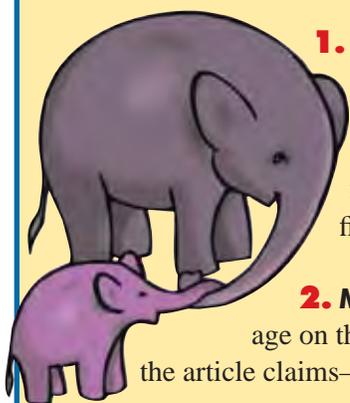
(This activity gets messy, so do it outdoors.) Put some tempera paint in a paint tray. With your bare foot, step in the paint, shake off the excess, and then step on a sheet of white butcher paper or freezer paper. Have friends and family members do the same . . . and be sure to keep a tub of soapy water nearby for cleanup. When the footprints are dry, let the “artists” sign their names next to their footprints. Use the mural that you've made as decoration for a Sasquatch party at which you serve snow cones in honor of the Abominable Snowman.



9. How much momentum do objects gain as they roll down slopes? You can experiment to find out. Fold an index card in half, then in half again. Get a plastic ruler with a groove or indentation running along the length of its flat top. Place one end of the ruler on a small stack of books. Set the folded card on the table, at the bottom of the ruler. Place a marble at the top of the groove in the ruler. When you let go, the marble will roll down the groove and hit the card, pushing it across the table. Measure how far the card moves. Try making the height of the stack of books higher and lower. Does the slope make a difference in how far the card moves? You'll find this and other fun experiments in *Six-Minute Nature Experiments* by Faith Hickman Brynie (Sterling, 1999).



USEFUL THINGS



1. Make a card game out of the “Animal Families” chart on pages 178–181. Write each of the words in that table on a separate index card. Deal five cards to each player. Turn the remaining cards face down except for one that is face up. The first player can take the face-up card or a card from the face-down pile. The player then discards a card into the face-up pile. Each player continues in that same way until someone gets a winning hand of five matching cards. An example of a winning hand is **Elephant-Bull-Cow-Calf-Herd**.

2. Make a line graph of the data table on page 182, “How Old Is Your Dog?” Put human age on the horizontal axis. Put dog age on the vertical axis. Explain how your graph shows what the article claims—that dog aging slows down after maturity.

3. Get together with friends to **see how many silly phobias you can invent**. Maybe flushophobia is a fear of toilets or fidophobia is a fear of pet dogs. You get the idea.

4. Capture the sparkle of colorful birthstones by making your own suncatcher. Remove the paper backing from a small piece of clear contact paper. Cut little squares of colored tissue paper in birthstone colors that you like. Place them on the sticky side of the contact paper in a nice arrangement. Cover with another sheet of contact paper. Tape your creation to a sunny window, and you'll see beautiful colors shining through.

5. Do you know who all of the possible successors to the President are in our current government? **Go online to find out something about all 18 of them**, from the Vice President to the Secretary of Homeland Security. Are any of them ineligible because they can't meet one of the requirements listed on page 184?

6. Pretend that your friend has been invited to tea with the queen of England. You've been there dozens of times, so you know all of the right moves, but your friend is in a panic. **Write and illustrate a Guide to Etiquette** for your friend to study before heading off to Buckingham Palace.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Faith Hickman Brynie is the author of 24 science and health trade books for children and young adults. Some of her books have earned awards from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Science Teachers Association, the Children's Book Council, and the International Reading Association. She holds a Ph.D. in science education (curriculum and instruction) from the University of Colorado, Boulder. A former high school biology teacher and university professor, she also was the first “Scholar in Residence” to serve overseas schools of the U.S. government (for children of embassy personnel, for example). She is a frequent contributor to *ODYSSEY*, a popular science magazine for middle-school children.