

Climbing Ink

Materials

- Plastic tub or large plastic container
- Felt tip pens
- Tape
- String

Instructions

- Cut a coffee filter into strips slightly longer than the depth of a large plastic tub.
- Make a dot with a different colored felt-tip pen about 0.5" up each strip. Write the color in pencil at the top.
- Pour just enough water into the tub to cover the bottom. Then tape a piece of string across the top of the tub.
- Fold the strips over the string, so that the ends near the dots are in the water, but the dots aren't.
- The paper will start to soak up water. Lift out the strips after 10 minutes. What has happened to the dots?

What's Going On?

The ink in most felt-tip pens contains mixtures of colors. Some colors dissolve more easily in water than others because of the chemicals they contain. These colors spread quickly up the paper. Other colors contain chemicals that don't like water. These colors stick to the paper to avoid it, so they don't move up the paper as the water spreads.