Science Club News

Larva Lamp Experiment

Last week in Science Club, we learnt how to make a larva lamp and what the cause of the effect was. Students were first asked to experiment with the oil, water, food colouring and Alka-seltzer tablets. We discussed what happened with the oil and water and then what happened when the tablets were added. From the excited voices and big smiles on their faces, I think it was safe to say that this experiment was a big hit!

Method

1. Pour water into the plastic bottle until it is around one quarter full (you might want to use a funnel when filling the bottle so you don't spill anything).
2. Pour in vegetable oil until the bottle is nearly full.
3. Wait until the oil and water have separated.
4. Add around a dozen drops of food coloring to the bottle (choose any color you like).
5. Watch as the food coloring falls through the oil and mixes with the water.
6. Cut an Alka-Seltzer tablet into smaller pieces (around 5 or 6) and drop one of them into the bottle, things should start getting a little crazy, just like a real lava lamp!
7. When the bubbling stops, add another piece of Alka-Seltzer and enjoy the show!
8. Tightly screw on a bottle cap and tip the bottle back and forth. What happens then?

What happens?

Oil and water do not mix because they cannot form any chemical bonds with each other. The molecules of water do not like to mix with the molecules of oil. The oil will float on top of the water because it is less dense than oil.