



Create, Test, Improve!

Design a Pillow

When you want to make something, you can use a three-step process: **create, test, improve!** This **computational thinking skill** is a creative way of thinking that can help children solve problems in more organized ways. Try the ideas below to practice this skill with your child.

Total time needed: 20–30 minutes



Watch the Story

The Elephant in the Room

Ask your child:

- What ideas did the monkeys have for **creating** a house for Ellie?
- Why did they need to come up with so many ideas?



Do the Activity

Design a Pillow

Follow the directions on the next page to design a pillow. You'll need:

- A pillowcase
- Cotton, fleece, soft toys, socks, bubble wrap, packing peanuts, towels, blankets, or other soft household materials



Watch the Video

Playing Around with Costumes

Watch two friends as they **create, test, and improve** costumes for their play. They use the same steps that you used when you made your pillow!



Read a Book (Optional)

The Perfect Pillow

by Eric Pinder

Illustrated by Chris Sheban

Ask your child:

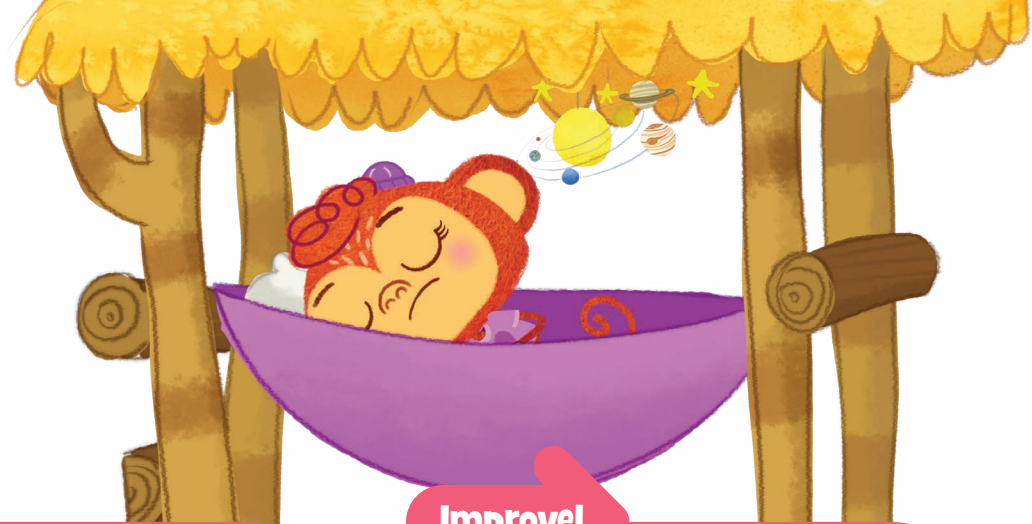
- What were some of the pillows that Brody tried out? What happened when he **tested** them?
- How did he figure out what made the perfect pillow?



Do the Activity

Design a Pillow

Design a pillow that is soft and comfortable enough for a nap. Use these three steps: **create, test, improve!** You can use these steps to make almost anything!



Create!

(see materials on first page)

1. Show your child the empty pillowcase and say:
 - Let's **create** a pillow that is soft and comfy to use at naptime.
 - How can we make a pillow out of this pillowcase?
2. Help your child think of ideas for his pillow. Ask:
 - What can we use to stuff the pillowcase?
3. **Create it!** Help your child try out his ideas.

TIP: Let your child take the lead

Join in and help, but let your child make most of the decisions and design the pillow. This helps your child practice solving problems.

Test!

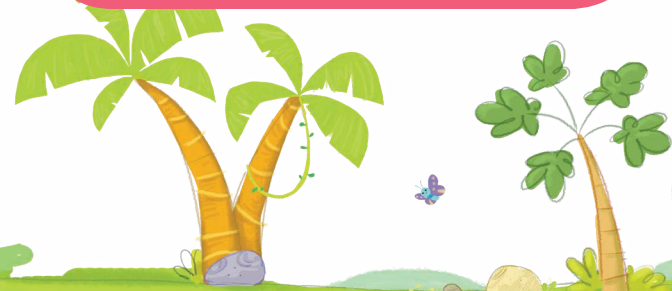
1. Tell your child:
 - Let's **test** your pillow. We need to see if it's soft and comfy enough.
 - How can we **test** the pillow?
2. If your child thinks the pillow is soft and comfortable, ask him to try to make it even softer. If the pillow is too hard, flat, lumpy, or uneven, ask:
 - What do you notice about your pillow now that you've **tested** it?

Improve!

1. Depending on the test results, ask:
 - How can we **improve** the pillow?
 - How can we make the pillow softer and more comfortable to sleep on?
2. Encourage your child to **make improvements** and **test** them until the pillow is perfect for napping.
3. When your child is satisfied with the pillow, remind him of what he did:
 - To make your pillow, you **created, tested, and improved** it. You can use these three steps to make almost anything!

TIP: Try another idea

Use a cardboard box and have your child make a bed for a pet or a favorite stuffed animal. He can use some of the same soft materials or find new things around the house to use.



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