

The Waker-Upper 3000

East Allington Primary School, South West Devon

Purpose

To keep you awake when working on a particularly late (or dull) piece of homework.

How it works

At the first sign of nodding off, the user should immediately don the Waker-Upper 3000 and begin to turn the handles (or wind up the optional motor – not supplied.)

The system's unique design ensures that power is gradually increased until the user is fully awake and homework can be completed. Each power level uses a different awakening mechanism, as follows:

1. Eye-openers gently lift drooping eyelids;
2. Headphones play obnoxious music and unpleasant sounds;
3. A strong infusion of cold tea is drip-fed through the mouthpiece;
4. The user is sprayed with a jet of ice-water;
5. The user is gently (and, of course, safely) tapped with the blunt end of the reversible mallet;
6. In extreme cases of deep, homework-induced slumber, the mallet rotates 180 degrees into "pointy" mode, and step 5 is repeated. The designers believe that this mode is effective on even the dullest of long-division homework questions, though this has never been tested. Indeed, for safety reasons, it is recommended that users remove the Waker-Upper 3000 before step 6 is reached, and switch on their Excuse-Maker 4000 instead.

Materials used

To produce our entry, we followed the (excellent) Cracking Ideas scheme of work. Having engaged our brains with the hour-long 'taster' (rolling footballs and rescuing snakes – great fun) we then came up with dozens of problems to solve – anything from feeding the cat, to getting toys upstairs and downstairs, to carrying a surfboard to the water's edge. We each then picked one of these problems and designed an innovative solution to it.

Our 'winning' solution was chosen through group discussion, short-listing, a vote, and ultimately from input from other classes and the staff. With only one session available in which to build our chosen design, we had to work fast. We split up into 4 groups, each responsible for one component of the model. At an agreed time we then assembled the complete design from its components, and photographed it.

The model was built from an eclectic mix of materials brought in from home, including newspaper, cardboard, tin foil, drinking straws, blu-tac reclaimed from a display, a ketchup bottle, used plastic cups, garden twine and old bits of felt. While the limited time available meant that the end result was a bit 'Heath Robinson', we feel that we have produced a good prototype of a design that is both innovative and entertaining. We have learnt a lot from Cracking Ideas, and thoroughly enjoyed it – thank you!

