

TAKE-APART

Title/Name: Take-Apart - Exploring complexity through un-making

Rationale and Possible Implications:

Exploring Complexity in an object or system is a capacity that young people can develop as they explore all the ways that design is embedded in the world around them. Popular in the world of maker-centered learning, the practice of taking something apart can be a generative and fun learning experience that provides a wealth of opportunities for exploration.

Find a brief write-up of the take-apart activity from Agency by Design [here](#).

A take-apart could be done by a child and caregiver, or asynchronously by older learners, though sharing what was noticed through taking something apart could be a great follow-up activity to encourage in-person or online conversation. You could also try pairing this with an object-finding mission in which a learner seeks out objects to be taken apart—whether that’s finding pine cones and flowers that could be disassembled during a nature walk, or rooting through a kitchen “junk drawer” or thrift store donation bag to find something compelling that could be fun and interesting to take apart. The exercise of taking something apart could be used in many different ways, including:

- Parents at home could use the prompts and questions on the attached activity write-up to encourage a young child to notice and talk about an object they’re taking apart.
- Older children could take an object apart, then share their work with others through an online gallery, a peer-to-peer video chat, posts on a private blog for the classroom, etc.
- For an extra engineering challenge, older learners children could try to reassemble what they took apart, or repurpose some of those parts to create a new object with the addition of other household materials.
- Older learners could explore the work of artist [Todd McLellan](#)—a take-apart master—and start discussions over questions brought up by his pieces.
- As a follow-up, learners could reflect on their take-apart experience using a thinking routine as a prompt for online discussion, classroom video chats, or independent process journaling. Two routines we recommend are [Parts—Purposes—Complexities](#) and [Imagine If...](#)

For more thinking routines, tools, and practices, visit the [AgencybyDesign.org website](#). For a wealth of examples on how educators and parents are using Agency by Design practices in socially-distanced and at-home settings, check out our Twitter and Instagram feeds [@AgencybyDesign](#).

Suggested Use: Asynchronous (with opportunities for synchronous follow-up discussion); In-Person guided activity