

Flash!

Your friends may get a charge out of this.

You need:

a sheet of newspaper
the metal top of a large can
a small piece of plastic wrap or wool

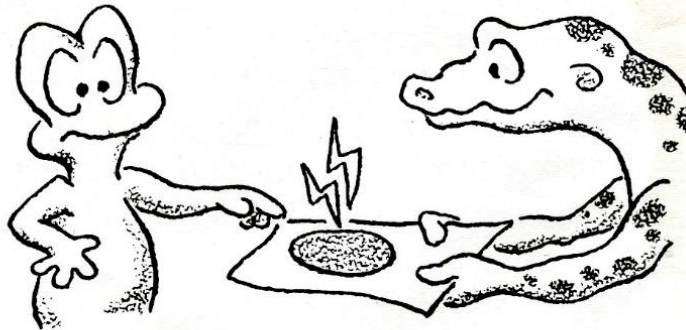
a friend

What to do:

Rub a dry sheet of newspaper vigorously with the plastic wrap or wool for 30 seconds or so. Then place the top of the can in the center of the newspaper. Holding the newspaper by its edges, lift it while your friend puts a finger near the metal.

What happens:

A spark!



Why:

When an electrical charge passes between two objects, the result is a spark. As you rubbed the newspaper, you charged it with static electricity. Your friend's touch made the electrical charge jump from the paper to the uncharged can lid.

You may have seen a similar spark when you rubbed your shoes on a rug and then touched a doorknob. Or you may have heard a crackling sound while combing your hair. These are all examples of static electricity.

Lightning is a huge electric spark that results when charges jump from one cloud to another or from a cloud to the ground.

