Ask Me About Light and Lasers!

Sparking Discovery in the Classroom

TRAVELING SCIENCE WORKSHOPS

DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Today, an instructor from the Discovery Museum in Acton visited my classroom and led a hands-on program about light and lasers.

Ask me about some of the differences between "white" light and laser light. I can tell you why I think lasers can be used for delicate eye surgery, precision cuttings and intricate design work. Encourage me to tell you about the laser light show I created.

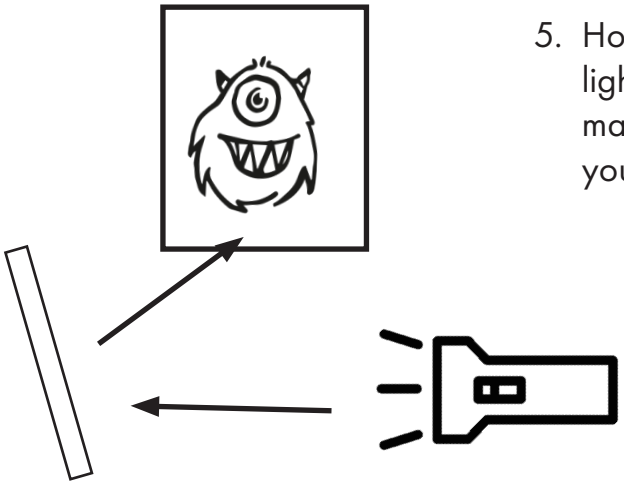
We can create more light fun with the following activity.

Monster Light

Try this experiment at home to see how light reflects and travels.

What you need:

- a variety of materials you think will reflect light and a few you are not sure about
- a piece of paper or cardboard
- crayons or markers
- a strong flashlight
- a dark room



What you do:

1. Test each material with the flashlight for its reflective ability. Did any material surprise you?
2. On the piece of paper, draw a picture of a monster and prop it up on a table.
3. Aim the flashlight at one of the reflective objects and try to bounce the light from this object to the monster picture.
4. Now see if you can bounce the light from this object to another object and from there to the monster.
5. How many reflective surfaces can you bounce the light off to reach the monster? Does the order of the materials make a difference in the number of times you can bounce the light?