

Go with the flow!



Background knowledge

Liquids flow and take the shape of the container into which they are poured. Some liquids feel "thin" and flow quickly, while others feel "thick" and flow slowly. This property of resistance to flow is called viscosity.

Science activity

Students tested the viscosity of different liquids by pouring each one into a tall jar and timing how long it took for a small lump of modelling clay to drop to the bottom.

Using the chart below, number the liquids in order of their viscosity. Write 1 for the least viscous liquid and 7 for the most viscous.

Liquid	Time taken for modelling clay to fall	Order
water	2 seconds	
vegetable oil	4.5 seconds	
olive oil	6 seconds	
castor/pinkish sesame	8 seconds	
golden syrup	90 seconds	
motor oil	12 seconds	
lubricating liquid	7 seconds	



How long do you think the modelling clay would take to fall through apple juice? Explain.

Science investigation

Collect different liquids in your home such as liquid soap, milkshakes, or one of the liquids noted in the above chart. Design and conduct an experiment to see which liquid has the greatest viscosity.