

# The Solar Power Challenge

Name \_\_\_\_\_

The mayor of a small town needs your help. The town will be growing quickly in the next few years. The city council would like to see this growing city use renewable energy as an energy source. Your job is to create a prototype using the sun as energy to generate electricity for the town.

The mayor has assigned you and your partners to find the best way to generate the most electricity from one panel efficiently.

Together with your group discuss what 3 main questions that you will need to research before you can start building.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Research:** Research is important to the engineering process. Watch the following videos and summarize what you learned in them.

[What is Solar Energy?](#) (5:07 min)

Summarize this video

[Solar Energy 101](#) (1:58 min)

Summarize this video

Engineering projects have criteria and constraints. In this activity, they are:

**Criteria:** Develop a prototype of a house that can gather at least 1.0 volts of solar energy as shown on a voltmeter.

**Constraints:** Limited supplies-- 1 sheet cardboard or very stiff paper, solar panel, voltmeter, and sun.  
Time: you will have 1 hour to complete your prototype.

**Design:** Draw your house design and show where the voltmeter will be placed and the angle it will have. Show where the sunlight will be coming from.

**Testing:** Take your prototype outside at least 3 times throughout the day to gather data. You must place it in the same location each time. Once outside, give your solar panel time to gather the sun's energy. Then measure the amount of energy the sun generated by using the voltmeter. Record your observations.

Day 1	Weather:
The angle of the solar panel:	
Time:	Volts:
Observation:	
Time:	Volts:
Observation:	
Time:	Volts:
Observation:	

**Analysis:** Answer the following questions.

1) How did your solar panel perform? Give some evidence from your observations.

2) What changes do you need to make with the solar panel to make it more efficient or fix issues during testing?

**Redesign:** Redesign your house by making changes to improve or reach the criteria. Is there a new angle? What adjustments did the group make? Redraw your prototype showing the changes made.

Retest your design and record the results in the table below.

Day 2	Weather:
The angle of the solar panel:	
Time:	Volts:
Observation:	
Time:	Volts:
Observation:	
Time:	Volts:
Observation:	

**Analysis:** Answer the questions below.

1) Did your redesign help meet the criteria? Why or Why not? Describe your observations.

2) What other changes do you need to make to the prototype to make it more efficient or fix issues during testing? Use the space below to show any redesigns.

**Interpretation & Summary:** Answer the following questions about your project.

1) Did your prototype meet the Criteria? Why or why not? Did your group succeed in creating at least 1.0 volts? What was the highest amount of voltage? How did the redesign changes help your project?

2) Did your group work together successfully? What is your evidence?

3) What did you learn in the process of designing and testing your project?

### **Assessment**

Write a Summary of your experience. The summary should have a clearly stated claim with one solution identified to increase the total volts (Energy) produced. Two evidence statements should come from the data collected from your design and your research. The reasoning should be thoughtful and complete based on which evidence and why you think it is most compelling.