

Junk Box Wars FAQ

How much preparation time should I allow the students?

Provide the event rules one week before competition day. Although the students will not find out the exact materials or amounts until competition day, they can assemble their team and start brainstorming ideas. Require the teams to sign up one week ahead of time so you know how many junk boxes to prepare. See our [project check list](#) for a complete list of tasks.

[Back to top](#)

How much time is needed for project creation?

On the day of the event, allow 5-10 minutes of brainstorming time and require the students to complete the [Think About It](#) page. Once they have finished the page, allow 45-60 minutes of construction time depending on the project. You may want to have project creation run over multiple classroom periods.

[Back to top](#)

How much time is needed for project testing?

The time required for testing the projects varies depending on how many groups you have competing and the number of trials each team is allowed. If you are able to recruit parent volunteers or other teachers, you can test several groups at the same time.

[Back to top](#)

How many students are allowed on one team?

It works best to limit the teams to 2-3 students. Feel free to adjust the teams to fit your needs. If you have large classes or a limited amount of supplies, you may need limit teams to 4-5 students per group.

[Back to top](#)

Do I have to provide all the supplies listed on the Teacher Notes page?

No, you can modify the supply list depending on the amount of "junk" you have available. If you don't have one of the items, substitute a similar item or provide more of another item. You may also provide a larger amount of any item, such as tape or paper, if you feel that the amount listed is not enough for your students.

Keep in mind that the projects on this site reflect the [Junkyard Wars television show](#) where contestants have a junkyard filled with lots of materials. By providing a variety of materials, rather than a few items, students have a lot of options and are challenged to select the best materials for that project. As a result, they don't use everything in the box and end up finding some unique uses for the junk.

[Back to top](#)

How can I get all the supplies on a limited budget?

1. Hold a junk drive! Create a list of items you need and send home notes with your students asking for donations of junk. Your junk boxes will be overflowing with materials! Several teachers have told us neighbors in their communities save junk — such as plastic containers, thread spools, film canisters, toilet paper rolls, and other materials — for their classrooms throughout the year.
2. Ask local stores and restaurants to save film canisters or donate supplies, such as straws, cups, and paper place mats. Some stores may give you a discount on materials or tools for your projects. Local businesses also may be interested in sponsoring an event by providing money and/or supplies in exchange for a bit of publicity!
3. Provide a supply list for each team and require them to bring the materials (or a few items) on competition day. Students refer to this as a "BYOJ" or "Bring Your Own Junk"!

4. Don't throw away your junk! Recruit students to help you "trash" old projects. Tear apart the old projects and save all the materials that can be recycled or reused. You will save money and teach students a few lessons on conservation in the process.

[Back to top](#)

How do I find time to prepare the junk boxes?

If you don't have time to make up the junk boxes before the day of the event, set out the supplies and give each team an empty box or container, such as old shoe boxes, plastic containers, or cardboard boxes. The students can then pick up the supplies they need in assembly line fashion.

Once the competition is finished, follow the same procedure to clean out the junk boxes. Don't forget to download "official" [Junk Box labels](#) (pdf) to decorate your boxes!

[Back to top](#)

What can I do to get the community involved?

1. Do you know of a community member who loves to create gadgets? Parents and grandparents are a great source to tap for extra help. Be sure to have extra materials available, as they may want to build their own contraptions.
2. Are there businesses in your area that are interested in "adopting" classrooms? Ask them to sponsor an event by providing money for supplies or people to work with the students and act as event judges. Ask for donations of food coupons, gift certificates, or other items that can be used to reward winning teams.
3. Don't overlook the power of the media! Invite the local newspaper or television station to one of your events to generate interest in the Junk Box Wars. Submit articles to your local newspaper to recognize the winning teams for each event and display the winning projects in your classroom or local businesses. Download official [Junk Box Wars Award Certificates](#) (pdf)!
4. Network with local schools to create Junk Box Wars competitions. Arrange a competition at your school with two or three different projects and invite other classrooms or schools in your area to participate! Each group can be required to supply the junk for one of the events.