

Frequently Asked Questions

About STEAM

What is STEAM?

STEAM is a type of hands-on programming for kids that emphasizes exploration in the sciences. STEAM was born out of the STEM movement in which each letter of the acronym stands for a scientific concept. STEAM adds the Art component which allows kids to express the STEM ideas in a creative way.

Letter	Concept	Application
S	Science	Experimenting to discover why something happens
T	Technology	Designing, building and using tools
E	Engineering	Identifying a problem and then finding and developing a solution
A	Arts	Illustrating a concept or solution through creative media
M	Mathematics	Using a variety of skills including recognition of numbers, shapes and patterns, sorting, comparison and equation solving

Why are STEAM programs at public libraries important?

A library setting allows children to participate in STEM/STEAM activities in a non-threatening, non-traditional learning environment. Libraries can offer additional resources like books, magazines and movies that allow for further exploration in an area that is of particular interest to the child, providing an added bonus to library circulation. Instead of working strictly with a classroom teacher, younger children participating in library STEAM events can share the experience with their caregivers, building and strengthening those relationships while showing caregivers the potential for enjoying such activities outside of the library.

I don't have a degree in any of those areas...can I still lead STEAM?

Absolutely! With the right materials and a little creativity, program leaders can create highly successful STEAM programming no matter whether they have an extensive background in the sciences or no background at all.

How can I incorporate STEAM into my programming?

Libraries can incorporate STEAM elements into their programming in a variety of ways including passive programming (like fish tanks or ant farms), STEAM Storytime add-ons, STEAM clubs, STEAM fairs, stand-alone STEAM

programming and STEAM activities in conjunction with makerspace programming.

About The Projects

How do I find a project or group of projects that fit the theme of my program?

Each of the projects is linked to all subjects that apply so that you can search for a Material theme (like pencils, magnets or pool noodles), Concept theme (like flight, colors or towers) or Principal theme (like buoyancy, density or magnetism). Most projects fit into at least one theme in each category.

How much time do I need to allow for each project?

Since libraries generally do not have the ability to provide STEAM opportunities that require large amounts of time to complete the project or elapsed periods of time to record numerous observations, it is essential to have access to simpler projects that can be completed in a short amount of time. Depending on how much prep is done before the event and how much is left to be done by the kids, most projects in the STEAM Stuff Digital Library can be completed in approximately 10-15 minutes. Events that include 5-7 projects should keep the kids busy for about 60 – 90 minutes.

Have the projects been used before?

Yes! There is nothing more frustrating than finding an idea online that looks amazing but due to poorly written instructions or difficult to acquire materials, these fabulous ideas can prove to be nothing more than disappointing duds that no amount of engineering can fix. Every project in the DL collection has been developed, modified (if needed) and used in a STEAM event.

What age group are the projects designed for?

All of the projects have been used with elementary age children (grades 1-5). The Ellsworth Public Library Saturday STEAM program has kids from this entire age range working on the same projects at the same time. The kids go "free range" from project to project at their own pace. The projects have worked well for the entire age range with the younger ones only needing assistance occasionally (usually seeking help from the older kids instead of us - which is awesome to see) and the older ones figuring out that they can usually do a bit more with the concept if they want to.

However, if the “prep” work for the project was left for the kids to do for themselves, most projects would also work well for grades 6-8.

Are the supplies easy to find?

Yes! One of the criteria for being included in the DL collection is that all supplies needed for the project are easy to find (or recycled) and inexpensive (or free).

Why are some of the items only links to other websites and not viewable or downloadable from this DL like everything else?

Sometimes great ideas, templates or handouts are not okay to share without the creator's permission. In those cases, we've provided a link so that the items can be acquired directly from the creator.

Are there any restrictions to the use of the projects that I download or print from this digital library?

Images in this collection may be used by individuals for fair and public use, such as for creating STEAM events at the local library. Any reproduction of these images for commercial, or financial gain, is prohibited without written permission from the creator.

Can I submit an idea to the DL that worked well for my team?

Absolutely! The submission will have to meet all of our DL criteria and not be based on any copyrighted material. Click on the "Contact Us" tab at the bottom of the library page and tell us all about your idea. We will let you know whether we will be able to add it to the collection or not.

About The Digital Library

Where did you get the idea for the DL's banner?

The banner was designed by the kids in the STEAM Saturday program at Ellsworth Public Library. They selected the colors that they thought worked best for each of the concepts represented by the STEAM acronym. Then they played around with the shade of each color until they found the combination that they could all agree on.