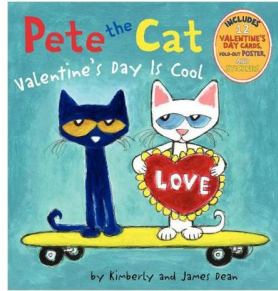


## **Valentine's Day is Cool! – Build a Mailbox**



***Pete the Cat thinks Valentine's isn't cool-- that is, until he realizes how many special cats there are in his life! Pete works hard to make Valentine's Day cards for everyone, and it turns out to be the grooviest Valentine's Day ever. But what happens when he's realized he's forgotten to make a card for a very important cat.***

**Materials:** Book “Pete the Cat: Valentine’s Day is Cool!” one “VALENTINE LETTER” per group DUPLO hula hoops Picture card of mail box types

### **Background Info:**

#### ***What is a mailbox?***

A mailbox is a box, either for everyone to use or for just one house to use, in which mail is placed for pickup and delivery by the post office. Mail can be many things, letters, postcards, magazines, packages and advertisements. Mailboxes can be found in many places – mail is picked up by a mail carrier who takes the mail back to the post office where it is sorted and sent on its way.

**Intro:** Review rules and process of engineering from last session. Tell students that mailboxes can be found in many places. What

is a mail box? What is mail? Explain that mailboxes can come in many different sizes and shapes. Share the picture card and definitions of the different types of mail boxes. Ask: Where have you seen mailboxes at? How do you use a mailbox? Have you ever mailed a letter? How does the mail carrier know when to pick up mail? (*Times are posted on public mailboxes and flags are put up on private mailboxes.*)

**Story:** Explain to the students that today's story has to do with a cool cat and a special holiday. Ask: What holiday do we celebrate in February? Valentine's Day! Explain that each year on February 14<sup>th</sup>, many people exchange cards, candy, gifts or flowers with their special "valentine"- someone that they like a lot. Ask if anyone in class has received a valentine before. How did they receive it? Tell students that many valentines are mailed in mailboxes. Read aloud "***Pete the Cat: Valentine's Day is Cool!***" and discuss elements of the story, problems in the story, and how the problems were solved.

**Challenge:** Review the different types of mail boxes again with students. Tell the class that each group will be designing and building a mailbox for Pete the Cat to send off a valentine (*show "valentines" and make sure students know that they are not real so they MUST NOT open them!*) The mailbox they build must have an opening that the "valentine" will fit into. It must be enclosed in all four sides. It must have a way for the mail carrier to know that there is mail in the box and a way to get the valentine out. What kind of mail box will they make?

**Build:** Divide students into work groups. If you like, assign one student to be the “foreman”. The foreman will make sure that everyone works together and presents questions to you on behalf of the group. Give each group a “valentine”. Monitor each group by observing interaction, and asking pertinent questions such as “Can the valentine fit in that opening?” and “How can you make the mailbox so that it has four sides? We don’t want the valentine to fall out or get wet if it rains!” Allow students approximately 20 minutes to build.

**Debrief:** Gather the students back together and discuss problems they had and how they solved them. Ask “What worked best?” “What didn’t work?” “What did you wish you had to work with?”

**Presentation:** Visit each group’s construction. The group presenting are called the “**Sitters**” because they sit and describe what they’ve done. The teacher and the rest of the class are called the “**Standers**” because they stand around the presenters in a circle to observe and ask questions. The standers and the sitters change depending on the group presenting. Which groups were able to build a mailbox that the valentine could fit into and be taken out of? What did they do to show the mail carrier that there was mail in the box?