



## **LEAP Science Kit FAQ's**

### **What Are LEAP Kits?**

LEAP kits are boxed sets that include science equipment and/or specimens along with supplementary materials including books, DVDs, posters, and other materials that create a complete learning package.

### **What topics do they cover?**

LEAP kits cover topics ranging from Astronomy through Zoology. A complete listing of the titles can be found on the HCPL website: <http://hcplonline.org/programs/leap/> Select a title to see the Materials Page that lists the contents of the kit along with the "What to Know About This Kit" that describes the kinds of activities that can be done with the kit.

### **Do they target a specific age group?**

The original grant that created the collection targeted children in grades 3-8. We have since expanded the collection to include kits for children in grades K-8. Each kit is labeled with a target age range, however many kits can be used by younger or older audiences.

### **How much do kits cost?**

Kits range in price from under \$100 to over \$400, depending on the contents.

### **Where can I purchase the equipment?**

The science equipment in LEAP kits is most often purchased from vendors who supply school science teachers. Like libraries, school teachers want durable items that can be used repeatedly, versus the toy market that expects a single child/family to use an item once or twice.

Specific suppliers:

LEGO Education: WeDo Robots

K'NEX Education: Build a Car, Solar Energy, Wind Energy, Water Energy, Bridge Engineering

Educational Innovations: Magiscope Microscope

Elenco Electronics/C&S Sales: Snap Circuits, Alternative Energy

BirdBrain Technologies: Finch Robots

Osmo: Coding, Newton, Monster, Masterpiece, Numbers, Pizza Co., Tangrams, Numbers, & Words

ThinkFun: Laser Maze and Laser Maze Jr. (from Brain Builders Kits)



General suppliers that sell a variety of materials. These vendors may sell the same items and we pick and choose who currently has the best prices.

Delta Education: Beginner microscope slides that are wrapped (less breakable)  
Ward's Natural Science: geology specimens  
Nasco: dinosaur specimens  
Carolina Biological Supply Company  
Acorn Naturalist: binoculars, creek and pond materials  
Learning Resources

Books and DVDs are purchased through various library vendors.

It can be useful to attend a conference sponsored by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). NSTA has 3 regional conferences each year, plus a major national event. The major science suppliers will be at any of these.

### **Do the kits contain consumables that need to be replaced?**

Kits contain very few “consumable” items. We do not circulate chemicals or other items that might be used up after one use. We do include batteries in some kits and coverslips for microscope slides.

### **How are they packaged?**

The outermost containers that get marked with the library's information, the kit title and barcode, etc. are translucent boxes from a company called Really Useful Boxes (<http://www.reallyusefulproducts.co.uk/usa/>). We either order them directly or via Office Depot depending on the size. They are durable and stack nicely.

We use tackle boxes with movable dividers to organize small pieces from LEGO or K'NEX kits. Take a look at the “Bridge Engineering” kit on our website to see how pieces are organized. The numbers tell the patron and Circulation staff how many of each piece should be in a compartment.

Each kit contains a binder that has a listing of all the items that should be in the kit. Kits with tackle boxes contain an extra page that shows what should be in each compartment. In the case of the “Bridge Engineering” kit example, the Materials page is the cover of the binder, the “What to Know About This Kit” page is the 2<sup>nd</sup> page, and the full-page photograph of the tackle box is the 3<sup>rd</sup> page. The binder also contains the user manual as well as booklists.

### **How long do they checkout?**

LEAP kits can be checked out for a week at a time, and can be renewed twice if no there are no holds placed for the item. We charge \$2.00 per day as an overdue fee, which is consistent with our overdue fees for DVDs and other special items.



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### **What happens when something is missing?**

Our experience is that very few items actually go missing. The most likely pieces to go missing are small pegs or connectors. These items are easy to replace and if a kit is returned without one or two small pieces we will generally decide not to charge replacement fees. If larger pieces are missing when a kit is returned we will call the last borrower to see if the items can be recovered. If they can't be located then the borrower is charged the replacement cost of the item plus a processing fee.