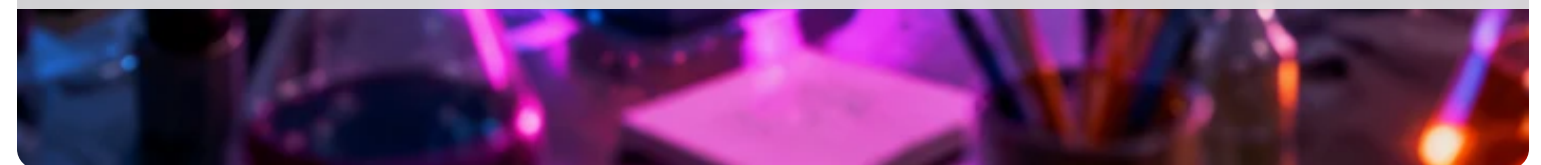


# The Great Science Project Showdown

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Mr. Harrison stood by the blackboard, pointing to a large drawing of a rumbling volcano. Leo and his classmates leaned forward in their chairs, eyes wide with excitement as the teacher announced their next big science project.



As soon as the teacher said the words group work, a loud chatter erupted across the classroom. Leo, Maya, Sam, and Zoe quickly moved their desks together, eager to build the ultimate erupting volcano.



The excitement quickly turned to confusion when Maya grabbed the poster board, declaring herself the artistic director. Leo frowned, gripping his notebook tightly because he had already sketched out a detailed plan to lead the design.



Sam raised his hand and insisted that he should be the one to mix the baking soda and vinegar because he loved chemical reactions. However, Zoe argued that she was the most careful organizer and should manage the main eruption sequence.



A heavy silence fell over the group as arms crossed and eyebrows furrowed in frustration. The beautiful blueprint of the volcano sat untouched in the middle of the cluster of desks, surrounded by pouting faces.



Leo looked around at his upset friends and realized that their project would never get built if everyone kept fighting for the spotlight. He took a deep breath, opened his notebook, and suggested they make a list of every single task needed for the project.



Maya looked at Leo's list and realized that painting the volcano structure was just as important as drawing the initial layout. She smiled and offered to share the artistic duties with Leo, blending their ideas together on the big poster board.



Zoe and Sam looked at the remaining tasks and realized they could team up for the big finale. Zoe agreed to measure out the precise ingredients into small cups, while Sam would have the honor of pouring them in to trigger the bubbling eruption.



With the roles finally sorted out, the gloom in the classroom evaporated into pure energy. Hands flew everywhere as the four friends painted, cut cardboard, and measured liquids, working together like a perfectly timed machine.



The next day, the group stood proudly before the class as their cardboard volcano erupted with a magnificent, bubbly red foam. Leo laughed and high-fived his teammates, realizing that sharing the work made the victory so much sweeter.