How to Construct a Data Table

NOTE: A link to the student version of this "How To" can be found in the student edition at point of use. It can also be found in the Student Resources menu at the top of the screen.

As students conduct investigations, they may not know how to organize the data that they are observing. If they cannot organize their data, they probably will have difficulty drawing valid conclusions. In *How to Construct a Data Table,* students are given specific steps to think about and design their data tables. Many of the steps take place before students actually start the investigation so they are able to think about the data they need to collect and how to organize that information before they are caught up in the investigation itself.

When students first begin constructing data tables, it may be helpful to take them through each of the steps one at a time. You should confirm that they understand the information that needs to be collected before they begin drawing the table so they do not become frustrated if they have drawn the wrong thing. Students will also find it helpful if you can provide them with page management guidance. For example, you might tell them to turn their notebooks to a landscape orientation before drawing or to make sure their tables take up at least half a page. That way, students will be more likely to have enough room to write their observations and other data. As students complete their investigations, you may need to remind them often to make sure they are recording information in their tables. This is a hallmark of good scientific work as it ensures that the data that is being recorded is accurate.