Reaction Times

What you'll need:

- A pencil
- A 30 cm ruler

How you do it:

1. **One person holds the ruler near the 30 cm mark and lets it hang vertically.**
2. **The other person places their thumb and index finger either side of the 0 cm mark ready to catch it when it falls - their fingers shouldn't touch the ruler.**
3. **Without warning the person holding the ruler lets go and the subject tries to catch the ruler as soon as possible.**

   Hint: To prevent guessing, vary the time before letting go of the ruler.
4. **The level (in cm) just above the subject's first finger where the ruler was caught is recorded.**

How does it work?

This experiment tests how long it takes the brain to translate visual information into your voluntary (or conscious) motor commands and finally to initiate a response (grasping finger movements) that leads to the ruler being caught. The shorter the time between these events, the faster your reaction time.

As with all science experiments, make sure you have a responsible person supervise you at all times. And remember to have fun!