

3-D Pumpkins

Objective: Students will learn many facts about pumpkins while creating a visual display of a mini pumpkin.



Common Core State Standards:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3; W.4.2

Next Generation Science Standards:
Animals, Plants & their Environment: K-LS1-1
Life Cycles & Traits: 3-LS1-1; 3-LS3-1

Suggested Reading:
Too Many Pumpkins by Linda White (ISBN-13: 9780823413201)
IAITC's Pumpkin Ag Mag

- Materials Needed:**
- Orange construction paper
 - Green construction paper
 - Hole punch
 - 2 paper fasteners for each pumpkin
 - Scissors

- Procedure:**
1. Begin by reading the Pumpkin Ag Mag.
 2. Cut 3 strips about 1 in. wide down the short side of the orange paper.
 3. Write a pumpkin fact on each strip.
 4. Holding the strips together in a stack, use a paper punch to make 3 holes in the strips. Punch one in the middle and one 1/2 inch from each end.
 5. Cut strips of green construction paper into 1 inch by 1 inch squares. Punch a hole in the middle of these squares. This will be the pumpkin's stem.
 6. Still holding the strips together, place the stem on top of the middle hole and put a paper fastener through the stem and the orange strips of paper in the middle hole.
 7. Bring together the ends of the long orange strips and fasten them with a paper fastener.
 8. Spread out the paper strips to form a pumpkin.

Another Variation: Trace your hand for the leaf, keeping your fingers together. Cut strips of green and curl them with a pencil for vines. Finish pumpkin by completing steps 7 and 8.

Popcorn—From Family Favorite to State Snack

Grade Level: 4-6

Objective: After completing this activity, students will be more familiar with the legislative process in Illinois and how a bill becomes a law.

Illinois Learning Standards: 1.B.2a; 1.B.2d; 2.B.2a; 3.A.2; 3.B.2b; 3.B.2c; 3.B.2d; 3.C.2a; 3.C.2b

Assessment Framework: 1.4.09; 2.4.14

Suggested Reading Materials:

The Popcorn Book by Tomie dePaola

ISBN-13: 9780823405336

How a Bill Becomes a Law by John Hamilton

ISBN-13: 9781591976462

Illinois AITC Specialty Crops Ag Mag



Other Resources:

Schoolhouse Rock!—Election Collection (features *I'm Just a Bill*)

UPC: 786936771350

Background Information:

Popcorn is a whole grain maize product. Popcorn kernels are the only corn kernels that can pop, because its kernels contain a small amount of water in the center. When heated, this water boils and turns to steam, which creates pressure within the kernel. This pressure causes the kernel to POP! Compared to field corn, the kernel size is smaller and may come in a variety of colors ranging from yellow to purple.

Did you know that popcorn is Illinois' State Snack Food? That's right! Second and third grade students from Joliet, Illinois proposed popcorn as a state symbol. Popcorn is a popular snack. Americans eat 16 billion quarts of popcorn each year, which equals 59 quarts per person. It is a good thing that Illinois farmers produce a lot of popcorn. Farmers use over 28,000 acres of Illinois land to grow our state snack.

Activity Instructions:

1. Discuss popcorn and popcorn production in Illinois.
2. Talk about how Illinois' State Snack Food is popcorn.
3. How did popcorn become our State Snack Food? Introduce Illinois legislature information. Talk about how a bill becomes a law. In order to help a bill become law, citizens and supporters of bills write letters to their local legislators, newspapers and other media giving facts about their idea and why it should be supported.
4. Have your students think of what they would want the State Snack Food to be. Have them write a fake letter to their local legislator about why their pick should be the State Snack Food. They should include why it is unique to Illinois and how it is related to Illinois agriculture (*hint: look at the ingredients and what may be grown in Illinois*).

Easy Egg Shell Planters

Want to start a herb garden but don't have a good place to plant them? Try this fun and easy planter idea!

All you need are egg shell halves that you have cracked and used for cooking and baking. To make sure they are clean, have an adult help you rinse the egg shells in very hot water. Then turn them over and let them dry. You can decorate your eggs prior to planting by dyeing them or painting designs on them. Be careful not to break your shells! After you have finished decorating your eggs, put them into the egg carton so that they stand upright. Add a cotton ball to the bottom of each eggshell to help absorb water. Add potting soil and then you are ready to plant. Add your favorite herb seeds to your egg shells. To keep from getting your herbs confused, use coffee stirrer tags to identify them! Once the plants have grown to about 3 inches and have a couple sets of leaves, they can be transplanted into larger pots, egg shell and all. Just be sure to crack the egg shells so that the roots can get to the new soil. After your herbs are grown, try using them in some of your favorite dishes. Herbs can add lots of flavor!

