

Pumpkin Life Cycle

A Systems Thinking and Cycles Activity

Estimated time for activity 1 class period

Essential Question

- What is the complete life cycle of a pumpkin?

Materials

- [Pumpkin Life Cycle Cards](#)
- Pumpkin Life Cycle Vocabulary Terms (Pumpkin Seed, Sprout, Vines, Yellow blossom (flower pollination), Seedling, Green Pumpkin, Orange Pumpkin, Slice of pumpkin pie)
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Real pumpkin (if accessible)

Background

Everything we consume comes from nature and returns to nature. What is the complete journey of a pumpkin, and how is it connected to other systems? As students trace the life cycle of pumpkin they build an understanding of the complexity involved in enjoying something as simple as a slice of pumpkin pie.

Activity

Whole Class: Teacher Led Pumpkin Life Cycle Example

~30 minutes

1. **Teacher Prompt:** Where do pumpkins come from?
2. Have the students put the Pumpkin Life Cycle cards in order. Ask them to arrange themselves from seed to pumpkin pie. Encourage the students to stand up holding each picture and move around until they agree on the correct order. Incorporate the word association cards to match with the pictures. (Students can physically move their bodies to represent each stage of the cycle.)
3. **Debrief:** Ask the students to tell the story of the pumpkin seed growing up. They can narrate it or draw a picture (model) of the journey. (This can be done in the student journals)

Discussion Questions ~15 minutes

- What happens to the pumpkin once its fully grown?
- Do you eat it? What parts of the pumpkin can you eat?
- Do you carve it?
- How does it decompose?

Resources:

This activity has been adapted with permission from Shelburne Farms Institute for Sustainable Schools, modified from "Cultivating Joy and Wonder"

https://shelburnefarms.org/sites/default/files/cultivatingjoywonder_all_smaller.pdf

GRADE LEVEL



GRADES K-2

CONNECTIONS TO THE BIG IDEAS OF SUSTAINABILITY



Cycles



Place



Community

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS



SCIENCE:
SYSTEMS &
SYSTEMS MODELS



SOCIAL STUDIES:
PRODUCTION,
DISTRIBUTION &
CONSUMPTION



ELA: READING
INFORMATIONAL
TEXT