

IT'S A FRUIT, IT'S A VEGETABLE, IT'S A PUMPKIN

BY ALLAN FOWLER

CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS

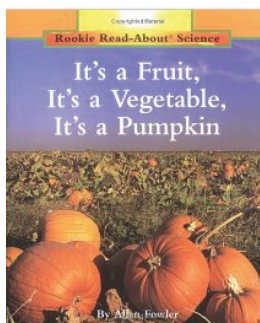
Grade Two: Reading Comprehension 2.4 Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition [e.g., why, what if, how]. 2.5 Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas.

Grade Three: Reading Comprehension 2.2 Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text. 2.3 Demonstrate comprehension by identifying answers in the text. 2.4 Recall major points in the text and make and modify predictions about forthcoming information. 2.5 Distinguish the main idea and supporting details in expository text.

Grade Four: Reading Comprehension 2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment). 2.5 Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.

Grade Five: Reading Comprehension 2.3 Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas. 2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge. 2.5 Distinguish facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text.

Grade Six: Reading Comprehension 2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.



GRADES: 2 - 6

READING LEVEL: ages 7-11

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to 1) distinguish how botanists and cooks determine whether a plant food is a fruit or vegetable; 2) describe how pumpkins grow and to what type of plant family pumpkins belong; and 3) list other plant foods that grow on vines.

This small book describes how pumpkins grow on vines, sometimes to enormous size!

- Discuss other plant foods that grow on vines. Which are fruits and which are vegetables? How do students know which are which? (Melons, cucumbers, zucchini and gourds grow on vines.)

Thus, vines can produce fruits or vegetables. Which of these categories does pumpkin belong to? Well, that depends on whom you ask!

Botanists, plant scientists, usually cast pumpkins as fruits because they house seeds, just as apples or grapes or kiwi do. But, cooks typically consider pumpkins as vegetables because 1) they are squash; 2) they are served similarly to other vegetables (however, sweet Thanksgiving pie might make some cooks rethink the issue and move to the "pumpkin is a fruit" group because fruits are often sweet tasting!)

- Talk about common classifications of fruits/vegetables that botanists might think of differently (e.g. tomatoes, summer squash, etc.). Use a Tree Map® to create categories of plant foods that are fruit or vegetable, those that grow on vines and, if desired, on other plants (trees, shrubs/bushes, underground, etc.)
- Discuss how vegetables and fruits usually taste. Which are often sweeter? Which are "savory," which in culinary terms (cooking terms) is "full flavored" or those flavors other than sweet. Note that we often classify as fruits those plant foods that taste sweet, whereas we often classify as vegetables those savory, non-sweet tasting plant foods.
- Find recipes using pumpkin. Do the recipes bolster favoring pumpkin as a fruit or vegetable? Why?

In the end, it doesn't really matter. Pumpkins are nutritious fruit/vegetables. The rich vitamin A source is maintained whether served as a side dish or dessert (though the added sugar and fat of pumpkin pie is another story!). It is true that fruit and vegetables often have nutrients in common; but, that's not always the case. What is important is to consume a variety of fruits and vegetables to insure nutrient needs are met.

For a more detailed look at pumpkin nutrition: <http://nutrican.fshn.uiuc.edu/tables/Pumpkin.html>.



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