

Activity: my own seed

Summary of activity

Pupils use equipment to plant their own seed and use speaking, listening and movement skills to consider the process of germination. Pupils reflect on their learning by creating an outdoor collage of a tree or other plant made from natural materials.

Learning objectives

1. To describe what a seed needs to grow.
2. To describe the role of roots, stems, leaves and flowers.

Preparation

Choose a suitable text to read as an introduction to seeds and/or growing. You may find these books useful for introducing this activity:

- *I Grew a Sunflower as Big as my Dad* by Jenny Alexander (ISBN 0-582-81722-6)
- *From Seed to Sunflower* by Gerald Legg (ISBN 0-5311-5334-7)
- *A Seed in Need* by Sam Godwin (ISBN 0-7500-2497-6)

Pupils should be asked to come to school prepared to spend time in the outdoors.

Resources

- Story about seeds and/ or growing.
- Plant pots.
- Trowels.
- Compost.
- Seeds.
- Watering can.

Introduction

Introduce this activity by reading one of the seed/ growing stories listed in the follow-up section.

Main Activity

1. Use a plant pot, trowel, compost seed and a watering can to demonstrate and talk through how a seed is planted, carefully explaining what you are doing at each stage.
2. Give pupils imaginary plant pots, trowels, compost, seeds and watering cans and ask them to use these materials to act out how they would plant the seedling. Support the class by reminding pupils at each stage "add in compost which holds water, goodness and warmth for your seed" and "don't forget your pot needs watering now" and so on.

3. Outside in the school grounds, put pupils in pairs and give each pair a set of seed planting equipment.
4. Facilitate a speaking and listening session where one pupil in a pair gives instructions to the other about how to plant the seed. You may choose to let the child in receipt of instructions ask questions, or you may wish them to just carry out the instructions without speaking.
5. Once every pupil has planted a seed, ask them to imagine that they are now climbing inside their pot and becoming their seed.
6. Ask pupils to think about what it would be like to be a seed underground and how it would feel to grow up into a plant. Pupils use movement to model how a seed germinates. You could use music to represent the sun and the rain, both of which would enable the seed to grow a little.
7. Bring the class back together and mind map the different parts of a plant/tree (roots, stem/trunk, leaves, flowers), using a real plant as a prop. they have collected.



Plenary

Pupils visit an outdoor space and use natural materials to create large scale natural collages to represent a tree or a plant. Pupils use their collage to point out the different parts of a plant.

Health and safety consideration

- Refer to your risk assessment for your school grounds.
- Complete a risk assessment if you leave the school grounds. Consider pupil specific risks.
- Consider activity specific risks such as collecting items for collage that may be dangerous, and ingesting soil.

Follow-up ideas

Why not plant some native trees or an orchard?

Pupils could plant acorns to establish a tree nursery.

Involve pupils in planting bulbs and observe their growth. Bulbs could be used to create mazes or decorative shapes.

Measure the growth of the seedlings every week. Plot the growth on graphs with other data such as temperature and rainfall.

Investigate how water, nutrients, sun and air are provided in your school grounds. Do you need to help your grounds to supply more of these things? Consider dry and shaded areas and why different plants grow in these places.

Investigate seeds from other countries, for example exotic fruits like coconut, passion fruit and avocado. Collect seeds of different shapes and use drama to explore different methods of seed dispersal.

Ask pupils to use their plenary collage to describe how a plant functions.

Create some raised beds in your grounds which can be used to grow crops all year round.



Play the germination game to better understand what a plant needs in order to survive. Make tokens to represent air, water, nutrients, sunshine and leaves. Each pupil is a plant trying to grow as many leaves as possible. To collect a leaf token you must hand over a sun, nutrient, air and water token which are distributed one at a time from different points around the school grounds. The aim of the game is to collect as many leaves as possible. Try adding the complication of a herbivorous animal or two who can run around and 'eat' seedlings when they are not at a feeding station.

Create smaller collages made from natural materials that can be displayed in school and ask pupils to label the names of the parts of their plant.

Take photographs of the different stages of planting a seed. Ask pupils to order the photographs correctly and then write instruction captions for each.