

IT'S A HARVEST HOEDOWN!

Here's a bumper crop of harvest activities just "ripe" for your autumn classroom.

ideas by Resa Audet and Kathy Wolf

Gather in the Harvest

Using reference materials, researching local crop production

Harvesttime brings to mind many images—Indian corn, yellow squash, orange pumpkins, and bushels of crisp, juicy apples. Introduce your students to harvesttime by reading the classic *Autumn Harvest* by Alvin Tresselt. Ask students what they think of when they hear "harvest." Explain that the harvest happens when crops are ready to be gathered.

Many crops—but not all—are harvested in the fall. Ask students to hypothesize why different crops are ready to harvest at different times. Have older students use encyclopedias and other reference books to find out when major crops are harvested in their own state. Call your local Agricultural Extension Service for additional information about crops grown in your area. As a class, make a list of crops along with the months in which farmers harvest them. If possible, ask a farmer to describe what harvesttime means to him. Are his crops harvested by machines or picked by field hands? Help students conclude that harvesttime means hard work. When crops are ready and the weather is right, farmers and helpers may work into the night to gather in the harvest.

We're Harvesting Good Books!

Promoting an enjoyment of books

To create an October reading-incentive bulletin board, enlarge one copy of the scarecrow pattern and six copies of the basket pattern on page 10. Color and cut out the scarecrow and mount it on the board. Program the baskets and cut slits in them as shown. Create a border of dried corn husks or twisted paper and corn cutouts. Add the title "We're Harvesting Good Books!" Duplicate the corn pattern on page 11 for each student. As each student finishes a book, have him fill in the information on an ear of corn and slip it into a basket.

To vary the display, change the title to "Something to Crow About!" and display students' good work. Or change the title to "We're All Ears for Vowels." Label the baskets with vowels. Program 24 ears of corn with words or pictures for students to match. Laminate both baskets and corn for durability. Place the corn cutouts in a basket near the board. Students choose ears of corn and place the ears in the correct baskets.



King Corn 🌽

**Recognizing similarities and differences,
Identifying corn products**

Find out why corn is king when it comes to farming in America. Display foods such as corn chips, corn cereal, corn on the cob, popcorn, canned corn, cornmeal, corn bread, corn syrup, and corn oil. Discuss the similarities and differences among these foods. Explain that all of these foods come from the corn plant.

To share corn facts with your students, make eight corn cutouts (see the pattern and note on page 11) and label each with one of the following facts:

- Corn is the most abundant grain in the Western Hemisphere.
- The United States produces more than half the corn grown in the world.
- Most of the corn is grown in the Corn Belt.
- Native Americans grew corn long before Columbus arrived.
- The kinds of corn grown today are improved for bigger and better harvests.
- Most of the corn grown today is field corn used to feed livestock.
- Corn is planted in long, straight rows to make it easier to harvest.
- Corn not fed to animals is made into other products in mills.

Mount the corn cutouts on a bulletin board and provide each student with a blank copy. Have each student list as many corn products as he can find on his pattern. Students can read labels at home or in grocery stores. (Examples include cereal, syrup, cornstarch, and oil, as well as ketchup, candies, ice cream, margarine, and sausage.) Have students cut out and color their ears and add them to the board.

From Field to Feast 🌽

Sequencing steps to plant and harvest corn

For a fascinating social studies lesson, follow the journey of corn from the field to the table. Read aloud *Corn Belt Harvest* by Raymond Bial. Have students locate the Corn Belt on a map of the United States. Then review the steps in the planting and harvesting of corn.

To prepare, make one copy of the corn pattern on page 11, mask out the words, and duplicate ten ears of corn. Color and cut out the ears; then print each sentence below on an ear. Laminate the ears and place them in a basket. Provide ten clip clothespins and help students clip the ears in order on a line below the chalkboard.

1. A huge tractor pulls a disk to break up the soil.
2. The farmer loads a planter with seed corn.
3. By late spring, young corn plants sprout.
4. By July, the corn may be "head-high."
5. In autumn, the green leaves turn light brown.
6. In late fall, machines called combines pick, shuck, and shell the ears.
7. Combines unload the corn into trucks or wagons.
8. The corn is stored in grain elevators.
9. Train cars take the corn to mills and processing plants.
10. At the mills, corn is made into corn products.

You may wish to place the laminated ears and an answer key in a basket at a learning center for individual sequencing practice. As a follow-up activity, assist students in preparing corn bread from a mix. Serve it warm with butter as you review the steps from field to feast!

