

# Sunflower Seed Activities



Try these fun, hands-on activities to introduce science basics: observing, measuring, describing, comparing, experimenting.

## **SUNFLOWER SPROUTS - Grades PreK - 4**

**MATERIALS.** For each student 4 sunflower seeds, zip lock sandwich bag, paper towel, scissors, tape, and for students in grades 2 through 4 copies of the *sprout observation sheet* (on reverse).

**STEPS.** Write the following instructions on your blackboard and demonstrate OR divide class into small groups and walk each group through the steps.

**1.** Cut the paper towel in half. **2.** Fold one of the halves in half. **3.** Pour a little bit of water onto the folded towel to make it DAMP. **4.** Put the damp towel into the plastic bag. **5.** Use the other half of the towel to wipe up spilled water, and then throw it away. **6.** Put sunflower seeds in the bag. Spread them out along the bottom. **7.** Zip the bag shut. **8.** Write your name and today's date on the label, and stick it on the bag. **9.** Tape the bag to the inside of a sunny window.

In hot, bright sun seeds should face into the classroom; in milder sun, seeds should face out. **OBSERVE.** Check seeds two or three times every day. How are they changing? Allow students 15 to 20 minutes to write what they see on their observation sheets (younger students should tell what they see). On the first day, describe how seeds were set up for observation. Once seeds have sprouted, start recording what happens every day. Remove a sprout from a bag and look at it with a magnifier. Be sure to zip the bag when you're done and return it to the window.

**MEASURE.** As seeds sprout, measure every day. Measure once in the morning and once at the end of the school day. Use standard and metric rulers OR covert metric to standard or vice versa. Write down how long sprouts are on the observation sheet.

**DRAW AND NAME.** When your sprouts have several leaves, draw a picture and name the parts (older students should write names on their drawings)--root, stem, seed leaf, leaf. (Two seed leaves (also called cotyledons) emerge first from the stem. Other leaves sprout above the seed leaves.)

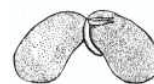
## **MORE SCIENCE - Grades 2 - 6**

**COMPARE.** Sprout other kinds of seeds: popcorn, black-eyed peas, beans (soak peas and beans overnight for quick results--lima beans work well). Do they germinate faster? Grow faster? Do bean sprouts look like sunflower sprouts? How are they different. You can create a big research project by collecting all kinds of seeds and filling your windows with sandwich bags: popcorn, raw peanuts, black-eyed peas, green peas, beans (pinto, navy, lima, great northern, black, adzuki), alfalfa--and flower and vegetable seeds collected from parents or from your school garden; and-or wildflower seeds collected in your neighborhood. Use a different *sprout observation sheet* for each kind of seed.

**EXPERIMENT.** Try sprouting sunflower seeds in a dark closet or in the refrigerator or in a window on the other side of your building. How do they compare with your original seeds? Try sprouting sunflower seeds in soil. Place small pots near the window you used for your bags. When sprouts have several leaves, dig them up and gently rinse soil off. Are sprouts grown in soil different from sprouts grown in bags?

## **SEED DISSECTION - Grades 1 - 4**

**MATERIALS.** Lima beans and plastic knives.



Soak beans in warm water overnight. Cut soft beans in half as shown. You should find the tiny embryo plant: two cotyledons (seed leaves) and a root-stem.

Plant lessons and more sunflower activities at  
<http://www.earthsbirthday.org/butterflies/gardens/easy.asp>



**Earth's Birthday Project PO Box 1536 Santa Fe NM 87504**  
**1-800-698-4438 [www.earthsbirthday.org](http://www.earthsbirthday.org)**



# Sprout Observation Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Kind of Seeds \_\_\_\_\_

Date	What Happened
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	