



Materials

- Pumpkins (1 for every 3-5 students)
- Journals
- Pencils
- Bowls and/or bags to collect seeds and pulp
- Knife
- Scale
- Rulers
- String
- A large, clear container of water
- Examples of other vegetables in the pumpkin family
- If inside: Newspaper



FIGURE 1 Do pumpkins float or sink?

PUMPKIN DATA COLLECTION

Lesson by Leslie Peck (Horticulture Agent, Forsyth County Cooperative Extension, FoodCorps NC Alum with Dillard Academy Charter School)

Time Needed: 45 minutes

This is a good lesson for October. The students will investigate a pumpkin and use it to practice estimation and data collection skills. Students will learn to estimate and to measure: height, circumference, weight.

LET'S DO IT!

Today we are learning about pumpkins. Have students share what they already know about pumpkins.

1. Draw on the board the following chart and have students copy it in their journals.
2. Explain what it means to estimate. Split the class into groups and give each group a pumpkin. Have the group record their estimates in the chart.
3. Have each group record the measurements for height, circumference, and weight.

4. Together, test if the pumpkin sinks or floats and record, *Figure 1*.
5. Why does the pumpkin sink or float? Because there is air inside.
6. Open each group's pumpkin so they can observe this and remove the seeds and pulp, *Figure 2*.
7. Collect each group's seeds and label the bag with the group name and estimate.
8. Clean up pumpkins and hands.

TALK IT OVER

1. Have one student from each group participate in the closing.
2. What is an estimate?
3. How did you collect your measurements?
4. Why did the pumpkin float?

VARIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

- You can use whatever vegetables you have growing in the garden! But be sure to modify the data you collect, because cucumbers won't float!
- Dry seeds and have students count them in the next lesson.
- Roast and taste pumpkin seeds
- Share fun facts about pumpkins
- Show other vegetables in the pumpkin family

PUMPKIN DATA COLLECTION

	Estimate	Actual
Height		
Circumference		
Weight		
Sink or Float?		
Number of Seeds		



FIGURE 2 Opening a pumpkin and exploring the insides is a favorite fall activity