

# “Decaying Pumpkins”

**Lesson Plan by:** Liz Myers

**Lesson:** Use tools to discover and describe a decayed pumpkin.

**Length:** 30 minutes

**Age or Grade Intended:** 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

**Academic Standards:** Science

1.1.4 Use tools, such as rulers and magnifiers, to investigate the world and make observations.

**Performance Objectives:** The students will use tools to discover how a pumpkin decays over time observing many differences between a fresh and decayed pumpkin.

**Advanced Preparation by Teacher:**

- Obtain fresh and decayed pumpkins
- Obtain tools for each group of students

**Assessment:** The students will be assessed through observation during the project.

**Procedure:**

**Introduction/Motivation:** “Every Halloween, I walk around and see all different kinds of pumpkins on the porches of houses. I also like to carve pumpkins into jack-o-lanterns so I can light them up at night. Yesterday I decided I wanted to clean my yard. I walked out onto my porch and found something where my pumpkins were sitting.” Hand out the containers with the decayed pumpkin in them to each table. Keep the lid on them so the students don’t mess with it. “I believe they are my pumpkins, but what happened to them?”

**Step-by-Step Plan:**

1. First, before we examine what is in the containers, let’s look at a fresh pumpkin. Hand out cut up pieces of the pumpkin. Tell the students to feel it, smell it, look at it, and observe as many characteristics that they can.
2. Write the characteristics they observed on the board and have them draw a picture in their journals.
3. I have placed on your tables a container that contains something in it. Please do not do anything until I have said all the directions. When I take the lid off, I want you to describe the characteristics of the item. Feel, smell, and look at it. PLEASE DO NOT TASTE IT. Make sure you have gloves on while you do this.
4. On your table, I have also placed a baggy that has tweezers and a magnifying glass. Feel free to use these materials to help you observe the item.
5. I will be walking around to help each group.
6. After the groups are done exploring the decayed pumpkin, have them describe the pumpkin and write the descriptions on the board.
7. Have a discussion with the class about what they think happened to this pumpkin. Describe how everything decays if they do not have the proper amount of food and water.

**Questions to ask the groups:**

1. Is this a pumpkin, like I thought, in the container?
2. What are the differences in characteristics between the two pumpkins?
3. What do you think happened?
4. Why do you think that happened?

**Closure:** On your table I gave you different tools you used to help you explore the decayed pumpkin. How did they help you? Why do you think people use different tools to help them?

**Adaptations/Enrichment:** The teacher will observe the students with learning disabilities more closely. The teacher will help them observe the pumpkin more closely and show them things they may not discover otherwise.

**Self-Reflection:**

- Were the students able to describe the differences between the pumpkins?
- Were the students able to use the tools properly to help them with their observations?