

How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin?

by Margaret McNamara

Young readers count along as a class learns fascinating facts about pumpkins and discover that big things can come in small packages.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *Have you ever eaten pumpkin seeds?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an “I wonder” statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder how much that pumpkin weighs?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out “rare words” (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin?*

- million: a large number
- even: equal in amount, number or extent
- odd: not divisible exactly by 2
- scooping: to hollow something out, remove something
- stem: the main stalk of a plant
- caps: the top of a pumpkin, removed once cut
- peered: to look closely and very carefully
- slimy: slippery or oily
- stringy: long, sticky strands
- pairs: two similar things used together
- chanted: a phrase spoken repeatedly
- ones: counting things by one
- fives: counting things in groups of five
- tens: counting things in groups of ten

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Why did Charlie not like lining up at school?
- What was on Mr. Tiffin's desk when the kids arrived at school? How many pumpkins were there?
- What were the students trying to guess about the pumpkins?
- How did the students get the pumpkin seeds out?
- How did the seeds feel?
- How many bowls did the students fill with seeds?
- What did Mr. Tiffin do with the seeds?
- How did the class decide to count the seeds?
- Which pumpkin did Charlie count?
- Which pumpkin had the most seeds inside?
- Why did the smallest pumpkin have the most seeds?
- How did the class line up at the end of the day?



Do

Pumpkin Exploration

Before: cut the top off the pumpkin, replace the lid until the activity.

You will need: one large pumpkin, newspaper, spoons, bowl and paper plates

After reading the story, present the class with a pumpkin. Let the kids guess how many seeds they think are inside the pumpkin. Take off the pumpkin lid and show each child what it looks like on the inside. Allow the children enough time to describe what it smells, looks and feels like. Give each child a spoon and allow them to scoop some of the seeds out into the bowl. If desired, allow the children to scoop out the insides by using their hands. After the pumpkin is cleaned out, spread the seeds out on a cookie baking sheet. Have the children separate the seeds from the stringy substance. Once all the seeds are separated, have the children place the seeds on paper plates in groups of 10. Once all the seeds are in groups, practice counting by 10s to find out how many seeds there are.

Additional Activity: If desired, take the seeds home, wash them and bake them. Serve the baked pumpkin seeds the next day.