

Lesson 2: Autumn Activities

Objective:

- Review Halloween vocab and have students use it in a creative way
- Have students learn about some other fall activities
- Have students brainstorm some ideas related to sustainability and pumpkins

1. Review Halloween vocab (using photos from last time) [5 min]

pumpkin
Jack-o-Lantern
Trick-or-treat
candy
costumes
witch
ghost
headless horseman
skeleton
witch

Then do a creative activity: [10-15 min]

- a. Design own costume (maybe do it similar to monster exchange game)
- b. Draw on Jack-O-Lantern and describe what it is
- c. Have them go in a circle, writing a story with each sentence including a vocab word
- d. [Worksheet] Rearrange jumbled sentences

2. Talk about other fall activities [5 min]

- Leaf peeping/hiking
- Apple/pumpkin picking
- Pumpkin boat race

3a. Have students learn about environmental issues with pumpkins

- Read through article about pumpkin shortage due to lack of water
- Identify causes of problem
- Identify effects of problem
- Have them fill in worksheet with web

3b. Have students brainstorm what can be done with pumpkins after [5-10 min]

- Bake: pumpkin pie, bread, muffins, soup, seeds
- Donate to zoo: snack/enrichment
- Compost

Extra time: Review difficult sounds from last time (e vs. i, g vs. j, y)

Sources:

[«Save a Pumpkin, Save the Planet: Halloween Waste - Where to Start»](#) *PlanetSave*.

[«How to Compost a Halloween Pumpkin»](#) *Sustainable America*.

[«Is Carving Jack-o-Lanterns Wasteful?»](#) *Grist*.

Future ideas: Talk about home, ask them to describe their village/favorite place/draw ideal world, [Legend of Sleepy Hollow](#); Thanksgiving time: food, Stone Barns.

California Drought's Newest Target: The Great Pumpkins

BY MARK KOBBA

The list of crops affected by California's ongoing drought is growing. This time it's pumpkins. The lack of water is forcing many pumpkin growers to face the possibility of plowing over their pumpkin patches sooner than later.

Next to Illinois, California is the second-largest pumpkin producer in the country. "The impact is very severe on us and if we don't get rain this winter we won't be able to grow anything," said Wayne Martin, a farmer in Fresno, California. "It's very bad here with the little water we have," he said.

Martin explained that because he's had to pump more water out of the ground than usual to produce this year's crop, the cost of doing business has gone up, "We've had to pay more for the water and that means consumers will pay more."

Doug Perry runs Perry Farms in Fremont, California, and grows pumpkins on 91 acres. He's actually growing smaller pumpkins because of water cutbacks. Perry said he's fortunate to have access to water that other farmers might not have in drier parts of the state. But like Martin, he worries about next year and beyond. "This winter is key for a lot of us," Perry said.

California's pumpkin crop

Most pumpkins are grown on smaller farms. And they don't go far from the fields. Despite their tough exterior, pumpkins bruise easily and are rarely shipped across state lines.

Most are sold locally. In fact—Halloween jack-o'-lanterns aside—the bulk of the pumpkin crop is used for canned pie filling.

Other crops feeling the heat from the California drought include, hay, wheat, olives and corn. Livestock deaths have increased due to lack of water in the state. Even California's rice production has been hit. Dairy production is also down.

Any chance of rain for this winter seems bleak. That's leaving farmers like Martin, who's grown pumpkins for 30 years, feeling helpless. "All we can do is pray for rain," he said. "What else is there to do."

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