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TALE OF TWO CORNS: USES



Instructions & Lesson

Lesson:

- As we have already discussed, there is more than one type of corn out there. The two main types of corn are sweet corn and field corn and they are used for completely different things.
- The makeup of each kind of corn is different. Since sweet corn is harvested when it is immature and still in the milk stage, when the kernel is squishy, it is used primarily for human consumption.
- When sweet corn is harvested, it is picked from the field and then sold by the grower at local markets or sent to packers where it is processed.
- Sweet corn is used for human consumption but in different forms. It can be eaten fresh right off the cob, from a can, or even frozen.
- Field corn, on the other hand, has many different uses. After it is harvested, it is usually stored at a local grain elevator or on a farm's bin site, which holds the corn and dries it.
- From storage at either the elevator or a bin site, corn is taken to many different places depending on what it is going to be used for.
- Some corn is taken to feed mills and other locations where livestock feed can be made.
- Also, a lot of the corn goes to ethanol plants so that it can be made into fuel for people to use.
- Some corn is also sent to barges on local rivers where it travels down rivers and may eventually end up on its way to other countries.
- The rest of the corn is sent to various processing plants where it can be made into all kinds of products and many of which you would never think of. For example, corn can make crayons, chips, vitamins, paint, plastic, and it also can be made into high fructose corn syrup, which is in MANY foods.

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Objective: After the lesson and activity, students should be able to give examples of products of sweet corn and field corn.

Interest Approach:

Give each student a kernel of field corn and a kernel of sweet corn. Ask them if they can eat both kinds of corn. If you have done the “Physical Differences” lesson, they should be able to tell the difference between the kernels. Then, have them “taste test” each kernel and see whether they think they can eat both. After that discuss what they think each kind of corn is used for. Also, do a quick recap of the differences between the two.

ACTIVITY:

- Use the “Tale of two corns: Uses” worksheet as-is – or, provide some items/wrappers for your students to look at around the classroom. Have them write down observations, for example if they spot “high-fructose corn syrup” on the ingredients lists.
- Use the “observations” sheet to have students explain why items may or may not contain corn
 - If you’re bringing items in to the classroom, feel free to customize this to what you provide.
- Some items will be more tricky. At the end, have them add up how many they have circled.

Answer Key: Every item on the list can (and typically does) contain corn!

Illinois Learning Standards: 15.C.1a, 19.A.1, 19.A.2, 21.A.1a, 21.A.2a



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Instructions: Circle the products you think have corn in them. Then, count how many you got right!



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Name: _____

Class: _____

- toothpaste
- rubber tires
- medicines
- vitamins
- plastic toys
- paint
- wallpaper
- cookies
- cakes
- pies
- peanut butter
- diapers
- makeup
- soap
- pudding
- soup
- baby food
- powdered sugar
- batteries
- glue
- crayons
- pop
- cereal
- salad dressings
- ice cream
- crackers
- yogurt
- mustard
- ketchup
- pickle relish
- chewing gum
- gasoline
- bandage
- jelly
- chips
- pretzels
- corn on the cob
- canned vegetables

Guess: _____

Total: _____

Total-guess: _____

Correct: _____





TALE OF TWO CORNS: USES

Instructions: Make observations about categories of items and what you notice about their ingredients.



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Name: _____

Food Items

What have you noticed that might contain corn? Why? _____

What do you think probably doesn't contain corn? Why? _____

Household Items

What have you noticed that might contain corn? Why? _____

What do you think probably doesn't contain corn? Why? _____

Other observations

Which item are you most confident contains corn? Why? _____

Which item do you think definitely doesn't contain corn? Why? _____
