

# Fiction | Nonfiction

by | Pat Miller

Grades  
K-2, 3-5

## Apples, Pumpkins, Research!

**Think October and you probably think Halloween. Pumpkins or jack-o'-lanterns may be your next thought. October is the peak month for harvesting pumpkins and apples, and it is a great time to interest students in a variety of research opportunities using these fruits.**

**B**ecause it is still early in the school year, you may not have had time to introduce the variety of research sources in your library. Consider a series of short lessons based on questions about this October produce, and introduce some fun at the same time. Before beginning, you may want to purchase a selection of pumpkins and apples to display next to labeled tent cards. Along with the fresh fruit, you might include pumpkin and apple products.

The research tools used in the following activities are:

- dictionary
- almanac
- atlas
- general encyclopedia, plant encyclopedia, or online encyclopedia
- Internet
- nonfiction books

Set up learning centers for each of the resources, and copy the questions for each resource on a 3" x 5" task card to laminate. Put the task card in a 4" x 6" manila envelope. On the front, add a picture of an apple, pumpkin, or both. Alternatively, you could write the task questions on strips of paper and put them inside a plastic jack-o'-lantern.



Each resource center will need:

- task card(s)
- pencil and paper for each student
- the appropriate research tool

Review the resources with your students as needed, then divide children into six groups. Assign each group a starting resource center. The groups should move around the library, completing each center as they go. You will be stationed at the Nonfiction Books resource center. Monitor students' progress as they work.

### Dictionary

#### Tasks

1. What word did "pumpkin" come from?
2. Is a pumpkin a fruit or a vegetable?
3. Besides its color, what else does the definition tell you about a pumpkin?

## Fiction | Nonfiction

4. Define “apple.”
5. Besides the definition, what other information does the dictionary supply about an apple?

### Almanac

#### Tasks

1. Which states grow pumpkins to sell commercially?
2. Which states are major apple producers?
3. List five pumpkin-producing states and five apple-producing states on a sheet of paper. Locate the population for each state. Then number each group of five in order of their size, from smallest to largest.
4. What similarities do you notice about the weather in the pumpkin- or apple-producing states? What does this tell you about the kind of weather needed to grow pumpkins and apples?

### Atlas

Photocopy the “Atlas Research” worksheet from page 4 for each student. Have a pile of worksheets at the resource center.

#### Tasks

1. Use the atlas and worksheet to locate the major pumpkin-producing states. Next to each, record the latitude and longitude of its capital city.
2. Use the atlas and worksheet to locate the major apple-producing states. Next to each, record the latitude and longitude of its capital city.

### Encyclopedia

Photocopy the “Pumpkins: True or False?” worksheet from page 5 for each student. Have a pile of worksheets at the resource center.

#### Task

1. Use the encyclopedia to answer the questions on the worksheet. Record the page number where you found each fact.

Answers:

False: 3, 6, 8, 10.

True: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9.

### Internet

Premier Star Company has a site called “Pumpkin Recipes Galore” and they are not exaggerating! Go to [www.pumpkinnook.com/cookbook.htm](http://www.pumpkinnook.com/cookbook.htm) to find

forty-six recipes for dishes like pumpkin pie, cake, cookies, chili, ice cream, dip, milk shake, and even seven international recipes including Moroccan Pumpkin Soup and Italian Pumpkin Marmalade. Have students visit this site or find apple and/or pumpkin recipes in your cookbook collection.



#### Tasks

1. Record the names of three pumpkin or apple recipes and the fractions used in each.
2. Which fraction is used most often? Why don't you see a fraction like  $\frac{1}{6}$  of a cup?
3. Which recipe would you like to make? Why?

#### Additional Internet Research:

Have students visit the University of Illinois Extension site, [www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/pumpkins/history.html](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/pumpkins/history.html) for information on carving and displaying pumpkins.

#### Tasks

1. What was the original “Jack O’Lantern” made from?
2. How did the custom of carving faces into fruits or vegetables begin?

### Nonfiction Books

Listening to or reading nonfiction books is more challenging than reading fiction. Students often miss information because they use the same reading speed and level of attention they do with “chapter books.” At this resource center you will read aloud a nonfiction book about pumpkins or apples. Before class, choose an appropriate book and develop five to ten questions from it. You may also use the sample questions below. Get students’ ears ready for your book by asking the questions and recording the groups’ three best guesses. Or read a question and three answers. Ask students to hold up one finger for “A,” two for “B,” and three for “C.” Do not tell the answers. Then read the book aloud. Students will listen for details, if only to see if their guess was

correct.

### Tasks

#### Sample Questions

*Note: These sample questions can be answered using books from the bibliography. If you are reading a specific title aloud, ask questions in the order that students will hear the answers. Include some questions that students should be able to answer using prior knowledge. This assures that all will get at least one answer correct.*

- How many seeds do apples have?  
A) five      B) six      C) seven
- How many kinds of apples are there in the world?  
A) 350      B) 1,000      C) 7,500
- How many apples are picked by hand in the United States each fall?  
A) none, machines do it    B) 3 million  
C) 3 billion
- How big was the largest recorded pumpkin?  
A) 30 pounds      B) about 250 pounds  
C) Over 1,000 pounds
- What percentage of a pumpkin is water?  
A) 90%      B) 50%      C) 25%
- How many calories are in an average-sized apple?  
A) 350 calories      B) 20 calories  
C) 80 calories
- How long ago were apples first grown as a food crop?  
A) 1,000 years ago      B) 3,000 years ago  
C) 5,000 years ago

Answers:

1) a, 2) c, 3) c, 4) b, 5) a, 6) c, 7) b



### Apple Matching

If you have time, set up one additional resource center with a book from your collection that identifies apple varieties by name, such as *Apples* by Gail Gibbons. Buy as many matching apples as you can find. Set them up in a numbered display. Have a pile of answer sheets at the resource center. Once everyone has completed this station, enter all answer sheets that have at least two correct answers in a drawing. The prizes might be an apple, an individually wrapped fried apple pie, applesauce, apple juice, or apple chews.

#### Task

Examine the apples and the pictures in the book. Complete the answer sheet. (For a sample answer sheet, see page 6.)

#### Pumpkin and Apple Books

- ***The Apple Pie Tree*** by Zoe Hall. Scholastic, 1996.
- ***Apples*** by Gail Gibbons. Holiday House, 2001.
- ***Apples and Pumpkins*** by Anne Rockwell. Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- ***Apples of Your Eye*** by Allan Fowler. Children's Press, 1994.
- ***Apple Trees*** by Gail Saunders-Smith. Pebble Books, 1998.
- ***Eating Apples*** by Gail Saunders-Smith. Pebble Books, 1998.
- ***How Do Apples Grow?*** by Betsy Maestro. HarperCollins, 1993.
- ***Picking Apples and Pumpkins*** by Amy Hutchings. Scholastic, 1994.
- ***The Pumpkin Book*** by Gail Gibbons. Holiday House, 2000.
- ***Pumpkins*** by Jacqueline Farmer. Charlesbridge, 2004.
- ***The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree*** by Gail Gibbons. Voyager Books, 1988.

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*Pat Miller is a career library media specialist. She is author of the upcoming **Library Monkeys** (UpstartBooks) and **Squirrel's New Year's Resolution** (Albert Whitman); the **Stretchy Lesson Plan** series, the **Stretchy Library Lessons** series, and **We're Going on a Book Hunt**, all from UpstartBooks; as well as **Reaching Every Reader** from Linworth. Visit [www.patmiller-books.com](http://www.patmiller-books.com) or e-mail Pat at [gpatmiller@gmail.com](mailto:gpatmiller@gmail.com).*

# Atlas Research

## Major Pumpkin-Producing States

State	Capital City	Latitude	Longitude
Colorado			
California			
Ohio			
Georgia			
Maryland			
New Jersey			
Oregon			
Pennsylvania			
Rhode Island			
Washington			

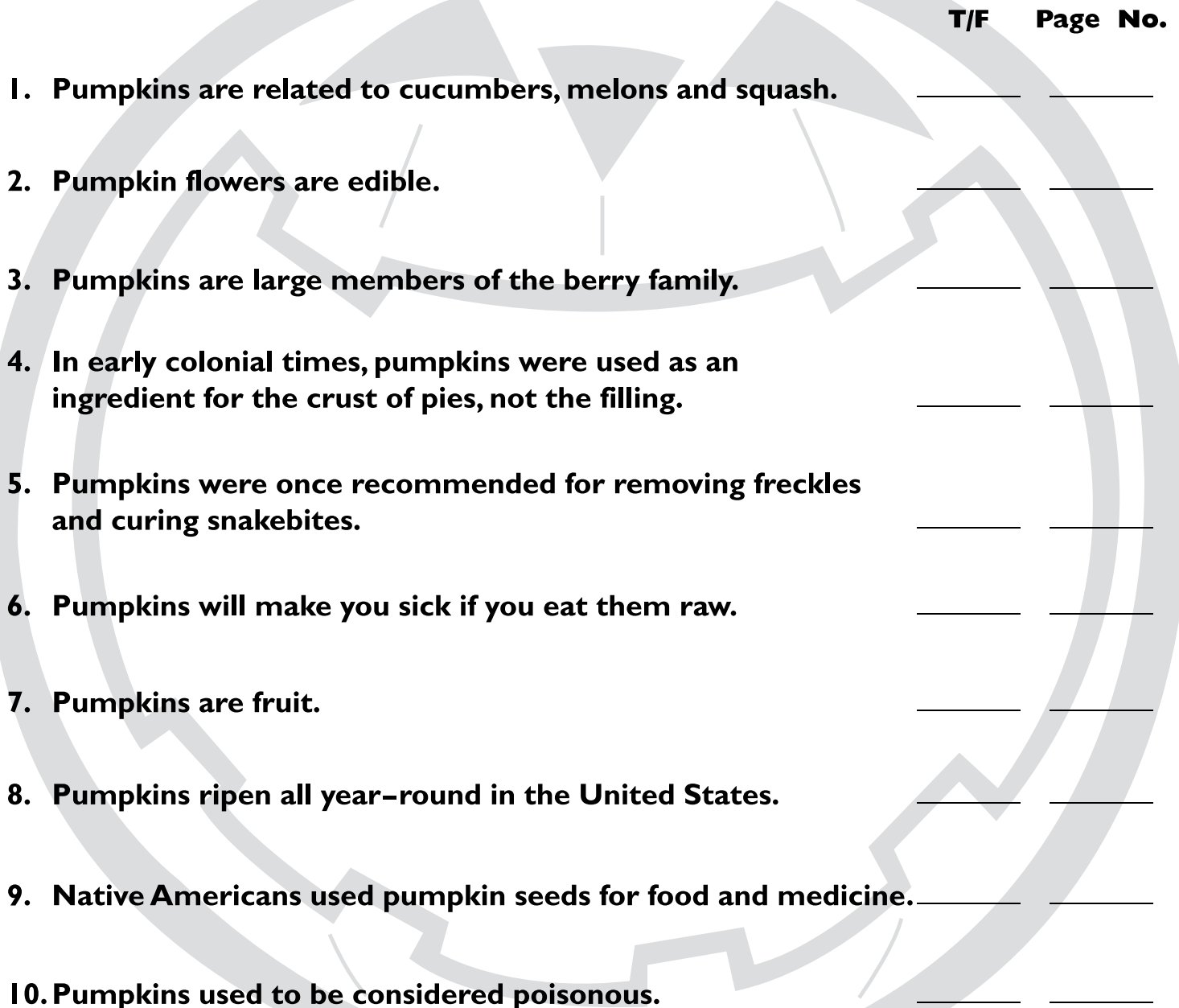


## Major Apple-Producing States

State	Capital City	Latitude	Longitude
Michigan			
California			
New York			
Virginia			
Pennsylvania			
Washington			

# Pumpkins: True or False?

**Directions:** Use the encyclopedia to determine if the following statements are true or false. Record the page number where you located the fact that proved or disproved each statement.

- 
- |   | <b>T/F</b> | <b>Page No.</b> |
|---|------------|-----------------|
| 1. Pumpkins are related to cucumbers, melons and squash.  | _____      | _____           |
| 2. Pumpkin flowers are edible.  | _____      | _____           |
| 3. Pumpkins are large members of the berry family.  | _____      | _____           |
| 4. In early colonial times, pumpkins were used as an ingredient for the crust of pies, not the filling. | _____      | _____           |
| 5. Pumpkins were once recommended for removing freckles and curing snakebites.                          | _____      | _____           |
| 6. Pumpkins will make you sick if you eat them raw.   | _____      | _____           |
| 7. Pumpkins are fruit.  | _____      | _____           |
| 8. Pumpkins ripen all year-round in the United States.  | _____      | _____           |
| 9. Native Americans used pumpkin seeds for food and medicine.   | _____      | _____           |
| 10. Pumpkins used to be considered poisonous.   | _____      | _____           |



# Match These Apples



**Directions:** Examine the real apples in front of you. Each one has a number. Identify the apples using the terms below. Use each term only once.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Red Delicious; Granny Smith; Cortland;  
Fuji; Golden Delicious**



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



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