

It's Autumn!



Ideas Collected by
Jean Roberts
With Thanks To
Primary Teachers Everywhere!

Literacy for Autumn

Fall Vocabulary

air apples autumn big birds brown catch chilly chlorophyll colour colourful cool
crunchy fall fly foliage garden harvest leaf leaves narrow nuts orange pointed
piles rake red ripe scarecrow sky small smooth south squirrel sunflower tree
weather wide windy yellow

Writing

Fall is the time when.....

On leaves - match upper and lower case letters. synonyms, rhyming words, sight reading vocabulary, etc.

Make a Fall Book

"I make a simple Big Book with the children. I print one sentence at the bottom of each page.

It is Fall! *(We draw a picture of something they like to do in fall.)*

I see a red leaf. *(I put one of the red leaves that the children have made)*

I see a yellow leaf.

I see a brown leaf.

I see an orange leaf.

Fall is a colourful season! *(This page has a tree with smaller leaves)"*

All the leaves
Are falling down
Orange
Yellow
Red and
Brown.



"The children copied the poem as I wrote it on the overhead: We used gold coloured paper, with handwriting lines and the first letter of each line already written.

On another piece of 8 x 10 white construction paper we coloured a tree, branches and trunk only, and the ground for the tree. We rolled up pieces of tissue paper the same colour as our poem and glued them on the tree. We glued these papers onto a 12 x18 inch blue construction paper. They looked great! Watch that the kids make the tree quite big."

We Went Walking

"We went on a simple nature walk around the school and looked for signs of fall. When we came back we wrote,

I went walking.

I saw a _____.

It had to be a sign of fall. Then they illustrated it. The cover was *We Went Walking* and some children decorated the cover for me with fall leaves."



Easy Autumn Poetry

"We brainstorm about all the summer things that we will say goodbye to and all the fall things we will say hello to. Then they write and illustrate. They are all different and charming. I make a big book and leave it on display for parents who are waiting in the hall for the parent/teacher conferences in October. They are always a big hit!"

A Name Glyph

"Everyone starts with a circle for middle of the flower with their name on it. Paint or colour craft sticks green - to use as stems. The petals on the flower represent how many letters are in their name. The leaves on the stem represent how many syllables are in their name. You can display them in a pot with floral foam."

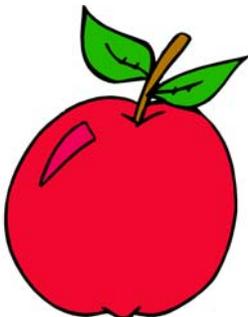
The Science of Autumn

Learn why the leaves change colour.

Learn why the days get cooler and shorter.

Learn about animal habits in the autumn.

Learn about animals that hibernate and the ones that migrate.



The Five Senses

I see _____.

I feel _____.

I smell _____.

I touch _____.

I hear _____.

It's Fall!

Study leaves with a magnifying glass. In Grade Three you can take the thinnest film from the surface of a green leaf and put it under a microscope so the students can see the cells moving in the tiny veins.

As summer ends and autumn comes, the days get shorter and shorter. This is how the trees 'know' to begin getting ready for winter. During winter, there is not enough light or water for photosynthesis. The trees will rest, and live off the food they stored during the summer. They begin to shut down their food-making factories. The green chlorophyll disappears from the leaves. As the bright green fades away, we begin to see yellow and orange colours. Small amounts of these colours have been in the leaves all along. We just can't see them in the summer, because they are covered up by the green chlorophyll.

The bright reds and purples we see in leaves are made mostly in the fall. In some trees, like maples, glucose is trapped in the leaves after photosynthesis stops. Sunlight and the cool nights of autumn turn this glucose into a red colour. The brown colour of trees like oaks is made from wastes left in the leaves. It is the combination of all these things that make the beautiful colours we enjoy in the fall.

Make a book with these pages:

1. In the autumn the days get shorter and cooler.
2. Many plants stop making food in the fall. Then the green chlorophyll goes away.
3. We can see orange and yellow colours. These colours were in the leaves all summer, but the green covered them up.
4. Some leaves turn red. This colour is made in the autumn, from food trapped in the leaves.
5. Brown colours are also made in the autumn. They come from wastes left in the leaves.
6. Then the leaves fall and the trees are ready for winter.



Separate Colours in a Leaf

Collect a few large leaves from several different trees. Tear or chop the leaves into very small pieces and put them into separate small baby food jars labeled with the name or location of the tree.

Add enough rubbing alcohol to each jar to cover the leaves. Using a plastic knife or spoon, carefully chop and grind the leaves in the alcohol. Rubbing alcohol can be harmful if mishandled, so use with care.

Cover the jars very loosely with lids or plastic wrap or aluminum foil. Place the jars carefully into a shallow tray containing 1 inch of hot tap water.

Keep the jars in the water for at least a half-hour, longer if needed, until the alcohol has become coloured (the darker the better). Twirl each jar gently about every five minutes. Replace the hot water if it cools off.

Cut a long thin strip of coffee filter paper for each of the jars and label it.

Remove the jars from the water. Place a strip of filter paper into each jar so that one end is in the alcohol. Bend the other end over the top of the jar and secure it with tape.

The alcohol will travel up the paper, bringing the colours with it. After 30-90 minutes (or longer), the colours will travel different distances up the paper as the alcohol evaporates. You should be able to see different shades of green, and possibly some yellow, orange or red, depending on the type of leaf.

Poetry for the Autumn

Note: I am assuming that all the following poems are free for use, written by anon....- if you know any authors of these, please let me know!

Hello, leaves
Hello, new teachers
Goodbye, beach
Goodbye, vacation
Hooray,
Hooray!
It's fall!



I like to run and jump in them
And kick them all around--
I like the prickly feel of them
And the crickly crackly sound.

In the Fall (She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain - the X's are claps)

When the leaves are red and yellow in the fall X X
When the leaves are red and yellow in the fall X X
When the leaves are red and yellow,
Then the apples taste so mellow
When the leaves are red and yellow in the fall. X X

5 little leaves in the tree next door,
1 fell off and then there were 4,
4 little leaves all over the tree,
a bird pulled off 1, and now there are 3,
3 little leaves up where the wind blew,
1 fell off and then there were 2,
2 little leaves sitting in the sun,
a bug ate a leaf and now there is 1,
1 little leaf in the tree alone,
the wind blew and blew and now there are none!

Oh, the air is crisp and colder in the fall (brr, brr)
Oh, the air is crisp and colder in the fall (brr, brr)
Oh, the air is crisp and colder
And the wind is getting bolder
Oh, the air is crisp and colder in the fall (brr, brr)

Down, down,
Yellow and brown,
The leaves are falling
Over the town.
Rake them up
In a pile so high,
They almost reach
Up to the sky.



Fall

From September to December
What's the season?
Fall!
Red leaves start to
Fall!
Brown leaves start to
Fall!
Gold leaves start to
Fall!
Orange leaves start to
Fall!
Yellow leaves start to
Fall!
After all, it's
Fall!

When the leaves are on the ground
Instead of in the trees,
I like to make a pile of them-
'Way up to my knees.

What Falls In The Fall?

In the fall
Do you fall out of bed?
Do you land on your head?
In the fall
Do houses fall down?
And buildings and butterflies
All over town?
Something must fall
In the fall, if you please,
Oh, yes. The leaves fall.
They fall from the trees.



Winter is cold.
Summer is hot.
Spring is wet
And Fall is not.

Math for the Autumn

Estimation

Put acorns or candy corn in a jar for the reference and another jar is filled for estimating.

Estimate how many leaves in a pile.

Graphing

Graph leaves brought in by students by colour, shape, and size.
Graph mixed nuts if your class has no allergies.



Addition and subtraction

Use acorns, nuts in the shells, large seeds or leaves as math manipulatives.

Sorting

Buy a variety of nuts and have the students sort by colour, shape, or size. Teach comparison words - big, large, small, tiny, smooth, rough, etc.

Sort leaves by colour, shape, size, etc.

Patterning

Make patterns with maple or oak leaf leaves or die-cuts. These can be glued on a headband to wear.

Measurement

Measure leaves to see how many cm long or wide they are.

Measure the circumference of a favourite tree.

*Note: There are lots of math activities in the Primary Success **Pumpkin** theme.*

There are some later in this theme in the 'Sunflower' section.

Social Studies

What do people do to get ready for winter? What changes are there in the clothing we wear, our activities, etc.

Learn about farms and the harvest and why we have Thanksgiving in the fall.

Learn about the maple leaf being the symbol of Canada.

Art for the Autumn



Leaves

Pressed Leaves

There are two ways to make pressed leaves. The first - and easiest - way is to place a leaf between two sheets of plain newsprint, then place it beneath a pile of heavy books for several days, until it is dry and stiff. Though easy, these take patience on the part of your students (several DAYS??), and they are fragile and crumble easily. Leaves can also be pressed between 2 sheets of wax paper - wax side towards the leaves and then put under a weight.

Place coloured leaves between two layers of wax paper. Cover with a cloth. Press the fabric with a warm iron sealing the wax paper together with the leaf in between. Cut them out, leaving a narrow margin of wax paper around the leaf edge. These can be used as bookmarks, hung in the window like suncatchers, or hung from the ceiling individually or as a mobile.



To preserve the beautiful fall leaves, you can laminate them. You can also use clear contact paper. Peel the paper off one sheet and lay the leaves on it carefully. Then peel the paper off the other sheet and lay it on top of the other. The result is a clear sheet of plastic with the treasures in between. Cut them out and hang them in your windows.

You also can preserve fall leaves in your microwave oven. Choose fresh leaves with the brightest colours. You don't want fallen leaves that already have started to dry. Take the leaves and place them in the microwave on top of two pieces of paper towel. Cover them with one sheet of paper towel. Run the oven for 20 to 60 seconds. The drier the leaves, the less time they will need. Be careful; you could start a fire in your microwave if they cook too long. Let the leaves dry for a day or two, then use a sealant, such as an acrylic craft spray.

Leaf Prints

Have the students paint the back side of a real leaf with tempera paint in autumn colours of yellow, red, or orange. Then they press it onto dark coloured paper- preferably black. They may use more than one leaf and different colours of paint in their picture. There is a little trick to it - not too much paint, and when you press, rub away from the centre all the way to the tips. Keep the leaves pliable - don't let them dry out. You can mount the black paper onto another larger piece of red, yellow, or orange for a frame.

Leaf Rubbings

This is a standard fall activity, but one of the favourites! Collect leaves, and lay one upside-down (rib side up) on the table. Cover it with a paper. Use wax crayon pieces with the paper removed. Model holding the crayon so the side of it touches the paper. Colour over the leaf with the side of the crayon, holding the paper down with the other hand.

Before the art project, the leaves can be sorted by shapes, size, colour, etc. Let the children study them using magnifying glasses.

Leaf Men

Photocopy a large leaf onto orange construction paper. Have the children fold paper to make accordion paper arms and legs. Draw on a face. When the leaf man dances the arms and legs wiggle!



Melted Crayon Leaves

"Last year we made leaves using construction paper leaf shapes with the center cut out. Grate yellow, orange, red, and brown crayons like you would grate cheese. Spread the grated crayon out on waxed paper. Cover with another sheet of waxed paper. Lay a kitchen towel over these and iron on a low setting. The colours will run together making beautiful centers that can be glued between two of the construction paper leaf cutouts. These also make wonderful leaf mobiles."

Falling Leaves

Cut spirals from brown construction paper.

Have the children trace real leaves, colour them and cut them out (or have the children cut leaves from coloured construction paper). Glue or staple the leaves to the spirals and hang them from the ceiling. The leaves will appear to be falling!

Handprint Leaves

"I cover a large bulletin board with blue paper. Then I make a tree that starts on the wall below the bulletin board. I have pie plates filled with different colours of tempera paint, yellow, red, and orange. I just put a little paint in at a time. The children put one hand in a pie plate of their choice and put it up on the large tree. Then their hand print becomes a fall leaf. It's really very pretty and the kids enjoy making the bulletin board."

More Leaves!

"For fall art I give each child a 12 x 18 white paper with several leaf patterns already printed on it. We wet the paper under the tap and drip orange, red, and yellow tempera paint on the paper with a brush (I make the paint quite liquid so it flows). Swirl it around slightly and let dry over night. The next day cut out the leaves. Use some to make a wreath for the classroom door, and others to put around the frame of the door.

Huge leaves!

Have also had the children fingerpaint papers in red, orange and yellow. When they are dry draw huge leaf shapes on the back and the children cut them out. These are very colourful and impressive to decorate your classroom!

Autumn Trees

A Tree For All Seasons

This 'Tree for All Seasons' is easy to make and very effective. Cut a strip of brown paper from the large paper rolls 60 - 80 cm. wide and approximately 1 1/2 times longer than you want the tree height to be. Cut 5 cm. strips from one end, ending these 'branches' at the height the 'trunk' begins. Now gather the trunk gently but firmly and crush the paper to make longitudinal wrinkles. Then crush each 5 cm. strip, again to make long wrinkles. Staple the trunk to the bottom of a floor length tackboard, leaving ridges so the trunk is about 30 - 40 cm wide. Staple the branches across one another and weaving in and out so the tree looks full and interesting. Clip off any branch ends that are too long. Decorate the tree with work samples, art projects, leaves and flowers. This can be used all year by continually changing the tree decorations. This is interesting and has a three-dimensional look. Golden and red leaves in the autumn, snowflakes in winter, and flowers or Easter eggs will make it colourful.

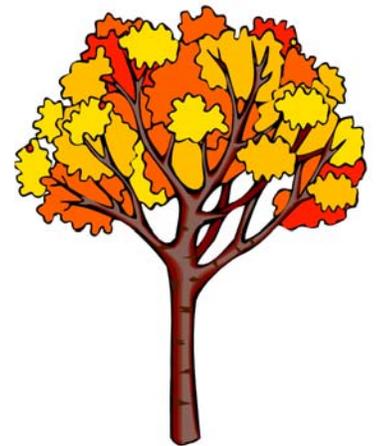
Arms and fingertips

This is messy, but interesting! Paint a child's hand and upper arm brown and press onto paper. After a good wash, the child dips one finger into yellow or orange paint and put leaf prints on his tree or sponge paint leaves.

You can make green leaves and red apples on the tree with sponge painting or cut-outs.

Ideas for Fall Trees

Draw trees with brown crayon (darkly) on pale blue or gray construction paper. Cut 1 inch or 3 cm. squares of yellow and orange tissue paper. Fold the small square over the flat end of a pencil or pencil crayon, and, holding it on the pencil end, dip it lightly into a puddle of liquid glue. Place it on the tree branches for coloured leaves. The more the child puts on, the better the tree will look!"



Draw and colour a tree trunk and branches. Press the finger tip to a red stamp pad and make fingerprint 'leaves' on the tree.

Make a large tree on the bulletin board. Then have the children cut across apples to show the star. Dip the cut apple into red paint and make prints on white paper. Cut out the apple shapes and glue them to the tree - or they could be printed right on your tree.

"Use precut tissue that comes in fall colours. Cut into squares about 15 cm. by 15 cm. I would guess. Demonstrate how to make balls of each tissue...not too loose, not too tight, dip into a glue cup lightly and press onto plate to cover all the white. Glue a trunk that they trace and cut, or trace and tear for a more natural look.... You could buy green plates and make smaller tissue balls...about 2x2 and have each child 'roll' 10 apples...It's fall...my favourite time of year!"

Have the kids trace each other's hand and upper arm on brown paper- thus making the 'tree' part.

"You can make autumn leaves for a small tree with torn construction paper or thumb prints in tempera paint with the fall colours."



Cornflake Leaves

Have the students draw or paint a brown tree trunk and branches. Paint a small area with glue and sprinkle with cornflakes. Paint the next area and add cornflakes until the branches are covered. Mount the pictures on autumn coloured construction paper and tack them around the poem.

**Cornflake leaves
Beneath the trees -
Are they a breakfast
For the breeze?**



Have the children trace their hands on red, orange and yellow paper. Cut them out and glue them to a large tree.

Have the children trace their hand and arm to just below the elbow - fingers splayed - on brown construction paper. Cut it out. This make the tree shape. Glue this onto yellow construction paper. To make the autumn leaves, sponge paint red and orange leaf shapes, or rip tissue paper into pieces and glue them on, or sponge paint green leaves and let dry. Thumb print red 'apples'.

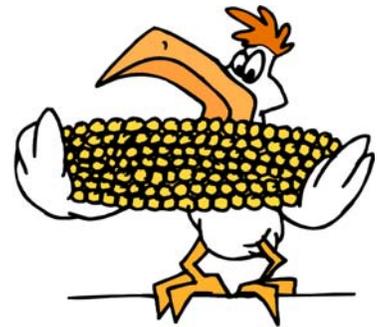
"I show the children how to make a large Y on the paper to form a tree trunk and branches and then they sponge paint green leaves or tear green tissue paper leaves and glue them on the tree. Then they put their fingertip into red paint or a red stamp pad and make red apples on the tree."

"Trace each child's hand on each of the following colours of construction paper and cut out (teacher or child can cut) red, orange, yellow, green and brown. Locate an old round wooden bushel or peck basket (check at grocery store or farms). Cut the basket in half and attach to the bulletin board at an angle (this will give your board a 3-dimensional look). Then place the hands (which are now leaves) inside and around the basket as if the basket is overflowing and pouring out with leaves. I did this several years ago. It looks super!"

Other Autumn Art

Corn Cob Flowers

Buy dried corn cobs from a feed store and cut them into 3 pieces; or buy ears of corn at the store, shuck them, cut them into 2-inch lengths and allow them to dry for a couple of weeks. Place shallow containers of tempera paints at each table. Show children how to dip the end of the corn cob into the paint, then press it onto a paper to create a flower shape. After some practice, give each child a sheet of paper, and ask them to create a garden full of corn flowers. They may use markers or crayons to add stems and centers after flowers have dried.



A Nature Picture

"In the fall the class and I go on a search for nature items, for example, leaves, small flowers, flower petals, (we have a garden at school and it proves to be a good time to take the flowers off the stems - which I do before class as I really don't want the kids to think that they can do it) and so on. The kids are encouraged to find colourful things and always do a great job. Then they arrange them on their desk top, sharing, of course. Then I give them a piece of clear contact paper and they redo their arrangement on this. When done we put another piece on top. Then I cut them into round shapes and hang them from the wire in my room. They move in the wind and are really effective and parents always wonder how we have done it!"

Chrysanthemums

Cut out a vase by folding paper that is cut the height you want the vase to be. With the fold on the right side, draw a very large letter 'S' that begins at the centre of the top edge and ends at the centre of the bottom edge. Cut the folded paper. Glue the vase onto a large paper and draw flower stems. Cut strips of yellow or orange paper 1-2 cm. wide and 6-10 cm. long. Glue ends of strips into the centre of the flowers in a circle pattern. When the glue is dry, curl the ends of the strips toward the centre around a pencil. Add green leaves.

Sunflowers and More Sunflowers!

"Here's an easy sunflower idea

Cut out brown circles and white circles that are slightly smaller.

On the white circles get each of your students to draw a picture of their face.

Glue this in the middle of the brown circle.

Cut out petals from yellow paper and glue on the back of the brown circle.

Cut out a stem and some leaves from green paper and glue on.

Then glue real sunflower seeds (with shells of course) on the brown circle, all around the white circle face.

Sunflower children

Nod to the sun.

Summer is over,

Fall has begun.

If you want to hang them, you could also get the children to cut out two white circles instead of one, and on the back of the sunflower draw the back of their heads."



"I make sunflowers by having the children trace their hands 3 or 4 times and cut them out. Arrange the hands in a circle. Trace and cut out a brown circle for the flower centre. Add a tall green stem and leaves."

"I did a mini-unit on sunflowers with my *Grade Two* students. Here's what we did: The first day they all brought in something that had to do with a sunflower - a picture they drew, a book, a real sunflower, etc. We read *This is the Sunflower* (a cumulative book like *The House That Jack Built*) and everyone shared their sunflower items. Then I took their pictures with what they brought for a class book. They completed an activity sheet with a space for drawing and the story frame taken from the book - This is the (big sunflower) that (Mrs. _____) brought to share. (It is over 11 feet tall.) (It came to school in the back of a truck). I typed what they wrote and added the picture and voila! Our first class book - *Sunflower Sharing*.

"We shared the book, *The Sunflower that Went Flop!* It's a great book for the start of the year. I have multiple copies of *Diary of a Sunflower* (from Scholastic), and we talked about fiction and nonfiction, along with fact *vs* opinion. Then we made a mini-book on sunflowers for them to take home and share with their families.

"We shared a sunflower poem and read it many different ways (I also did a cloze activity first with it.)

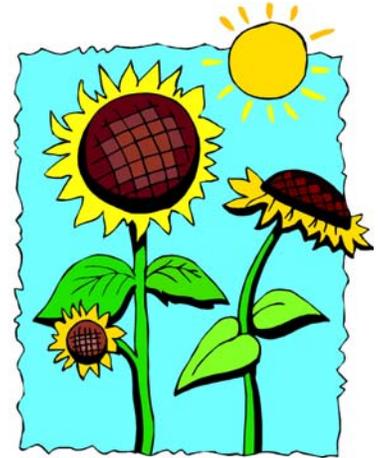
"The final thing we did is complicated to explain, but really fun and worthwhile. You can

do it with any book. We used the *Flop!* book (which we also used for reader's theater). We brainstormed important events in the story, then sequenced them. Then groups of students posed for a 'still life' showing those events and I took their picture with the digital camera. (We talked about expression, big hand/arm movements, etc.) Once we did all the important events in the story, I created a powerpoint presentation and we worked together to add text (retelling). They LOVED to see it when it was all done."

Sunflower Activities

Bring a sunflower head to school and have the kids estimate how many seeds are in it. Take out the seeds, group in tens and count.

Make large sunflowers with a paper plate for the center. Cut huge yellow petals and glue them behind the plate. Glue sunflower seeds to the plate, make a tall green stalk and leaves.



You could measure VERY small items with both shelled and unshelled sunflower seeds and see what the difference is and discuss why.

You could do some research on the net about different types of sunflowers and compare their sizes. You could find out how many kids tall certain sunflowers are.

Plant sunflower seeds and observe in class.

Show students a sunflower plant (roots and all). Ask them to describe what they see. Identify the parts (roots, stem, petals, and seeds).

Give students a large piece (12x18) of white drawing paper. Instruct them to put their name in the lower left hand corner. Ask them to tell how many petals they think there are. Count how many petals are on the flower. Post it on the board. Estimate the number of seeds. Count how many seeds. Post that number. Do the same for the roots and stem. Have students draw the sunflower based on their observations and data collected.

When the sunflower seeds are dried (in a few weeks) you can give each student several to take home and plant next spring.

"I have my class cut out brown circles and trace petals on yellow paper and cut them out, as many as they want. They glue them to the brown circle and then when dry, they flip them over and glue sunflower seeds on the other side. Glue on a long stem with leaves and it looks great!"

A Sunflower Bulletin Board

"I made a bulletin board with a title 'Watch Us Bloom'. It had a blue background with sunflowers (big) out of yellow construction paper, one for each student. I used coffee filters for the middle - coloured brown. Then a child's picture was put in the center of it. Each flower had a green stem with 3 green leaves that the child wrote or filled in. These were staggered heights.

1. (My name is _____.)
2. (I am ___ years old.)
3. (I like _____.)



"They also made their names with sunflower seeds in small groups. I wrote the name with glue and they put seeds on one at a time (they let the seeds kiss each other tip to tip). It's a great tactile experience and looked good displayed! They counted how many were used in their name.

We made a sunflower graph by tasting them and then deciding whether they liked them or didn't like them. We did these on cute little sunflowers with faces.

We painted a big sunflower on an easel.

We made Picasso sunflowers with yellow hand prints and glued seeds in middle and painted green stems."

"I bring in a sunflower from a local field. We compare the seeds in the head to processed sunflower seeds, doing a Venn diagram. I have some paintings of sunflowers, by VanGogh (who did 7 or 8) and another artist, a postcard of O'Keefe's sunflower, a poster, and fabric with sunflowers. Then the kids draw and paint a sunflower. At the end of the plant unit, we have a plant eating party. I tell the kids we are going to eat roots, leaves, stems, seeds, flowers, and fruit. I send a note home for the parents to send in any vegetables or fruit. I usually bring cauliflower or broccoli so we have flowers. We discuss what part of the plant we are eating."

To find 'O'Keefe's sunflower', google "A Sunflower From Maggie" by Georgia O'Keefe.

"I have discussed Vincent Van Gogh with the sunflower unit. I have the children make a sunflower by doing yellow finger painting for the petals and using a brown construction paper centre which we fringe and glue on sunflower seeds. Add a stem and a couple of green leaves to complete that part. Draw a big vase and add the children's sunflowers and you have the Grade One Sunflower picture. I have also done the centre the same as above and then added yellow construction paper petals to it until they are big enough to be a sunflower. They turned out very nice and take a little longer to make. I put them along the wall so it looks like a field of sunflowers as you walk down the hall. It was the focal point when parents walked down a hall to the gym for our art show.

There is a book called *Camille and the Sunflowers* that I like to read to the children when I am doing this unit. I also like to bring in a sunflower for the kids to see but if you can

go where they are actually growing it amazes the kids to see how tall they can get (we saw them 12 feet tall one year).

I like to finish Van Gogh by doing the 'Starry Night in October'. Instead of doing the trees, etc., at the bottom of the picture, I do a fence and pumpkins in the field. All is done in crayons and then washed with thin black paint. It looks lovely."

"Make BIG sunflowers! Cut a circle centre from brown. Cut petals of yellow tissue paper, or you can use construction paper. Glue the ends of the petals behind the circle. 'Paint' glue on the brown circle and place sunflower seeds on the glue. Staple the big flowers up at about eye-level. Give the children a piece of green butcher paper about half the width of the roll and 6+ feet long. The children can work in pairs and scrunch the width of the paper, and then gently twist it until they have a rope-like stem. Staple the stems onto the flowers and add leaves."



October Celebrations

"Our grade ones have a Fall Festival the last hour of the day on October 31st. Each class is responsible for a game booth and the kids rotate through the games during that time. The booths include cookie decorating, face painting, musical chairs to win a cupcake, basketball throw, and pumpkin toss. Everyone wins a prize or piece of candy and each class supplies what it needs for their booth. Only students are invited to attend and they leave their costumes at home. The kids have great fun. The parents run the booths and the teachers get a chance to mingle and have fun with the kids."

"I stopped doing any activities about Hallowe'en when I had children who couldn't participate due to religious beliefs. It caused so many problems sending them elsewhere in the school that I decided to skip over it all together in following years. I now do bats, owls, and spiders throughout the month of October which I integrate into guided reading, shared reading, read-alouds, and writing as well. The kids always love all the non-fiction and never even ask why we don't read any Halloween stories or do any activities. I love this unit and the excitement level it produces in the classroom. It's a great learning experience."

"One year a local grocery store donated small pumpkins for my class. Then we had the children bring in vegetables - carrots, celery, mushrooms, red, yellow and green peppers, cucumbers, etc. Then the moms helped by slicing the



vegetable (if necessary) and using wooden skewers to attach the vegetables to the pumpkins to decorate them. For example, cucumbers make great ears or eyes with another small vegetable being the eyeball. The children had great fun! We put the pumpkins on display for that night and next day. Then the children took the pumpkins home on Friday. Prior to decorating the pumpkins, the students estimated the circumference of their pumpkins and measured them. They set them in order of size, weight and height. One pumpkin was used to estimate the number of seeds inside, and then it was cut open to count them. The pumpkin seeds were roasted in a toaster oven."

"If your class is unable to go to a pumpkin farm, there are websites on the internet that show pumpkin farms. You can take a virtual trip. It may not be the same, but it is interesting, too."

"My school did storybook character day. Some kids liked it better than Hallowe'en because it wasn't scary. The first year is the hardest to get going. We found that if we read some books and talked about how you could make a simple costume that really helped. We also pointed out that it was often easier to be a character that was a person (e.g. Mike Mulligan) than a character that was an animal (e.g. Arthur). We had them bring the book to school for the day."

"At my school, we have a Harvest Festival. From 9:00 to 11:30, the children travel as a whole class, to 4 different teachers, then back to their own teachers. There are 5 different activities in which they will participate. For example, in one room they will make a scarecrow, as a class, to decorate the halls. In my room they will learn about the life cycle of a pumpkin - I love the project that I'm doing with them. You cut out a pumpkin shape book so that all of the pages are connected - like paper dolls. On the cover you write 'The Life of a Pumpkin'. On the first page, the child colours soil and then glues on a pumpkin seed. Then he draws a green vine through all of the pages, coming out of the seed. On the next page, he glues on a 2 x 2 inch piece of yellow tissue paper to represent the pumpkin flower. Next page...he sponge paints a small green circle. Last page...he sponge paints a larger orange circle. After lunch, I do centres. Other teachers do Harvest Bingo, graphing Dem Bones, doing a pumpkin seed toss where they have to get a seed into a pumpkin, and others."

