

# The Story of the Seminole Pumpkin

*For Grades K–5: Please feel free to modify these lessons as needed to fit the needs of your students.*

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*Imagine pumpkins dangling from trees like fruit on vines! That's how the Seminole people grew their special pumpkins, safe, dry, and hidden in the treetops.*

## Once Upon a Time in Florida...

A long time ago, the **Seminole people** lived in the wild and swampy lands of Florida. They were smart farmers, hunters, and gatherers who knew how to live with the land. One of their favorite foods was a special kind of squash called the **Seminole pumpkin**.



*Figure 1: These pumpkins could even grow in trees!*

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Seminole pumpkins are not like the big round pumpkins we carve for Halloween. They come in all kinds of shapes and colors, and they're **smaller and sweeter!** You can eat the soft inside part, and even the flowers! The Seminole people used these pumpkins in many yummy meals.

## Pumpkins in the Trees?!

The Seminole pumpkin wasn't just tasty—it was **tough!** It grew well in Florida's **hot and rainy weather**, and it didn't need a lot of help. Even better, it could be stored for up to a year!

Here's something cool: the Seminole people often grew their pumpkins **up in the trees!** They planted seeds near trees and let the vines climb up. Soon, pumpkins would be **hanging down** from the branches like nature's decorations. This helped keep their food safe and hidden.



*Figure 2: Seminole Pumpkins hanging in the tree.*

The Seminole people grew their food in **secret gardens** called **hammocks**. These hidden places helped protect their food. Even during hard times, they had something to eat.

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### What does a Seminole Pumpkin look like?

Seminole pumpkins are a unique kind of pumpkin that grow on long vines, which like to climb trees, fences, and anything nearby. Sometimes, the pumpkins even hang down from tree branches like ornaments! They come in different shapes round, pear-like, or a little bumpy and their skin can be tan, green, orange, or striped. Inside, they're bright orange and taste sweet, kind of like butternut squash.



*Figure 3: The viny pumpkin climbing.*



*Figure 4: The inside of a Seminole Pumpkin.*

These pumpkins are tough. They grow well in hot, wet places and keep producing new vines and pumpkins even when other plants start to fade. Once picked, they last for months sometimes even a whole year. A long time ago, the Seminole people dried slices of the pumpkin to save for later. Today, they can be steamed, baked, or eaten when still green, like summer squash. It's a strong, beautiful plant that's been growing and feeding people for generations. Today, people all over Florida and beyond are learning about the amazing Seminole pumpkin. Some are even **planting them in their own gardens!**

So next time you see a pumpkin, think of the Seminole people, their smart farming, and the **strong little squash** that helped feed their families.

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## **Lesson Activity: *The Seminole Pumpkin!***

**Grade Level's:** K-5<sup>th</sup>

### **Vocabulary:**

- Pumpkin
- Seed
- Sprout
- Vine
- Flower
- Seminole

### ***Engage***

- Ask students to color the attached coloring sheet of pumpkins.
- Then, ask them if they knew pumpkins could be multiple colors. Use the attached link to showcase types of pumpkins.
  - o PPT: Pumpkin Varieties
- Ask students what we can use pumpkins for? How is it prepared in their homes if it is prepared?

### ***Explore and Explain***

- Activity 1:
  - o Learn about the Seminole Pumpkins from the story provided in the Educators Lesson Plan.
    - Have students draw their own Seminole pumpkin [pottery](#). Use the following attachment to create your own piece of special pottery! Use greens, tans, and oranges.
- Activity 2:
  - o Use the attached vocabulary sheet to help students learn important words about growing pumpkins. As they work through the activity, support them in exploring these words in English and in native languages either their own or a friend's.
- Activity 3:
  - o The Life Cycle of a Pumpkin
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGogvQOvcV8>
    - Attachment: The Lifecycle of a Pumpkin

### ***Elaborate***

- View the [Pumpkin: How Does it Grow?](#) video to learn more about how pumpkins are grown and harvested.
- Show the [America's Heartland: Uses for Pumpkins](#) 2-minute video clip.
- Show the video clip [Libby's 100% Pure Pumpkin From Farm to Can](#). This video shows the pumpkin in a farmer's field, planting, harvest, and processing.

## ***Evaluate***

After conducting these activities, review and summarize the following key concepts:

- Pumpkins are the fruits of the pumpkin plant that contains seeds inside.
- In addition to being utilized for Halloween, pumpkins are also processed into pumpkin puree, soups, pies, and other food products.

## **Suggested Lesson Activities:**

- Native Vocabulary
- The Lifecycle of a Pumpkin
- Seminole Pumpkin Pottery
- Pumpkin Matching
- Pumpkin Math
- Draw and Write Pumpkin Life Cycle

## **Additional Educator Resources:**

- Pumpkin Varieties (PowerPoint)
- [The Incredible Seminole Pumpkin](#)
- [What are Seminole pumpkins?](#)
- [Attack of the Seminole Pumpkins](#)
- [Seminole Pumpkin: by Cameron Lee - Seed St. Louis](#)
- [Oh my Gourd! Seminole Pumpkins and Other Uniquely Cultivated Seminole Foods - Florida Seminole Tourism](#)

## TEACHER EXAMPLE

### Native Languages Vocabulary Sheet (K-5)

#### Directions:

- In Column 1, rewrite the word in English.
- In Column 2, rewrite the word in your own Native language (if available). If it's not available, you may use the Native language of a neighbor, friend, or community member.

Vocabulary Word	English Rewrite	English Rewrite	Cherokee
			Language Rewrite
Pumpkin	Pumpkin	Pumpkin	I-ya
Sprout			
Vine			
Flower			
Seminole			

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Vocabulary Word	English Rewrite	English Rewrite	
			Language Rewrite
Pumpkin			
Sprout			
Vine			
Flower			
Seminole			

# Pumpkin Varieties

*How many pumpkins are  
there??*



# Cinderella





# Baby Boo



# Galeaux D Eysines





# Full Moon



# Atlantic Giant





# Lil Pumpkemon



# Fairytale

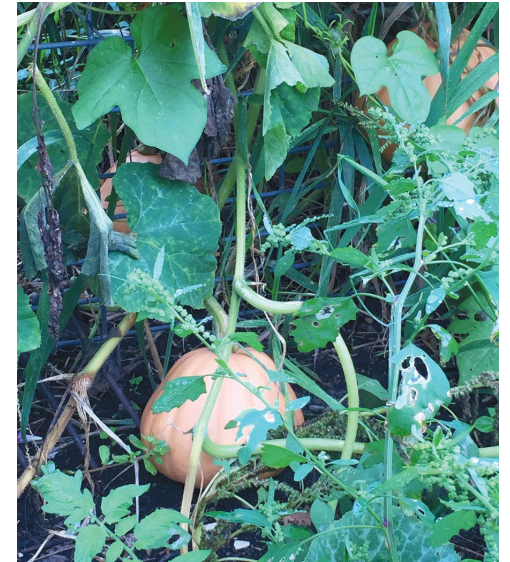


# Orange Smoothie



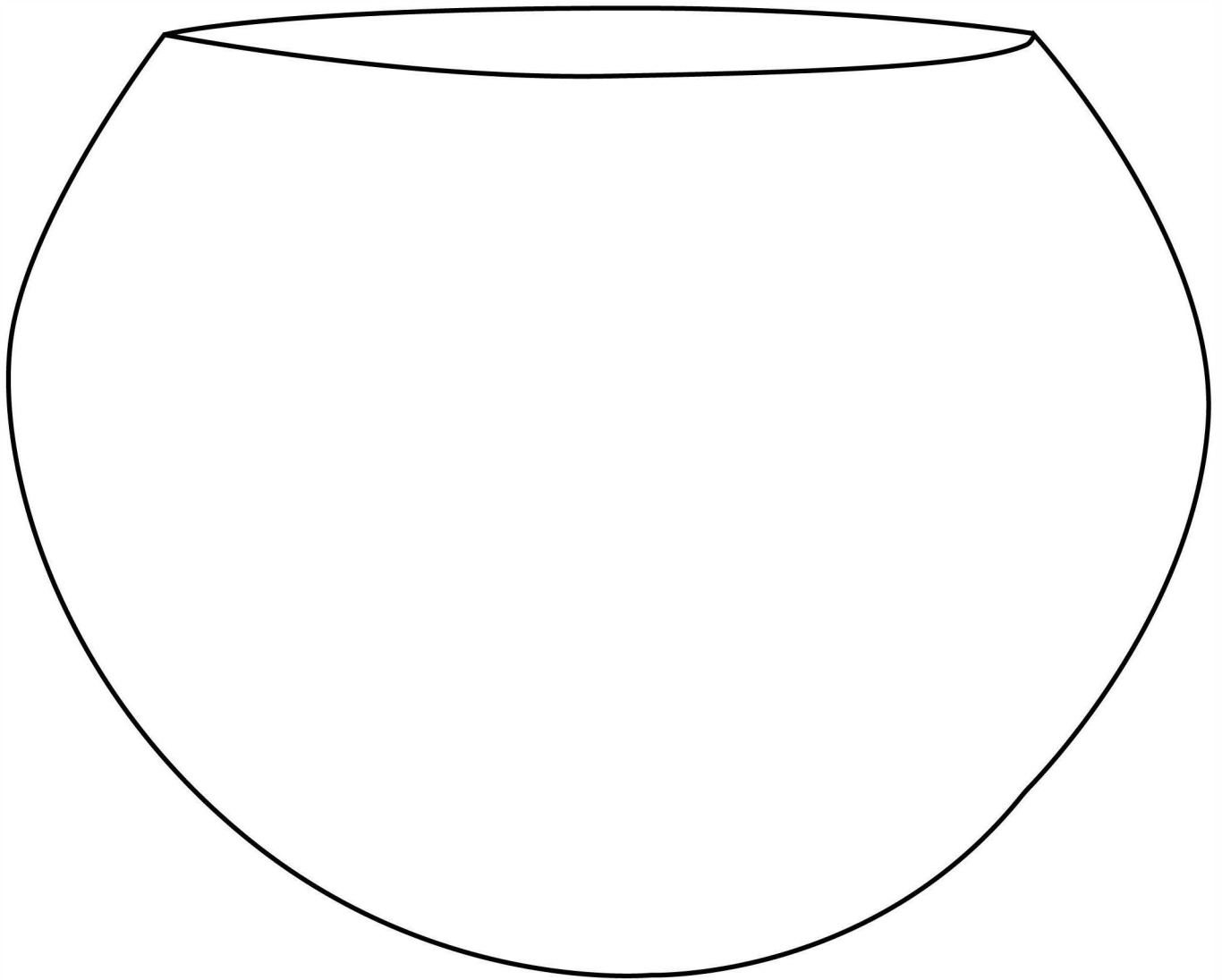


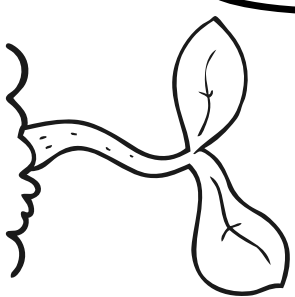
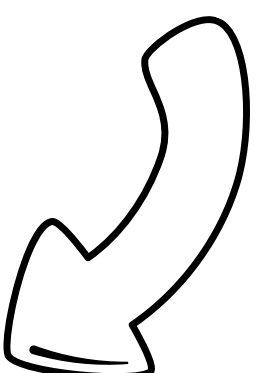
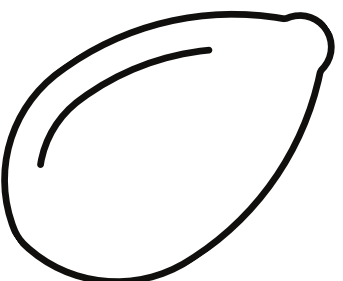
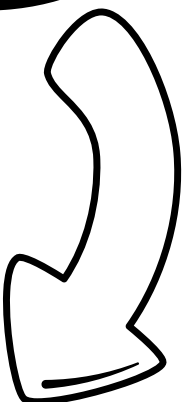
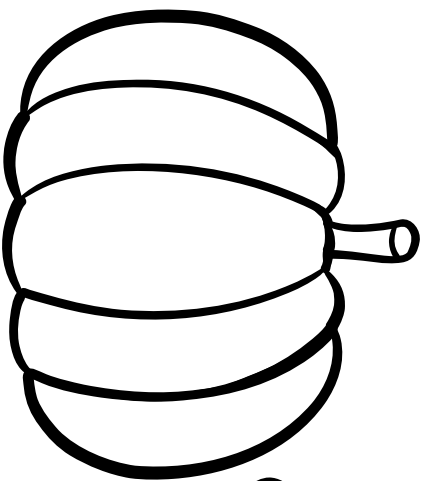
# Seminole Pumpkin



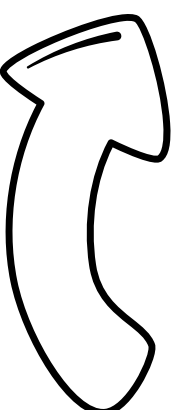
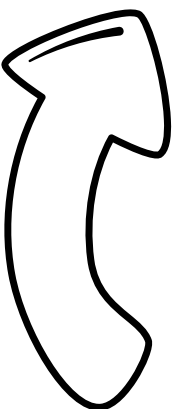
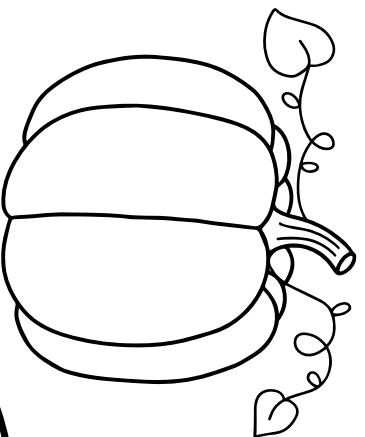
# DRAW YOUR DESIGN

Use this to create your own unique Seminole  
Pumpkin pottery design.





THE LIFE CYCLE  
OF A PUMPKIN





# The Life Cycle of a Pumpkin



## Pumpkin Math!

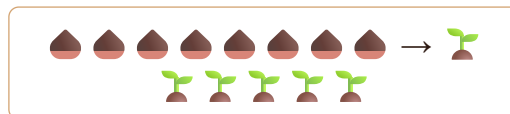
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Solve these fun pumpkin math problems! Show your work and write your answers in the boxes.

**Seeds and Sprouting:** If you plant 8 pumpkin seeds and 6 of them sprout, how many seedlings do you have?

1



Answer:  seedlings

Think: How many seeds sprouted successfully?

**Growing Vines:** A pumpkin vine grows 3 feet each week. How long will it be after 4 weeks?

2

Week 1: 3 ft | Week 2: +3 ft | Week 3:  
+3 ft | Week 4: +3 ft

Answer:  feet

Think:  $3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = ?$  or  $3 \times 4 = ?$

**Pumpkin Weights:** Sarah's pumpkin weighs 12 pounds and Jake's weighs 8 pounds. How much do they weigh together?

3

Sarah's 🎃 : 12 lbs + Jake's 🎃 : 8  
lbs = ? lbs

Answer:  pounds

Think: Add the two weights together:  $12 + 8 = ?$

**Harvest Time:** A farmer harvests 15 pumpkins in the morning and 9 pumpkins in the afternoon. How many pumpkins did he harvest in total?

4




Morning:        
         
Afternoon:         
 

Answer:  pumpkins

Think:  $15 + 9 = ?$

**Seeds Inside:** Each pumpkin has about 200 seeds. If you have 3 pumpkins, about how many seeds do you have?

5

 (200 seeds) +  (200 seeds) +  
 (200 seeds) = ?

Answer:  seeds

Think:  $200 + 200 + 200 = ?$  or  $200 \times 3 = ?$

**Growing Time:** If it takes 100 days to grow a pumpkin from seed to harvest, and you planted seeds 30 days ago, how many more days until harvest?

6

Total time: 100 days - Days passed:  
30 days = ? days left

Answer:  days

Think:  $100 - 30 = ?$

### Amazing Pumpkin Math Facts!

**World Record:**  
The heaviest pumpkin weighed 2,749 pounds!

**Seeds Galore:**  
Large pumpkins can have up to 500 seeds inside!

**Vine Length:**  
Some pumpkin vines can grow over 100 feet long!

**Growing Speed:**  
Pumpkins can gain 25+ pounds per day when fully growing!

🌟 Excellent math work with pumpkins! 🌟



# The Life Cycle of a Pumpkin



## Matching Game

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Draw a line from each stage on the left to the correct description on the right!



### Pumpkin Stages



Seed

\_\_\_\_\_



Sprout/Seedling

\_\_\_\_\_



Vine with  
Leaves

\_\_\_\_\_



Flower

\_\_\_\_\_



Small Green  
Pumpkin

\_\_\_\_\_



Ripe Orange  
Pumpkin

\_\_\_\_\_



### Descriptions



A long green vine  
with big leaves  
spreading out



A small, dark brown  
oval shape



A big orange  
pumpkin ready to  
pick



A bright yellow  
flower on a green  
vine



A tiny plant with first  
leaves coming out of  
the ground



A small green round  
fruit growing on the  
vine

🌟 Great job learning about pumpkin growth! 🌟



# The Life Cycle of a Pumpkin



## Draw and Write!

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Circle your favorite stage of the pumpkin life cycle in the box below.

 Remember the Pumpkin Life Cycle Stages! 



Seed



Sprout



Vine



Flower



Green Pumpkin



Ripe Pumpkin

**Instructions:** Draw your favorite stage of pumpkin growth here.



## My Explanation

**Write about your drawing:**

**My favorite stage is:**

---

**I chose this stage because:**

---

---

**What happens during this stage:**

---

---

**Something interesting about this stage:**

---

---

### Exit Ticket

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

1. List 3 things you learned in today's lesson:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. List 1 question you have about what we reviewed today:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. List 2 things you want to learn more about:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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