

My nature connection

MYSTERIOUS MUSHROOMS

GRADES: K-12
TIME: 20 MIN.

Why was the mushroom invited to so many parties?

He was such a fungi!

Mushrooms are often grouped together with vegetables but they are truly neither a plant nor an animal. Mushrooms are in their own mysterious group of organisms called fungus! (Fungi is the plural name.)

INTRODUCTION

Mushrooms are the largest and oldest organisms on Earth, and there are more than 14,000 known species!

While plants get their energy by using chlorophyll to turn sunshine into food, mushrooms break down and feed on dead and decaying plants in the forest. They then release these nutrients into the soil for other plants to consume. Mushrooms thrive in dark, shady, and moist areas where there is little sunshine. Because there are so many species in the world, not all mushrooms act the same, but most share the basic structures below.

Mushroom Structure



Cap: This umbrella-like structure on the top of mushrooms protects its spores.

Gills: Rather than seeds, most mushrooms produce a powdery substance in their gills called spores that form new fungi.

Stem: The stem connects the cap to its root system. Mushrooms above ground may be connected by a root network that spans many miles long!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

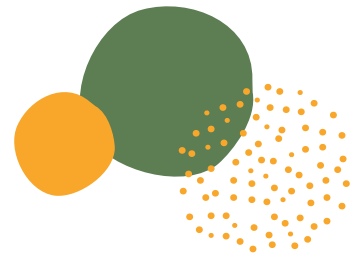
Pen or Pencil

Optional: Art materials: paper, pencils, markers, scissors, magazines for collage



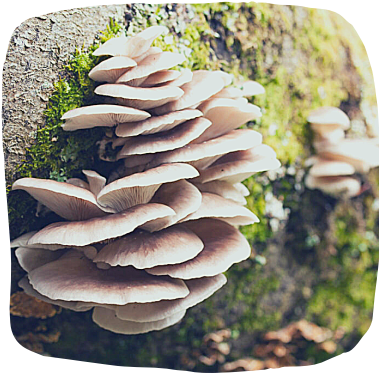
While mushrooms are a nutritious source of food, eating wild mushrooms from the forest can be extremely dangerous. Many similar looking species are very toxic for humans. Never consume wild mushrooms unless you've asked an expert.





MUSHROOM MATCH

Mushrooms often stand out because of their bright colors and textures. Match the mysterious mushroom photos with their descriptive names in the word box.



WORD BOX

Chicken of the Woods

Monkey Head

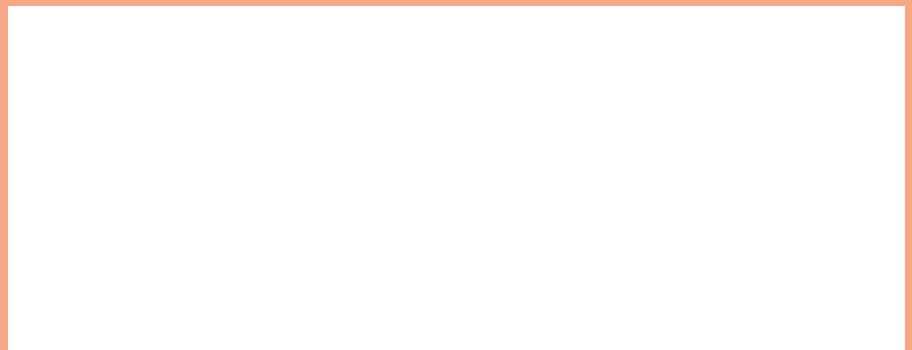
Jack o'Lantern

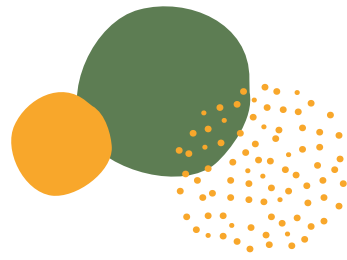
Black Trumpet

Oyster

Making A Mystery Mushroom

Create a mushroom that you would like to find in the forest. Draw it and give it a fun name!





MUSHROOM MATCH (KEY)

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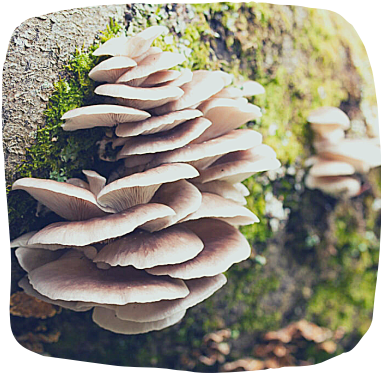
Chicken of the Woods



Jack o'Lantern



Monkey Head



Oyster



Black Trumpet



WORD BOX

Chicken of the Woods

Monkey Head

Jack o'Lantern

Black Trumpet

Oyster

Photo Credits:

Chicken of the Woods: <https://www.wildfoodie.co.uk/post/chicken-of-the-woods>

Oyster: <https://www.henosismushrooms.com/shop/oystergrowkit>

Jack o'Lantern: Photo from /u/joeharri84 on reddit

Black Trumpet: <https://virginiawildflowers.org/2015/07/10/black-trumpets/>

Monkey Head: mycelium100 on Etsy