



Dear Educators,

Americans love popcorn! In fact, we consume about 15 billion quarts annually. Not only does popcorn taste great, it's also a healthful whole-grain food that is low in fat and calories, and provides fiber to the diet.

Plus, popcorn can mean a cash prize for your school when you enter the annual **Popcorn Pep Club Contest**. Just showcase your school's team spirit and love of popcorn for a chance to win cash prizes! Entries can be submitted online any time from October 1 — the start of National Popcorn Poppin' Month — through December 31, so start planning now. For contest rules and details, visit www.popcorn.org/PepClub.

To help you get your students excited to enter the contest, the Popcorn Board and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired have created this free educational program. It includes classroom activities that focus on fun facts about popcorn, challenges students with an online popcorn scavenger hunt, and takes them behind the scenes to learn how popcorn is grown. Designed to supplement family and consumer sciences, language arts, and health curricula for grades 4-8, the activities can also be used by families to extend the learning at home.

Feel free to share this program with other teachers and families in your school. And please let us know your thoughts on the program by visiting ymiclassroom.com/feedback-popcorn.

Happy popping!


Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired



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Questions? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005, or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.



Let's Get Popping!

TARGET AUDIENCE

Grades 4 to 8 as a supplement to family and consumer sciences, language arts, and health curricula

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Visit ymiclassroom.com/popcorn for:

- This teacher's guide
- Three reproducible activity sheets
- A curricular standards alignment chart

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to nutritional information about popcorn and explain what makes it a healthful, whole-grain snack
- Challenge students to an online scavenger hunt to discover facts about popcorn, such as its history and where and how it is grown

HOW TO USE THE PROGRAM

This program can be used in the classroom or with families at home. Make copies of the activity sheets and distribute them to students.

ACTIVITY 1: GOOD GRAINS, GOOD HEALTH

To start this activity, ask students what they know about popcorn. List responses on your whiteboard/chalkboard, then explain that popcorn is a type of maize (corn) and a whole grain that comes from the grass family. Distribute the activity sheet and review the nutritional facts about popcorn and what makes it a healthful, whole grain. Have students answer the questions and solve the fun facts, and then review the answers together.

Answers:

1. Popcorn is a healthy snack, and is a source of carbohydrates and several essential nutrients, including dietary fiber, iron, and B vitamins. It is low in fat and calories, has no artificial additives or preservatives, and is sugar- and gluten-free. All American grown popcorn is non-GMO.
2. Carbohydrates provide our bodies with energy.
3. The bran (pericarp) contains most of the fiber. Dietary fiber may help lower the risk of certain diseases.
4. Refining grains removes dietary fiber and vitamins.

Challenge: Explain to students that three cups of popcorn equal one serving from the MyPlate grain group. Challenge students to create a balanced meal that includes popcorn as a whole grain and aligns with MyPlate guidelines (MyPlate.gov).

ACTIVITY 2: LET'S POP BACK IN TIME

Distribute the activity sheet. Challenge students to predict the answers to the scavenger hunt, then group students to work on the activity

together. Next, have students watch the video, *Where Does Your Popcorn Grow?* at youtu.be/Gvjyc6cdUWA. Students can also find answers on the www.popcorn.org web pages listed on the activity sheet. Review the answers together and share the additional background information in parentheses.

Answers:

1. Thousands of years (Long ago, popcorn was used as a decoration for ceremonial headdresses, necklaces, and ornaments.)
2. 4,000 years old (They were found in a cave in New Mexico in 1948 and 1950.)
3. Popcorn balls
4. About 5 to 10 cents a bag
5. Three
6. In the Midwest
7. The Corn Belt
8. The major popcorn-producing states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, and Ohio.
9. Each kernel has some starch in it and the starch has some moisture in it. When the kernel gets hot, the moisture turns to steam. That steam makes the kernel pop.
10. *Zea mays everta*

ACTIVITY 3: POPCORN FUN!

Explain that popcorn is the only type of corn that pops. (You can't pop sweet corn like corn-on-the-cob). Read the *From Seed to Snack* web page: www.popcorn.org/All-About-Popcorn-From-Seed-to-Snack. Then, encourage students to look for key words to put the process of how popcorn is grown in order. For younger students, you might work on the steps as a class.

Answers:

Part 1: 1. 15 billion quarts; 60 billion cups;
2. 36 inches; 3. old maids. **Part 2:** 3, 6, 1, 5, 7, 4, 2

CONTEST

Conclude this unit by having students review some of the past winning Popcorn Pep Club Contest entries at www.popcorn.org/PepClub. Then brainstorm a Popcorn Pep Club project for your school!

ONLINE RESOURCES

- The Popcorn Board: www.popcorn.org
- Lessons, videos, and teaching resources: www.popcorn.org/Learning/Teaching-Tools
- Popcorn videos: www.popcorn.org/All-About-Popcorn/Videos
- YMI and The Popcorn Board microsite: www.ymiclassroom.com/popcorn

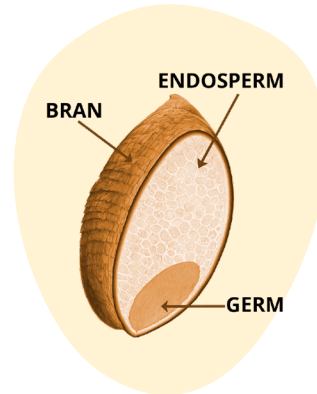
Good Grains, Good Health



It's hard to believe a snack that tastes so good can be good for you. But it's true! Find out about one of America's oldest and favorite snacks. Then use these facts to answer the questions that follow. Now, let's get popping!

FOOD FACTS ABOUT POPCORN

1. A kernel of grain has three main parts. The **bran** is the outside layer of the kernel, which contains most of the dietary fiber, B vitamins, and some minerals. The **endosperm** (under the bran) contains starchy carbohydrates, proteins, and small amounts of vitamins and minerals. The **germ** (in the center) is the part of the kernel from which a new plant would grow if you planted it. It provides vitamins and antioxidants.
2. There are two types of grains in the food family: refined grains and whole grains. Refined grains are milled, which makes them finer, but removes the bran and germ — this is where many nutrients are found. Whole grains contain the **whole** kernel, which keeps these nutrients intact and make them a healthier option.
3. Popcorn is a whole-grain food. Whole grains are a source of carbohydrates that provide our bodies with the energy we need to stay healthy.
4. Popcorn provides several essential nutrients, including iron, B vitamins, and dietary fiber. Fiber may help lower the risk of heart disease and cholesterol.
5. Popcorn is low in fat and calories. It has no artificial additives or preservatives and is sugar- and gluten-free. It is also non-GMO.



YOUR TURN!

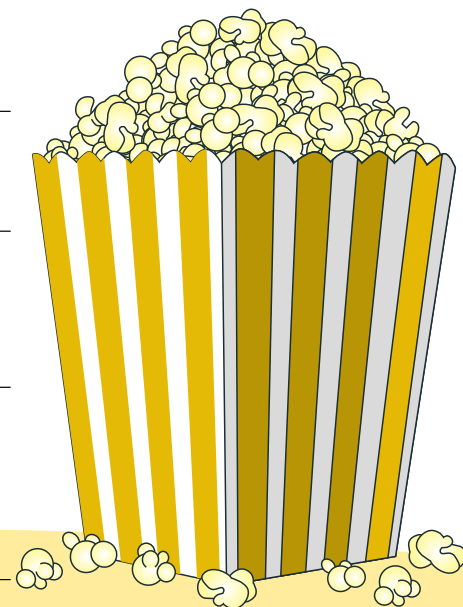
Think about what you read and then answer the questions below. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. Explain why popcorn makes a healthy snack.

2. How do carbohydrates like those in popcorn help our bodies?

3. Which part of the popcorn kernel contains most of the dietary fiber? Why is it important to eat foods rich in fiber?

4. Unlike whole grains, which contain the entire kernel, refined grains are milled. That process removes the bran and germ. What are some important nutrients that might be removed from refined grains as a result?



Families: Visit www.popcorn.org to learn more about popcorn and to explore some fun recipes!



Let's Pop Back in Time

Popcorn is one of America's oldest foods and is still hugely popular today. People love to eat popcorn just about anywhere — at the movies, sporting events, and holiday celebrations and special occasions.

A FACT-FINDING MISSION

In this scavenger hunt, you'll learn about the history of popcorn, where it is grown, and how it pops. First, predict the answers to the questions below. Then visit these pages on The Popcorn Board's website to find the correct answers.

- How long has popcorn been around?

- How old were the oldest ears of popcorn ever discovered?

- During the late 1800s and early 1900s, what kind of popcorn treats were often given as gifts?

- If you went to the movies during the Great Depression of the 1930s, how much would a bag of popcorn cost you?

- During World War II, Americans ate _____ times as much popcorn as usual.
- In what part of the United States is the most popcorn grown?

- What is the nickname given to the area of the country where popcorn grows?

- List three of the major popcorn-producing states.

- What makes popcorn pop?

- What is the scientific name for popcorn?

History of Popcorn

www.popcorn.org/

All-About-Popcorn/History-of-Popcorn

What Makes Popcorn Pop?

www.popcorn.org/

All-About-Popcorn/What-Makes-Popcorn-Pop

"Where Does Your Popcorn Grow?" video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gvjyc6cdUWA

From Seed to Snack

www.popcorn.org/

All-About-Popcorn/From-Seed-to-Snack



Families: Visit www.popcorn.org to learn more about popcorn and to explore some fun recipes!





Popcorn Fun!

Test your pop smarts with these fun activities.

PART 1: FUN FACTS ABOUT POPCORN

Solve these problems to learn some fun facts about popcorn.

- Popcorn is so popular that Americans consume about _____ billion quarts of it each year.
Solve it: $(2 \times 2) + 3 + 3 + 2 + 2 + 1$
Challenge: How many cups is that? _____
- When they pop, popcorn kernels can shoot up to _____ inches in the air. **Solve it:** $(2 \times 3 \times 2) + (4 \times 6)$
- Kernels that don't pop share their name with a popular kids' card game. Unscramble the letters to find out:

LOD DIMAS _____

PART 2: AS THE POPCORN GROWS!

Check out the *From Seed to Snack* page to learn how popcorn grows:

www.popcorn.org/All-About-Popcorn/From-Seed-to-Snack.

Then test your pop smarts by putting the steps below in the correct order.

- _____ As the popcorn plant grows, the stalk reaches about 8 feet tall, producing long leaves and ears of corn.
- _____ Once the kernels are dried and cleaned, they can be packaged.
- _____ In the spring, popcorn seeds are planted in a field.
- _____ After popcorn is harvested, the kernels are removed and dried to a 14 percent moisture level.
- _____ Finally, it's ready to pop! Popcorn needs to be heated between 400 to 460-degrees Fahrenheit in order to pop.
- _____ In the fall, the plant turns dry and brown and is ready to be harvested.
- _____ About ten days later, the seed sprouts from the soil and roots grow down.



Families: Visit www.popcorn.org to learn more about popcorn and to explore some fun recipes!

