

GENERAL: MULTI-SUBJECT

PRE/POST-FAIR

1. Use mini-units on the next pages: "*A Garden Plot*" and "*What Does a Farmer/Rancher Do?*"



TITLE: **A Garden Plot**
GRADES: **K-2**
OBJECTIVES: **The students will:**

- Relate "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" to a garden they grow themselves.
- Prepare, plant, and maintain a small individual garden.
- Discover the joys and headaches of producing food.

- Make graphs and charts that illustrate various aspects of "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" and their gardens.

SUBJECTS: Reading, Language, Social Studies, Science, Math, P.E., Art.

PROCEDURE:

1. Discuss with the children background information on a very special author, Beatrix Potter.

Many of the animals that Beatrix Potter wrote about in her stories were actually her own pets. Beatrix Potter lived with her parents in London, England. During her time, young women grew up and stayed at home with their parents until they were married. The top floor of the Potter home, which was originally the nursery, became Beatrix Potter's studio where she kept her artwork and pets. She was a very fine artist and enjoyed using her pets as models. Her first book, The Tale of Peter Rabbit, was originally a fold-out story card which she wrote and drew for a friend's ill child. Her friend later suggested that she make it into a book and have it published. This she did, keeping in mind that children have small hands; thus all of her books were very small.

2. Throughout the next several weeks, read and discuss several of Beatrix

Potter's books. Have the children point out details they see in the pictures and descriptive works they hear in the stories. After reading many of the books, return to the first story, The Tale of Peter Rabbit.

3. Have the students complete a unit on "Rabbits". Some ideas include:
 - a. Make a scatter graph of all of the things your students already know about rabbits. (see graph examples).
 - b. Have a live rabbit come visit your classroom. A 4-H or FFA member can be invited to talk about rabbit breeds, what rabbits eat, etc.
 - c. Visit the "Fur and Feather" exhibit at the Fresno Fair.
 - d. The children can learn the "Bunny Hop" dance routine.
 - e. The children can try all kinds of "rabbit food", (lettuce, parsley, etc.).
 - f. Discuss why rabbits are mammals and the characteristics of all mammals.
 - g. Conclude your unit by making a list of new information the students learned about rabbits. (See graph examples)

4. Develop your own unit on "Soil, Seeds, and Plants." Some ideas include:
 - a. Visit the agriculture exhibits at the Fresno Fair.
 - b. Make a list of items that could be grown in a garden. (See graph examples)
 - c. Make a list of items the students need in order to plant a garden. (See graph examples)
 - d. After getting packages of seeds for the gardens, talk with the students about seeds.
 - Discuss seed size and seed shape.
 - Is there a relationship between seed size and plant size?
 - Which packages of seeds contain the most seeds?
 - The least seeds?
 - What are some benefits and problems with planting small seeds? Large seeds?

e. Make individual gardens. Young children like to have possession of their own things. Having each student be responsible for his/her own garden is a great learning experience. Plastic disposable hospital dish pans or the bottoms of (1) gallon plastic milk cartons can be great individual gardens.

- Have the students pick two types of seeds they would like to grow in his/her garden. Some possible seeds include pumpkin, zucchini, radish, turnip, carrot and parsley.

- Each student should make a plant stake for each kind of seed he/she will plant. As a class, prepare the soil. Sand and water tables work well for this.

- Have each student help mix the soil -- top soil, manure (sterilized), sand and vermiculite are items that can be mixed together. Speak with a local nursery about the quantities of each.

- At planting time, have each student place about 2" to 3" of gravel at the bottom of his/her container (gravel from the play yard will do) and then fill the remainder of the container with the prepared soil (about 6" deep) making sure that the students do not fill the container so high that the soil will run off when watered.

- Using parent volunteers, have the students go to the appropriate stations to plant the seeds. The parents should teach the students how the particular seed needs to be planted watered, etc.

- Each morning the children begin their day by putting their garden outside in the sunlight, checking to see if the garden needs watering and then watering it if necessary. They also are responsible for drawing/writing in their journal "What I have Done Today" and "What is Happening in My Garden." Teachers and parents can assist the students with writing sentences in the journals at various times during the "season". Class work lists can be made so that students can begin to write their own journals. A work list example is shown below:

WHO	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE
1. I	Planted carrots	Today	In my garden

2. Pat	Watered vegetables	Yesterday	On the farm
3. He	Will weed	Tomorrow	In the sun

- The job of watching, waiting and watering begins.

5. Discuss what needs to be done to protect the garden plants from bugs, rabbits, birds, mold etc.
6. A Scare Crow can be built by each student. (See example)
7. Discussions should occur as some plants die, others wilt, some grow very large, etc.
 - After 3 to 4 weeks allow the students to take their journals and gardens home. Some of the plants can be transplanted into family gardens. Other plants, such as radishes, do not transplant well and should remain in the original container.
 - Taste products of the gardens. Make tasting graphs as shown in the graph examples. Radishes might become very popular in salads, students will get a little taste of farming and you will see the joy in your student' faces all because of**Peter Rabbit!**

EVALUATION:

At the end of the unit, have the students write and/or draw their own story about a seed that is planted in a garden. Have the seed do the "talking" in the story.