



Tending Our Common Ground

Introduction to Compost

Materials:

- “Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth” by Mary McKenna Siddals
- “Composting: Nature’s Recyclers” by Robin Koontz
- Assorted food items to sort
- Compost bin and trash bin
- Science journals

Engage

Whole Group
(5 min)

- Silent Independent Breathing Time
- Share Time (Leading Questions)
 - What do you notice that is different about our garden? (clean beds)
 - Why did we clean out our beds? (to make room for new plants)
 - What will our new plants need to grow? (air, water, sunlight, nutrients)
 - How will we give our plants those nutrients? How do we make plant food?
 - What if I told you that you could find all of the ingredients here at school?
 - What if I told you that we could find all of the ingredients in the trash?

Explore

Small Group
(10 min)

- Read “Compost Stew”
 - Students repeat: “Just add it to the pot and let it all rot into compost stew.”
- What did the ingredients in her compost stew have in common? (They were all once living – organic. “If it grows, it goes”)
- Where will we find all of the ingredients we need for our compost stew? (Cafeteria – fruit and veggie scraps, Garden – yard scraps)

Explain

Whole Group
(5 min)

- Explain the process for composting daily at school based around: “Moisten. Toss Lightly. Cover. Let Brew. Now open the pot and what have you got? Compost stew!”

Extend

Independent
(10 min)

- Grades K-2**
 - Food Sort* – Give food items, sort the foods into the compost bin or the trash can.
- Grades 3-5**
 - Sort Greens and Browns* – Reread “Compost Stew” and sort each item into a chart of either a “green” or an organic nitrogen source or a “brown” or an organic carbon source, explaining that our compost pile needs a mix of both.
 - “Composting – Nature’s Recyclers”* – Students can read this book to engage deeper in an understanding of the decomposers involved in the compost process. (AR 4.1, 0.5 points).

Evaluate

Independent
(10 min)

- “In your journal, draw yourself as the compost chef and draw the balanced ingredients that will go into your compost stew. Then show the steps to complete the recipe.”