



Lesson 2: Exploring Wheat

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Time: 1 hour

Subjects: ELA, Science

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 2 of 5 in the *Celebrate Wheat* unit within the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on a series of books written by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Lesson 2 serves as a hands-on literacy lesson focused on planting wheat to deepen students' understanding of how wheat begins as a seed and grows into a food source. Students build understanding by applying background knowledge from the shared reading in Lesson 1 while engaging in structured discussions and a real-world planting experience connected to agriculture in Kansas. This lesson reinforces foundational print concepts and early writing skills through explicit instruction in letter-sound correspondence, spacing, capitalization, and ending punctuation, supporting deeper learning and cross-curricular connections in subsequent lessons. Connections to *The Soil Neighborhood* unit are woven throughout as students physically experience what they learned about soil's role in plant growth.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across units, wheat growth, seed observation, oral language, vocabulary, descriptive language, print concepts, phonological awareness (initial sounds), phonics, sentence construction, informative drawing, and writing.

Kansas Academic Standards:

Kansas ELA Standards

W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

W.K.10 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing.

W.K.10.a Print many upper and lowercase letters.

W.K.10.d. Use the most frequently occurring prepositions in written work (e.g., to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with).

W.K.11 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

W.K.11.a Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.

W.K.11.b Recognize and name end punctuation.

W.K.11.c Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short vowel sounds.

W.K.11.d Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

RF.K.1.b Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.

RF.K.1.c Understand that words are separated by spaces in print and can point with one-to-one correspondence.

Science Standards

K-LS1-1 Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

K-ESS3-1 Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of plants and the places they live.

National Agriculture Literacy Outcomes:

Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber, and Energy

T2.K-2.a Describe how plants are grown and used for food.

T2.K-2.e Identify the importance of natural resources (e.g., sun, soil, water) in farming.

Objectives

Science Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify that wheat begins as a seed and grows into a plant.
- Observe and describe what plants need to grow (soil, water, sunlight)
- Explain that wheat is a plant grown by farmers to make food.
- Connect the role of healthy soil to wheat growth, drawing on prior knowledge from *The Soil Neighborhood*.

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding that spoken language is represented by written letters and words.
- Apply one-to-one correspondence and spacing between words during writing.
- Compose a simple informative sentence about wheat using drawing, dictation, and writing.
- Write letters that represent sounds in words related to wheat.
- Write sentences using an uppercase letter at the beginning and appropriate punctuation.
- Use common prepositions (e.g., in, with, to) in oral language and writing.

Materials Needed

- Wheat seeds (one per student, plus extras)
- 9oz clear plastic cups (one per student)
- Soil wafers (one per student)
- Water
- Trays or newspapers to protect surfaces
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Student drawing and writing paper
- Pencils or crayons
- Hand wipes or paper towels

Lesson Procedures

1. Activating Prior Knowledge (Connecting to *Celebrate Wheat*)
 - a. Explain to students: *"In our story, Celebrate Wheat, Kailey's grandma told her where pizza crust comes from. Today, we are not rereading the book, but we are going to use what we already know to do something farmers do: plant wheat."*
 - b. Ask students:
 - *"What does wheat start as?"*
 - *"What does wheat need to grow?"*
 - *"What food do we eat that comes from wheat?"*



- c. Briefly restate key ideas from Lesson 1 using student language:
"Wheat starts as a seed. It grows with sun, water, and soil. Farmers grow wheat to make flour, and flour is used to make foods like pizza crust."
 - d. Bridge to The Soil Neighborhood: *"We also learned something important in The Soil Neighborhood; soil is not just dirt. It is a neighborhood full of helpers that give plants the nutrients they need to grow. Today, your wheat seed is going to go into that same kind of healthy soil."*
2. Wheat Seed Exploration (Before Planting)
 - a. Give each student one wheat seed to examine.
 - b. Explain to students: *"Before we plant our wheat seed, we are going to look at it closely. Scientists and writers look carefully before they write."*
 - c. Prompt students to observe using their senses.
 - *"What does the seed look like?"*
 - *"Is it big or small?"*
 - *"Is it smooth or rough?"*
 - *"What color is it?"*
 - d. Model descriptive language as students respond. Record a few student words on chart paper (e.g., small, brown, hard)
 - e. Connect observation to prior knowledge from the story: *"In the story, Grandma said wheat starts as a seed. This small seed can grow into a tall wheat plant. And remember what we learned about soil? The soil neighborhood is going to take care of this seed once we plant it."*
 - f. Explain to students: *"We look closely so we can use good words when we talk and write about wheat."*
3. Wheat Planting Activity (Hands-On Investigation)

Prepare materials so each student has their own planting container, soil, and wheat seed.

 - a. Teacher models expectations:
 - *"Each of you will plant your own wheat seed."*
 - *"We handle seeds gently."*
 - *"We do not put the seed in our mouths."*
 - *"We keep soil in our own container."*
 - *"We listen and follow directions."*
 - b. Show students the wheat seeds and explain: *"In the story, Grandma told Kailey that wheat starts as a seed. Today, you are each going to plant your own wheat seed, just like farmers do."*
 - c. Model planting wheat step-by-step while students watch:
 - *"First, put the soil in your cup."*
 - *"Next, place your wheat seed in the soil."*
 - *"Then, cover the seed with soil."*
 - *"Last, add water to the soil."*
 - d. Students plant their own wheat seeds following each modeled step. Pause between steps to ensure all students are successful.
 - e. As students plant, prompt oral language using complete sentences and emphasizing prepositions (in, with, to).
 - *"I put the seed **in** the soil."*
 - *"I covered the seed **with** soil."*

- *"I added water **to** the soil."*
- f. Explain to students: *"Planting your own seed helps you understand what we learned in the story. Each of your seeds can grow into wheat, just like Grandma described. And now that seed is resting in the soil neighborhood, surrounded by all the helpers we learned about."*
- 4. Vocabulary & Oral Language Development
 - a. Introduce and reinforce vocabulary using real samples:
 - Wheat – a plant farmers grow for food
 - Seed – the part of the plant that grows into a new plant
 - Soil – dirt that helps plants grow
 - Plant (verb) – to put a seed in soil so it can grow
 - Grow – to get bigger over time
 - b. Ask Students:
 - *"What did we plant the seed in?"*
 - *"What do plants need to grow?"*
 - *"Why do farmers plant wheat?"*

Encourage students to answer using complete sentences.
- 5. Phonological Awareness
 - a. Say the word wheat.
 - b. Have students repeat the word
 - c. Ask students:
 - *"What sound do you hear at the beginning of wheat?" (/w/)*
 - d. Repeat with key lesson words:
 - Seed – *"What sound do you hear at the beginning?" (/s/)*
 - Soil – (/s/)
 - Plant – (/p/)
 - Grow – (/g/)
 - e. Write the letters W, S, G, P on chart paper as students say the sounds.
 - f. Explain to students: *"When we talk, we use sounds. When we write, we use letters to represent those sounds, to show what that sound looks like on paper."*
 - g. Have students practice saying the sound and naming the letter together.
- 6. Shared Writing & Print Concepts

Explain to students: *"Scientists write about what they learn. Today, we are going to write about wheat."*

 - a. On chart paper, write a simple sentence:
"Wheat grows from a seed."
 Teacher models explicitly:
 - Tracking words left-to-right
 - Pointing to each word with one-to-one correspondence
 - Identifying spaces between words
 - Identifying the uppercase letter at the beginning of the sentence
 - Identifying punctuation at the end of the sentence
 - b. Ask students:
 - *"Where does the sentence start?"*
 - *"Where does the sentence end?"*
 - *"Can you find the word wheat?"*

7. Student Writing Component

- a. Gather students in a place where they can clearly see the chart paper.
Prompt: *"Now it is your turn."*
Explain to students: *"When we write a sentence, we follow rules that help the reader understand what we wrote. A good sentence:*
 - *starts with an uppercase letter,*
 - *has spaces between words,*
 - *uses letters that match the sounds we hear, and*
 - *ends with a punctuation mark to tell the reader, "we are finished."*
- b. Model a complete sentence: On chart paper, slowly write:
"I planted a seed."
 - Model each step out loud.
 - Beginning with an uppercase Letter
 - Point to the I.
- c. Prompt: *"Every sentence starts with an uppercase letter. I used an uppercase I because it is the first letter in my sentence."*
Ask students:
 - *"Is this an uppercase I or a lowercase i?"*
- d. After writing "I", stop
Explain to students: *"I finished my first word. Now I need a space so the reader knows a new word is starting."*
Use your finger or a pencil to show the space before writing "planted".
Point to planted.
- e. Prompt: *"Let's say planted slowly: /p/ /l/ /a/ /n/ /t/ /e/ /d/. I am writing the letters that match the sounds I hear."*
Repeat steps with:
 - a
 - seed
- f. Prompt: *"Writers listen for sounds and write the letters that match those sounds."*
Reread out loud while pointing: *"I / planted / a/ seed."*
Ask students:
 - *"How many words are in my sentence?"*
 - *"What helps us see where one word ends and the next word begins?"*
- g. Point to the period and explain to students: *"This dot is called a period. A period tells the reader my sentence is finished."*
Ask students:
 - *"What does the period mean?"*
 - *"Do we put the period at the beginning or the end of the sentence?"*
- h. Students complete a draw-and-write response.
Display sentence frames so students can copy onto their paper:
 - "Wheat grows."
 - "I planted a seed."
 - "The seed is in the soil."
Prompt: *"When you write today, remember our sentence rules:*
 - *Start with an uppercase letter*
 - *Say one word at a time*

- *Leave a space before your next word*
 - *Listen for the sounds in each word*
 - *End with a period."*
- Students may:
- Draw the wheat seed they planted
 - Copy one sentence frame
 - Write letters that match the sounds they hear
 - Dictate their sentence to the teacher
- Teacher supports:
- Letter-sound correspondence
 - Spacing between words
 - Use of an uppercase letter at the beginning of a sentence
 - end punctuation
 - Tracking words while rereading sentences aloud

8. Discussion & Reflection

a. Ask students:

- *"What did we do today that helped us understand the text better?"*
- *"Why do farmers plant wheat?"*
- *"What do you think will happen to our seeds next?"*
- *"How is our planting cup like the soil neighborhood we learned about? What helpers are in that soil right now?"*

9. Kansas Connection

- Explain to students: *"We live in Kansas, and Kansas is a farming state. Some farmers in Kansas grow wheat to help feed the world. Wheat is one of the crops Kansas is best known for."*
- Show a simple map of Kansas and point to where the school is located
- Explain to students: *"Right here is where we live. All around our community, farmers grow crops like wheat in big fields."*
- Connect to students' experiences, explain: *"Today, every one of you planted a wheat seed, and that is something farmers across Kansas do every single year. Wheat farming looks a little different depending on where you are. If you live out in the country or your family has land, you might have watched a farmer get a field ready, or seen rows of little green sprouts coming up in the spring. If you live closer to town, you might not have planted a seed before today, but now you have. And whether your family farms or not, that seed in your cup is doing the same thing that millions of seeds across Kansas are doing right now; putting down roots in the soil, reaching for the sun, and slowly becoming the food that shows up on all of our tables."*
- Ask students
 - *"Have you seen wheat growing near your home or on a drive through Kansas?"*
 - *"Who do you know that works on a farm or ranch?"*
 - *"How does planting your own wheat seed help you understand what farmers do?"*

Assessment:



Student understanding is assessed through ongoing formative and observational measures embedded throughout the lesson, including teacher observations, student discussions, hands-on planting activities, and the application of foundational literacy skills during shared and independent writing. The teacher should note whether students can articulate what a seed needs to grow, connect the planting experience to the text, apply letter-sound correspondence during writing, and use correct spacing and punctuation in their sentences. Students who make unprompted connections to *The Soil Neighborhood* demonstrate meaningful cross-unit learning transfer and should be noted.

Supplemental Activities:

Wheat Journal: Give each student a simple folded-paper booklet to use as a wheat journal. On the first page, students draw their planted seed and copy or dictate the sentence “I planted a seed.” As the wheat grows over the coming days and weeks, students add a new page each time they observe a change; drawing what they see and writing or dictating one observation sentence (e.g., “I see a sprout,” or “The plant is green”). This activity reinforces informative writing, scientific observation, and sequencing while giving students a concrete, living record of the wheat journey from seed to plant. The journal can be revisited in later lessons and brought home at the end of the unit as a take-home artifact connecting school learning to family conversations about food and farming.

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