

# Truth or Hogwash?

**Grade Level: 2-3**

**Approximate Length of Activity: One class period**

## Objective

### Teacher

1. Discuss with students the history of pigs.
2. Explain the different uses of pigs.
3. Assist students in playing a game that determines the facts about pigs.

### Students

1. Work in teams to play a game in which they answer true/false questions about swine.
2. Research and develop questions of their own.

**Michigan Content Standards: (Language Arts) R.WS.02.11; R.IT.02.04; R.MT.02.02; W.PR.02.01; R.WS.03.08; R.IT.03.02; R.MT.03.01; R.MT.03.02; W.PR.03.01**

## Vocabulary

- **Boar**-a mature male swine.
- **Commercial**- of, relating to, or being goods, often unrefined, produced and distributed in large quantities for use by industry.
- **Gilt**- a young female swine that has not had a litter.
- **Hog**-a large swine, weighing over 250 pounds.
- **Hogwash**-garbage fed to hogs; swill; worthless, false or ridiculous speech or writing; nonsense.
- **Lard**-the white solid or semi-solid rendered fat of a hog.
- **Lean**-containing little or no fat.
- **Manure**-animal dung, compost or other material used to fertilize soil.
- **Pig**- a small swine, weighing less than 250 pounds.
- **Pork**-the flesh of a pig or hog used as food.
- **Snout**-the projecting nose, jaws, or anterior facial part of an animal's head.
- **Sow**-a mature female swine.
- **Swine**-any of the family of mammals having short legs, cloven hooves, bristly hair and a hard snout used for digging.



## Background

Pigs were among the first animals to be domesticated, probably as early as 7000 B.C. Forty million years ago, hog-like animals roamed forests and swamps in what are now Europe and Asia. By 4900 B.C. hogs were domesticated in China. By 1500 B.C. they were raised in Europe.

In 1939 Hernando de Soto landed at Tampa Bay, Florida, with 13 pigs, the first in North America. By the time of de Soto's death, three years later, his hog herd had grown to 700.

Colonists in Pennsylvania developed the practice of "finishing" the hogs on corn (feeding them nothing but corn in the few weeks before butchering them). This practice improved the quality of the pork and laid the foundation for the modern pork industry. In the colonial U.S., hogs were driven to market in large droves over trails that later became routes used by the railroads.

Hog-raising became an important commercial enterprise during the 1800s when the Midwest farm regions settled. The new Erie Canal system gave farmers a way to get their hogs to the cities back east. Farmers started calling their hogs "Mortgage Lifters" because the profits from their sales helped pay for the new homesteads.

The hogs would eat corn, grass, clover or even table scraps that would have otherwise have become garbage. The word "hogwash," meaning something that is worthless, came from this practice. In some areas hogs would be turned out to find their own food. Hogs would roam freely, eating what they could find-acorns from the ground or roots, which they dug from the ground with their snouts. On Manhattan Island, New York, the hogs rampaged through the grain fields until farmers were forced to build a wall to keep them out. The street running along this wall became Wall Street.

Most people had pig pens near their homes and fed the hogs just enough to keep them returning home from their daily forage for food. Everybody had a different hog call so that only their pigs responded to their call. These calls might be a high pitched "sooie," a low pitched "wark" or a simple "here pig here."

Lard was in high demand for baking, so pork producers grew pigs that were very fat. People could eat foods that were higher in fat then because most were involved in vigorous physical labor that caused their bodies to burn large amounts of fat and calories.

Today most people are not as active as they were back then, and health conscious consumers want leaner meat. To meet this demand, pork producers have changed the way they feed and raise their swine. Most cuts of pork today are as lean or leaner than similar cuts of beef and chicken. Pork has a high nutrient density (a high level of nutrients for the level of calories). It provides protein, iron, zinc, and B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and vitamin B12).

Many people picture a hog farm as a smelly, muddy place where pigs wallow in muddy pens. Years ago, pigs would lie in the mud to protect themselves from overheating and biting insects. Today most hogs are kept indoors in buildings where producers can control temperature, humidity and other environmental factors. These buildings are well-lit and clean, so the producer can better monitor and promote the health of the hogs. Some operations use indoor and outdoor facilities. Healthy, unstressed animals are more profitable, so producers try to keep their hogs comfortable and happy.

By-products made from swine include adhesives, plastics, shoes, paint, glue, crayons, chalk and chewing gum. Pig heart valves are used to replace diseased or damaged human heart valves. Hog skin is used as a dressing in treating serious burns, and hog pancreas glands provide insulin to treat diabetes.

## Materials Needed

- Poster board
- Pocket folders
- Blank index cards
- Glue
- Reference books

## Activity Outline

1. Create a game board by gluing the pocket folders on the poster board in even numbered rows and columns.
  - Students will brainstorm what they know about pigs.
  - Write adjectives students use on a chalkboard.
  - Copy Student Worksheets A and B
  - Cut on lines to make game cards.
  - Explain the meaning of the word “hogwash” (nonsense; speech that is worthless, like the table scraps formerly fed to hogs.)
  - Place the cards in a bowl.
  - Students will take turns drawing a card from the bowl to read to the class.
  - After each question is read, students will call out “truth” or “hogwash.” As an alternative, let students take turns answering the questions.
  - After students have given their answers, the student who drew the card will read what is on the back.
  - Discuss answers after each one is read.
2. Read and discuss background.
  - Divide students into groups of four or five.
  - Provide books, encyclopedias and other resource information about swine.
  - Students will work in groups to create questions about swine in four or five different categories (nutritional value, waste management, history, by-products, etc.)
  - Students will write questions on index cards with the correct answers written on the back. Each statement should be assigned a value of 10, 20, 30, 40, or 50 points.
  - Write values on pocket folders, and place the cards in the appropriate folders.
  - Divide students into teams of four.
  - Draw cards from the folders.
  - Teams will take turns answering questions.
  - Teams will continue answering questions and accumulating points until they respond incorrectly to a question. As an alternative, let teams take turns so each team gets a chance to answer questions.



## Discussion Questions

1. Were pigs among the first animals to be domesticated?
2. Why would farmers create special “calls” for their pigs?
3. Why is it important to keep animals healthy and stress-free?

## Related Activities

1. For more information and activities, contact the Michigan Pork Producers Association, 4801 Willoughby Rd. #5, Holt, MI 48842, (517)-699-2145. [www.mipork.org](http://www.mipork.org)
2. The lesson “This Little Pig” located in the language arts section of this curriculum guide.
3. The lesson “Ag Libs” located in the language arts section of this curriculum guide.

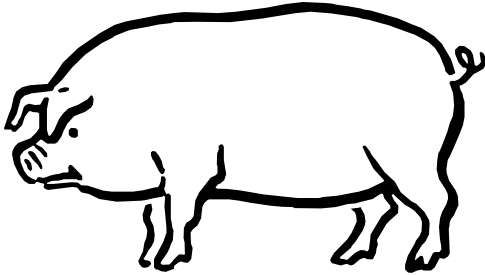
## Book Resources

1. “A Pioneer Sampler: The Daily Life of a Pioneer Family in 1840” by Barbara Greenwood and Heather Collins
2. “If You Give a Pig a Pancake” by Laura Joffe Nuberoff

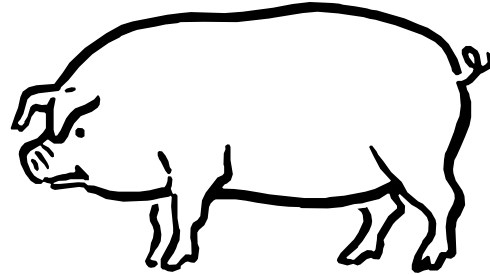
*Acknowledgement: Adapted from “Truth or Hogwash?” Oklahoma Agriculture in the Classroom.*

# Truth or Hogwash?

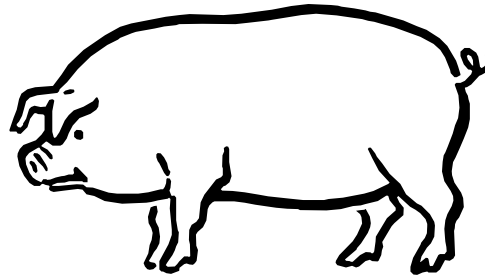
Directions: Cut each of the following statements out and paste them on a blank index card. On the opposite side paste the correct answer.



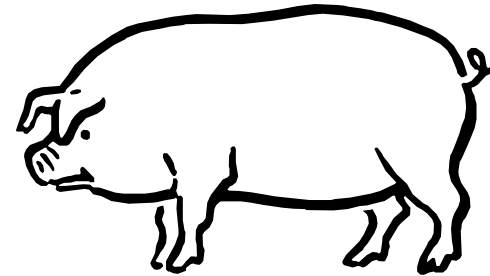
1. Pigs eat and eat and really "pig out."



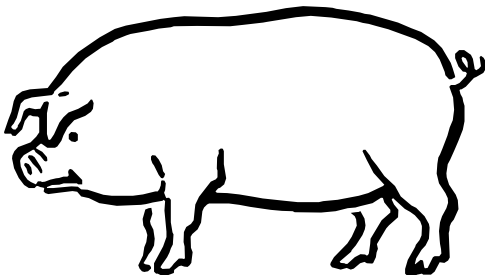
2. Pigs are not stupid. They are as smart as dogs.



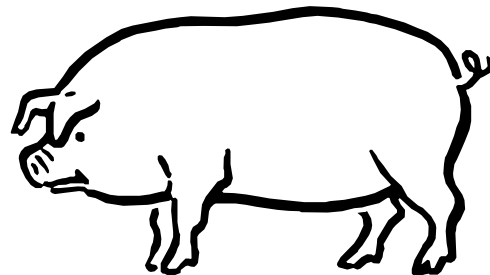
3. Pigs never grow to weigh more than 1,000 pounds.



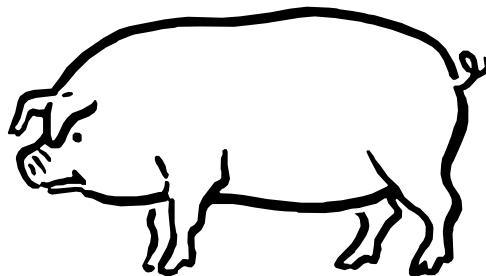
4. Pigs have small eyes and poor eyesight.



5. Pigs are dirty animals and love to wallow in the mud.



6. Pigs have rings in their noses to keep from smelling.



7. Pigs enjoy listening to music.

# Truth or Hogwash?

Directions: Cut out the following statements and match them with the corresponding card. Paste the statement on the back of the card.

1. Hogwash: they stop eating when they have had enough.

2. Truth: They can be taught to do tricks such as fetching. They have even been taught to do important jobs. In war they have served as mine sniffers in battlefields.

3. Hogwash: The heaviest hog in history, Big Bill, weighed 2,552 pounds.

4. Truth: But they have a strong sense of smell.

5. Hogwash: They are cleaner than most farm animals. They roll in the mud to cool off because they have no sweat glands. They love to take showers.

6. Hogwash: The rings are used to keep them from rooting, or digging up the earth, with their snouts. This is a natural behavior of hogs in the wild, who dig for roots to eat. It can cause a lot of damage on a farm.

7. Truth: Pigs are curious and like to keep busy. Some farmers entertain their pigs with beach balls and old tires.

# Truth or Hogwash?

Directions: Use this page as a gameboard and place Swine Card Facts in the correct box.

(Correct answers will be on the back of the cards once pasted on the index card.)

**Truth**

**Hogwash**

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**Truth:** They can be taught to do tricks such as fetching. They have even been taught to do important jobs. In war they have served as mine sniffers in battlefields.

3. Pigs never grow to weigh more than 1,000 pounds.

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**Hogwash:** The rings are used to keep them from rooting, or digging up the earth with their snouts. This is a natural behavior of hogs in the wild, who dig for roots to eat. It can cause a lot of damage on a farm.

7. Pigs enjoy listening to music.

**Truth:** Pigs are curious and like to keep busy. Some farmers entertain their pigs with beach balls and old tires.