

# The Little Red Hen

**Grade Level: K-2**

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

## **Objective**

### **Teacher**

1. Show the importance of a variety of communication techniques.
2. Show the plant life cycle and the uses of plants.

### **Students**

1. Develop language for the purpose of effectively communicating through listening, speaking, viewing and presenting.
2. Describe the life cycle of plants.
3. Students will identify how people use plants (e.g., food, clothing, shelter).

**Michigan Content Standards: (Language Arts) R.WS.00.10; R.NT.00.03; R.CM.00.02; R.NT.01.03; R.NT.01.05; R.CM.01.02; R.NT.02.03; R.NT.02.04; R.CM.02.02**

## **Introduction**

In this lesson, students will listen to the familiar story of "The Little Red Hen." They will explore a stem of wheat and use their knowledge to complete a comprehension worksheet.

## **Materials Needed**

- "The Little Red Hen" Story (included)
- One wheat stem per child
- Copies of "From Seed to Harvest" worksheet

## **Activity Outline**

1. Read the story of "The Little Red Hen" to the students.
2. Divide the chalk or white board into three segments.  
Write "Beginning," "Middle" and "End" at the top of the segments.
3. Ask the students to retell the story based upon the three different segments. Write their comments on the board. You may wish to have the students elaborate on the emotions or feelings that may be expressed by the Little Red Hen or the other animals in the story. Students may also enjoy acting out the different segments of the story.
4. Give each student a wheat stem.

5. Ask students to first predict the number of seeds in their seed head, then using the “threshing directions” (see below), ask the students to thresh the wheat. “Threshing” means to remove the kernel from the hull and chaff of the plant.
6. Threshing or Removing the Seed from the Plant
  - Place the seed head between both hands with the palms in horizontal position and move hands backwards and forwards repeatedly while applying pressure. This is similar to the threshing action in a combine.
  - After the grain has been “threshed,” shake the separate parts in the palm of one hand letting the bigger and lighter parts of the head float to the top and the heavier grain kernels settle to the bottom. The student can now skim the empty spike and some of the hulls off to the side and discard. This is similar to the separating action of the combine by the straw walkers and sieves.
  - Now clean the chaff (seed hulls) from the grain that remains in your hand. A combine completes this job by blowing air through the grain and chaff, removing the lighter chaff, and blowing lightly on the material as it drops through the air from one hand to the other.
  - Remember that the trip through the combine for the seed head only takes about 15 seconds, and that there are thousands of heads going through the combine at the same time. Historically, farmers would have had livestock walk on the wheat heads on a hard surface to thresh the grain out of the heads, separate the straw and spikes by hand, and then throw the grain and chaff up into the air for the wind to blow the chaff away.
7. Complete the “From Seed to Harvest” worksheet.

## Discussion Questions

1. Were your predictions of how many seeds on the seed head accurate?
2. What is the machine called that harvests the wheat?
3. What is wheat ground into?

## Related Activities

1. The lesson “Ag Libs” located in the language arts section of this curriculum guide.
2. The lesson “Wheat: From Field to Oven” located in the language arts section of this curriculum guide.

## Book Resources

1. “Face-to-Face With the Chicken” by Christian Harvard
2. “Chickens Have Chicks” by Lynn M. Stone
3. “The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza” by Philemon Sturges
4. “Little Red Hen Makes Soup” by Williams, Rozanne Lanczak

Acknowledgement: Adapted from “The Little Red Hen,” Utah Agriculture in the Classroom.



# The Little Red Hen Story

Once upon a time, a little red hen lived in a small cottage. She worked hard to keep her family fed. One day, when the little red hen was out walking with her friends, the goose, the cat and the pig, she found a few grains of wheat.

"Who will help me plant this wheat?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the goose, "I'd rather swim in the pond."

"Not I," said the cat, "I'd rather sleep on the hay."

"Not I," said the pig, "I'd rather lie in the mud."

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

Time went by and the wheat grew, but so did the weeds.

"Who will help me pull the weeds?" asked the little red hen.

Time went by and the wheat grew, but so did the weeds.

"Who will help me pull the weeds?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the goose, "I'd rather swim in the pond."

"Not I," said the cat, "I'd rather sleep on the hay."

"Not I," said the pig, "I'd rather lie in the mud."

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

All summer the wheat grew taller and taller. It turned from brown to golden amber. And at last, it was time to harvest the wheat.

"Who will help me harvest the wheat?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the goose, "I'd rather swim in the pond."

"Not I," said the cat, "I'd rather sleep on the hay."

"Not I," said the pig, "I'd rather lie in the mud."

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

"Who will help me take the wheat to the mill?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the goose, "I'd rather swim in the pond."

"Not I," said the cat, "I'd rather sleep on the hay."

"Not I," said the pig, "I'd rather lie in the mud."

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

The next day came and the little red hen was hungry.

"Who will help me bake this flour into bread?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the goose, "I'd rather swim in the pond."

"Not I," said the cat, "I'd rather sleep on the hay."

"Not I," said the pig, "I'd rather lie in the mud."

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

At last, the bread was baked and the little red hen called to her friends once more.

"Who will help me eat this bread?" asked the little red hen.

"I will," said the goose.

"I will," said the cat.

"I will," said the pig.

"Oh, no you won't!" said the little red hen. "I found the wheat, I planted it, I weeded it, and when it was time to harvest it, I did that too. I took it to the mill to be ground into flour and at last, I baked it into bread."

"Now," said the little red hen, "I'm going to eat it with my family." And she did.

# From Seed to Harvest

Directions: Complete the sentences below using words from the "Word Box".

## Word Box

grass	strong wind	winter wheat	golden	irrigation	Michigan
bushel	flour	grasshopper	truck	combine	

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is planted in the fall and harvested in the summer.
2. Winter wheat is planted in \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ can flatten a ripe wheat crop.
4. When wheat is ripe it is a \_\_\_\_\_ color.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a harmful insect in a wheat crop.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ cuts, separates and cleans the grain.
7. The farmer sells his wheat by the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is used to haul the grain to the elevator.
9. Wheat is ground into \_\_\_\_\_ to make cakes, bread and pasta.
10. Some farmers use \_\_\_\_\_ to water their crops.
11. Wheat is a \_\_\_\_\_ plant.

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1. Winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested in the summer.
2. Winter wheat is planted in Michigan.
3. A strong wind can flatten a ripe wheat crop.
4. When wheat is ripe it is a golden color.
5. A grasshopper is a harmful insect in a wheat crop.
6. The combine cuts, separates and cleans the grain.
7. The farmer sells his wheat by the bushel.
8. A truck is used to haul the grain to the elevator.
9. Wheat is ground into flour to make cakes, bread and pasta.
10. Some farmers use irrigation to water their crops.
11. Wheat is a grass plant.