Sweet Potatoes

*Lesson Plan for Grade 2, Science*

*Prepared by USDA-Sweet Potato Hill*

*Modified by Mississippi State University, School of Human Science*

*for Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation - AITC*

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In this lesson, students will observe the outward appearance and characteristics of a sweet potato.

# EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

**Mississippi College-and-Career Readiness Standards:**

L.2.2 Students will demonstrate an understanding of how living things change in form as they go through the general stages of a life cycle.

ELA-W.2.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

**NALOs:**

T2.K-2 a Explain how farmers/ranchers work with the lifecycle of plants and animals to harvest a crop.

# OBJECTIVES

* Students will identify a sweet potato as a heavy, oblong-shaped, orange-brown vegetable
* Students will describe the outward appearance and smell of a sweet potato

# MATERIALS NEEDED

* Sweet potato (1)
* Brown box (1)

# Lesson Set Up:

1. Place sweet potato in mystery box before class so that the students do not see what is placed in the box.
2. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food.
3. Have the children wash their hands.
4. If this is the first activity involving food tasting, talk with the children about polite food tasting habits.

# VOCABULARY

**family farms:** farm owned and/or operated by a family of individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption. The majority of farms (97%) in the USA are owned and operated by families.

# Ag Facts:

* The majority (73%) of all farm workers in the US were not born in the United States.
* The overwhelming majority of farm workers in the United States were born in Mexico.
* There are more men farm workers than women.
* Farmers rely on farm workers to complete many tasks on the farm and compensate them with money for their time, housing for their families, and daily necessities to keep them working on the farm.
* There are many laws in place to keep farm workers safe and making money for their families such as the Fair Labor Standards Act or Occupational Safety and Health Act.
* Taxonomically, Sweetpotato should be one word because it is not technically a potato (root vegetable) it is a tuber. However, commercially it is usually presented as two words (Sweet Potato).

# Background information for teachers:

Today Mississippi is the 2nd largest sweet potato producing state in the United States. Most of our sweet potatoes are produced in Northern Mississippi and the largest acreage is centered around the town of Vardaman which has a long history of producing great tasting sweet potatoes.

# LEARNING PROCEDURES

Interest Approach:

1. Introduce or reintroduce the Mystery Box/Bag if you have used it before.
2. One at a time, ask each student to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box/bag with the child.
3. Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he/she feels.
4. After everyone has guessed, reveal the sweet potato. Let each child hold the sweet potato, if desired. < Note the children’s guesses that were close (a plant food) or correct (sweet potato).
5. Talk about the sweet potato. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.

* Is sweet potato a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
* What shape is it? (Oblong, like a squished ball)
* What color is the outside of the sweet potato? (Light to bright orange)
* How does the outside of it feel? (Bumpy)
* Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell musky like soil)
* Is it light or heavy? (Heavy like a baseball –let the children feel the baseball)
* Is it soft or hard? (Hard)
* Has anyone ever tasted a sweet potato? (Yes or No)

**Concept Elaboration and Evaluation**

* Conclude the lesson by offering the children a piece of raw sweet potato to taste. As necessary, remind the children how the group follows polite tasting manners.

# Additional Learning Procedures

To help students review and elaborate more about sweet potatoes try using the [“I used to think… Now I think..”](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BZhReiv8yIzJDrBsoGESMrbvV0OTk5uV/view?usp=drive_link) method to allow students to think deeper and make new connections.

Additional texts to include:

[From Eye to Potato](https://www.agfoundation.org/recommended-pubs/from-eye-to-potato)

[Eating the Alphabet](https://www.agfoundation.org/recommended-pubs/eating-the-alphabet-fruits-vegetables-from-a-z)

[What’s for Lunch, Potatoes](https://www.agfoundation.org/recommended-pubs/whats-for-lunch-potatoes)



Source: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/growit_book4.pdf>

*For more information and additional lessons visit*

*https://msfb.org/ag-in-the-classroom/lesson-plans/.*