Plant or Fungus? What is the Difference?

Objective

Students will discuss differences between mushrooms and plants. Compare the structures of mushrooms and flowers.

Procedures

1. Bring an assortment of mushrooms (edible) and green plants or flowers to class.
   —Hold then up one by one and ask "Is this a plant?"
   —Ask what makes a plant a plant? Write answers on the board.
   —Ask how do mushrooms grow? What do they need to grow and survive? Is that different from what plants need to grow and survive.
2. Explain that mushrooms are not plants but fungi. Read and discuss background and vocabulary.
   —Students will use the worksheet provided to compare and contrast flowers and mushrooms.

Oklahoma Academic Standards

GRADE 3
Life Science 1-1; 4-3

GRADE 4
Life Science 1-1

GRADE 5
Life Science 2-1,2

Materials

variety of mushrooms and green plants or flowers

Name_____

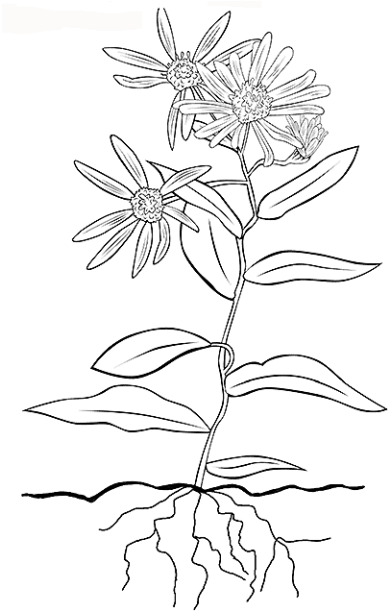
Plant or Fungus? What is the Difference?

Plants take non-living material (water, sunlight, carbon dioxide and minerals) and produce plant food. This process is called photosynthesis. Photosynthesis is what gives plants their green color.

Mushrooms are a kind of Fungi, a major kingdom of living things. They do not have chlorophyll like plants, so they can't photosynthesize their own food. Instead, they rely on other plants for their nutritients.

When the fruiting body of the mushroom first appears above the surface, it looks like a little button. This is called the cap. The cap is protected by a thin covering called a veil. As the mushroom grows bigger, the veil splits and falls down around the stalk of the mushroom and forms the annulus. As the mushroom grows it develops spores in the gills. The gills are located on the underside of the cap. New mushrooms grow from these spores.

What is the difference between a flower and a mushroom. How are they similar?



Label the parts of the flower

<u>Flower Parts</u>

petal
seeds
pistil
stem
root

Label the parts of the mushroom

<u>Mushroom Parts</u>

cap
spores
gills
stalk
hyphae

1. A cap is to a mushroom as a_____ is to a flower
2. Spores are to a mushroom as _____are to a flower.
3. The pistil is to a flower as the _____are to a mushroom.
4. A stem is to a flower as the _____ is to a mushroom.
5. The roots are to a flower as the _____ is to a mushroom.

Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom is a program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.