

# Elementary Language Arts



A collection of lessons and activities for the elementary classroom using engaging examples found on the farm to teach language arts concepts.



# Table of Contents

---

- Ag Tag
- Apple of My Eye
- Barnyard Bag Book
- Barnyard Exploration
- Story Chain
- Virginia Blanket
- Virginia Stone Soup



# Ag Tag Game

---

## **Standards of Learning**

English K.1, 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1

## **Objective**

Students will:

- Expand listening, speaking, and written vocabulary
- Use descriptive words and adjectives
- Build prewriting skills to generate ideas

## **Materials**

- Pictures relating to agriculture
- Nametags (hanging name badges)
- Large post-it notes

## **Background Knowledge**

Agriculture is Virginia's largest industry by far. Advances in agricultural productivity have led to abundant and affordable food and fiber throughout most of the developed world. The diversity of Virginia agriculture affords you many different potential pictures to use with this lesson.

In this activity, students wear "Ag Tags" on their back with pictures of agricultural products. Other students write adjectives describing the pictures, and students must guess the identity of their "mystery product." This activity is a wonderful opportunity for students to expand their use of adjectives while learning more about Virginia agriculture.

## **Procedure**

1. Construct nametags prior to doing the activity with students.
  - Insert an agriculture related picture into each hanging name badge
  - Cover the picture with a large post-it note.
2. Hand out the nametags and instruct the participants not to look at their picture.
3. Tell the participants to place the nametag around their neck so the picture is on their back.
4. Ask the participants to walk around the room and have others look at their picture and write (or say) a descriptive phrase or word on the post-it that gives a clue as to what is pictured.
5. After time is called, tell the participants to take off and read the post-it and try to guess their picture.
6. After guessing, tell the participants to look at their nametag to see if they guessed correctly.
7. Discuss how the pictures relate to agriculture and why agriculture is important to us.

## **Suggested Pictures**

- Wildlife (snakes, groundhogs, squirrels, birds, etc.)
- Farm animals (cows, chickens, pigs, horses, etc.)
- Crops (corn, peanuts, pumpkins, apples, soybeans, tobacco, etc.)
- Forestry (soil, trees, etc.)
- Farming/gardening equipment (tractors, shovels, calculators, etc.)
- Products (milk, eggs, cheese, etc.)

## **Extension**

- This game can be adapted to fit any unit of study. Simply change out the pictures to match the topic being studied.
- Have students take the adjectives / adverbs given to them during the game and write a descriptive paragraph about the item in the picture, incorporating the adjectives / adverbs on their tag.



*For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).*

# Apple of My Eye

---

## Standards of Learning

English: 2.1, 2.2, 2.9, 2.11, 2.12, 3.1, 3.6, 3.9

Science: 2.4, 3.8

## Objective

The student will

- listen to and respond to a reading by recording facts about apples.

## Materials

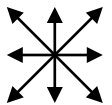
- Apples by Gail Gibbons
- 4, 1"x12," red strips of construction paper per student
- Hole punch
- school glue
- stapler
- Green pipe cleaners, 1 for each student

## Background Information

The book, Apples, provides an excellent overview of apples, including history and science concepts. Students will learn about the life cycle of apples, their origin in the United States, as well as their uses.

## Procedure

1. Read Apples to the class.
2. Ask students to brainstorm anything new that they learned from the book. Record their answers on the board.
3. Pass out 4 red strips of construction paper to each student.
4. On each strip they are to write a fact about apples, which they learned from the book.
5. Students then lay the strips on their desks (writing facing down), so that they form a star. See diagram to right.
6. Glue the strips together at the middle meeting point (you may also use a stapler).
7. Gather the ends to form an apple shape. Staple strips together at the top.
8. The student then punches two holes at the top and threads a green pipe cleaner through to form a stem and curling the ends to form a leaf.
9. Display around the room.



## Extension

After making the apple, have students cut seeds out of brown construction paper. On each seed they should write a question about apples. Slide the seeds into the apple. Students get into pairs and trade apples. They shake their partner's apple and pull out a seed question. The student will then try to answer the question on the seed.



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

# Barnyard Bag Books

## Standards of Learning

Science: 2.1, 3.1, 4.1

Language Arts: 2.2, 3.4, 4.4

## Objective

Students will:

- Investigate an ecosystem
- Utilize descriptive vocabulary

## Materials

- Large plastic container
- Soil or peat moss
- small shovels/trowels (you may also use plastic spoons)
- plastic bowls
- farm ecosystem items
  - Ex: leaves, artificial worms/insects/animals, sticks, pebbles, pine needles, seeds, tractor toys, plastic farm animals
- Paper lunch bags
- Hole punch
- Yarn or pipe cleaners
- Pre-printed descriptive word slips, *sample attached*



## Background Knowledge

The world is made up of a multitude of living things, and in this lesson, students will explore the natural world around them and become more aware of the many plants and animals that inhabit the farm. You will be bringing the farm to the classroom by filling a large plastic tub with various items that might be found on the farm. See the “Materials” section for suggestions.

Pre-punch your paper bags by folding each bag in half and punching two holes by the fold. Then have students assemble their books by threading either yarn or pipe cleaners through the holes to create the binding for the books.

## Procedure

1. Have your large plastic tub filled with soil and pre-loaded with various items for your farm ecosystem.
2. Pass out paper bag books and descriptive word slips. Have students glue a descriptive word onto each page in their book.
3. Have students take turns in small groups coming up to the discovery tub. Give them a chance to sift through it and see what is hidden. Have them find items in the tub to match the descriptive words in their book.
4. Students can either place their items in the sleeves in their books or draw a picture of the item on the correct page.
5. Use probing questions to create a conversation about items found of the farm and how each interacts with others.
6. Have students write a sentence about each item chosen explaining the connection to the farm.



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

**Extension**

Write a descriptive paragraph using the items and words from their book.

**Barnyard Descriptive Words**

rough

smooth

living

non-living

hard

soft

dark

light

wide

thin

heavy

light

small

large

bright

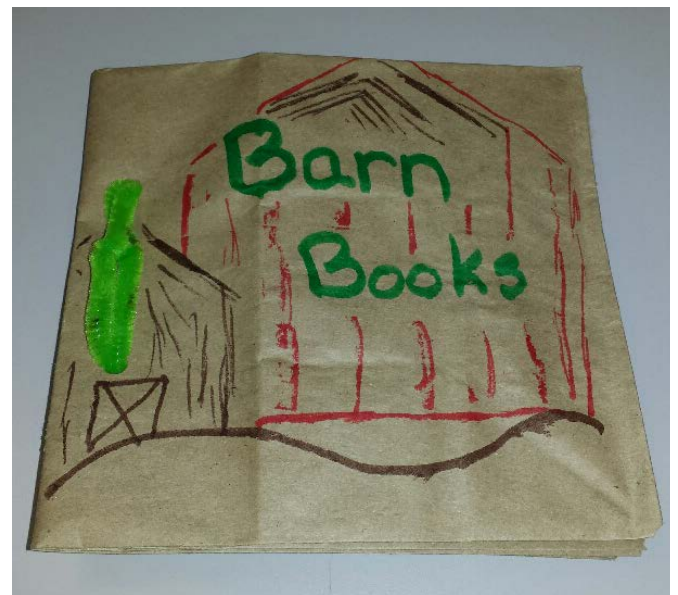
dull

capital resource

natural resource

domesticated

wild



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

# Barnyard Exploration

---

## **Standards of Learning**

Science: 2.1, 3.1, 4.1

Language Arts: 2.2, 3.4, 4.4

## **Objective**

Students will:

- Investigate an ecosystem
- Classify, compare, and contrast their discoveries

## **Materials**

- Large plastic container
- Soil or peat moss
- small shovels/trowels (you may also use plastic spoons)
- plastic bowls
- farm ecosystem items
  - Ex: leaves, artificial worms/insects/animals, sticks, pebbles, pine needles, seeds, tractor toys, plastic farm animals
- Recording worksheet, attached (*you may choose to use one or both sides*)

## **Background Knowledge**

The world is made up of a multitude of living things, and in this lesson, students will explore the natural world around them and become more aware of the many plants and animals that inhabit the farm. You will be bringing the farm to the classroom by filling a large plastic tub with various items that might be found on the farm. See the “Materials” section for suggestions.

## **Procedure**

1. Have your large plastic tub filled with soil and pre-loaded with various items for your farm ecosystem.
2. Have students take turns in small groups coming up to the discovery tub. Give them a chance to sift through it and see what is hidden.
3. Give each student (or pair) a plastic bowl to fill with items.
4. Have them take the items back to their seats to complete their recording sheets.

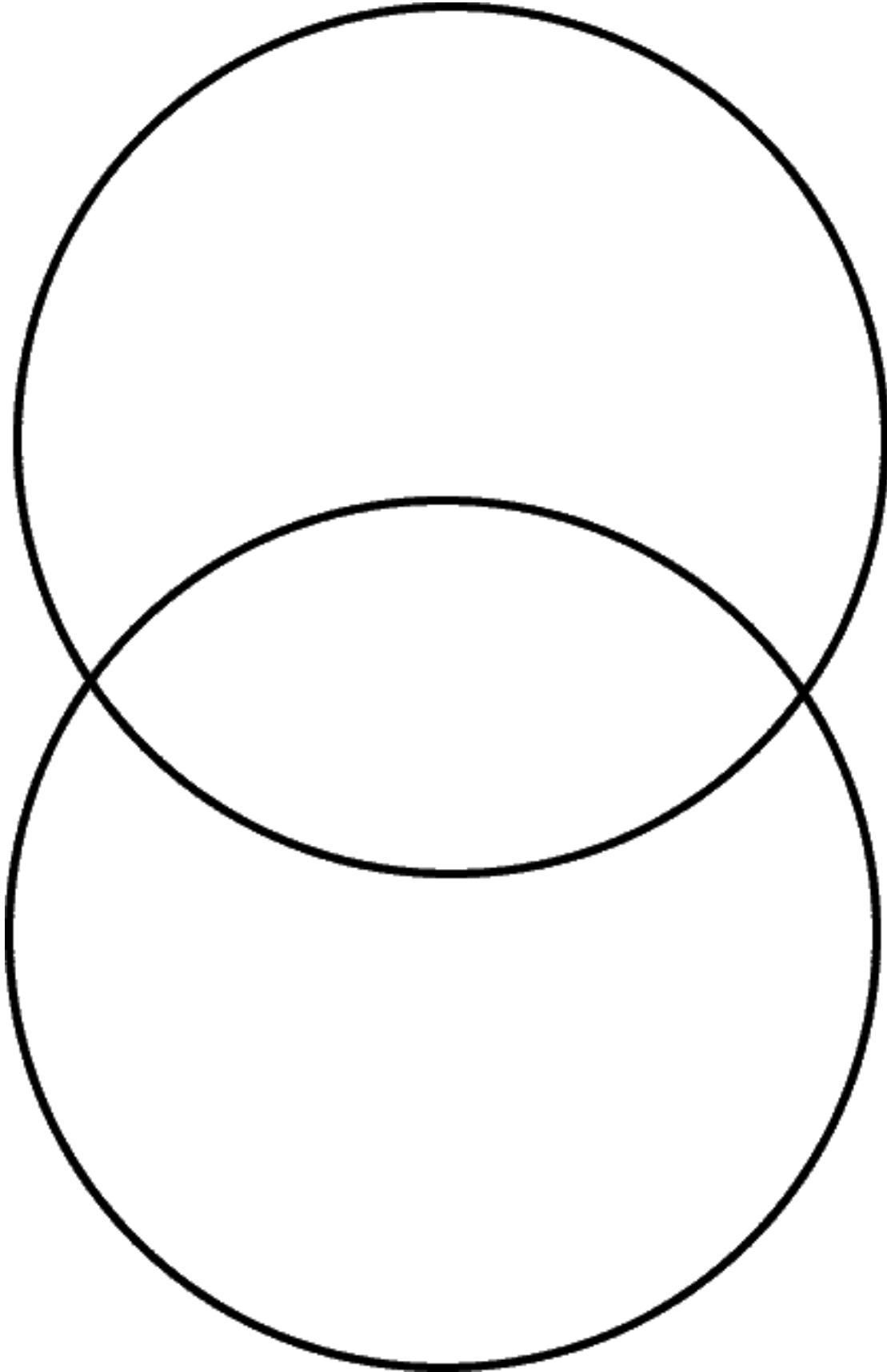
## **Extension**

Use the descriptive words in the “Characteristics” box to write a poem or song.



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

## Barnyard Exploration: Recording Sheet



**Directions:** Choose 2 items from the box to compare and contrast.



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Characteristics</b></p>              | <p><b>Picture</b></p>                          |
| <p><b>Item</b></p>                         |  |
| <p><b>What other items is it like?</b></p> | <p><b>What other items is it NOT like?</b></p> |



# Biography/Story Chain

## Standards of Learning

Language Arts: 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.9, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7

## Objective

The student will be able to:

- Organize information and events logically
- Identify the characteristics of a biography
- Summarize content of a selection, identifying ideas and supporting details

## Materials

- Paper plates
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers
- Yarn
- Staplers
- Tape
- Picture of main character (optional)

## Background Knowledge

One of the original thirteen colonies, Virginia is rich with famous historical figures. The Commonwealth is the home of seven presidents, as well as inventors, and educators. In terms of agricultural significance several figures come to mind. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Rolfe, and Cyrus McCormick each claims the state as home and have a historical significance in part due to their agricultural achievements. As a means of celebrating their lives students will enjoy creating a biography chain.

## Procedure

1. Read a selected biography emphasizing a connection to farming or rural living. Discuss the key landmarks and accomplishments of the person's life.
2. Have students write down five statements which best highlight the person's life.
3. Pass out one paper plate and one half paper plate to each student, a sheet of construction paper, yarn, and art supplies.
4. Staple the half plate to the back of the full plate, forming a pocket.
5. Cut out five shapes from the construction paper and write one of the summary statements on each piece.
6. Place them on the desk in chronological order to form a timeline.
7. Attach them, in order, to the yarn using tape or stapler.
8. Attach the yarn to the half plate by stapling the end with the latest life event closest to the plate.
9. Decorate the front of the plate.
10. Place the chain in the pocket. Have students get into pairs and then take turns summarizing the life of the selected individual by pulling each event out, one-by-one.

## Suggested books:

*Farmer George Plants a Nation* by Peggy Thomas  
*Eli Whitney and the Cotton Gin* by Jessica Gunderson  
*Thomas Jefferson's Feast* by Frank Murphy  
*A Weed is a Flower* by Alik



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

# Virginia Picnic Blanket

---

## **Standards of Learning**

Science K.1, K.2, K.4, 1.1, 2.1

English K.2, K.3, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

## **Objective**

The student will be able to:

- determine questions required to make an accurate classification and prediction
- make predictions based on the categorization and description of an object
- utilize descriptive vocabulary in writing

## **Materials**

- Artificial or real fruits, vegetables, and animals  
*Use Virginia products such as apples, pumpkins, potatoes, corn, grapes, green beans, wheat, peanuts, eggs, chickens, cows, hogs, turkeys*
- A thin fabric such as a fabric table cloth

## **Background Knowledge**

Many favorite picnic foods are made with items that are grown or raised in Virginia. In fact, the chicken in your chicken salad ranks as Virginia's top agricultural commodity (product). Many poultry farms are found in the Piedmont region of Virginia. Additionally, Virginia farmers produce apples; the wheat for your pasta salad; vegetables such as peppers, tomatoes, and potatoes; dairy products; pork for ham biscuits; even the cotton for your picnic blanket.

## **Procedure**

1. Before students enter the classroom place 6-8 fruits and vegetables on a tabletop and cover with a thin cloth. Hint: It helps to number each item with a post-it on top of the cloth.
2. Divide the class into 4-5 groups. Then ask for 6-8 volunteers (one per object under the blanket).
3. The volunteers will take turns peeking under the blanket at their object. The rest of the class cannot see what is underneath.
4. Each group is allowed to ask 4-5 yes-or-no questions to try and determine the object under the blanket. Groups will take turns asking questions. The group that can accurately name the object wins.
  - Sample questions: Is it red? Can it be eaten? Does it grow under the ground? Is it a vegetable?
5. After all items have been accurately determined, place them on top of the blanket and explain that each of these items are grown or raised in Virginia.
6. Writing Activity
  - Option One: Have students choose one of the items to draw on their paper and then write adjectives to describe it.
  - Option Two: Have students write a descriptive paragraph about a picnic and their favorite picnic foods.

## **Extension**

Have your own Virginia picnic in class – bring in real food items like the ones that were under the blanket and have a tasting party.



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

Possible Virginia picnic items:

- apple slices
- pasta salad with veggies and sliced chicken
- veggies with dip
- milk
- tortilla roll-ups with lunch meat and cheese
- potato salad



*For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).*

# Virginia Stone Soup

---

## **Standards of Learning**

Language Arts: 2.8, 3.5, 4.4

Social Studies: VS.10

## **Objective**

The student will be able to:

- define generosity
- read/listen to a story and respond by identifying problem, solution, and main idea
- identify major agricultural products of Virginia

## **Materials**

- Stone Soup (many editions exist, any will work with this lesson)
- crock pot
- clean stone
- chicken broth
- canned chicken
- elbow macaroni

The following soup ingredients may be canned, frozen, or fresh

- diced tomatoes
- corn
- peppers
- potatoes

## **Background Knowledge**

Stone Soup is a favorite children's story which has been retold multiple times. The plot involves two hungry travelers who come upon a village. The villagers are initially unwilling to share their food with the travelers so the travelers decide to make their special stone soup. Curiosity wins over the villagers and each one contributes an item to the soup, then they can all eat and enjoy.

In this lesson, students will discuss the importance of generosity and then make their own Virginia Stone Soup using ingredients that are grown in Virginia. You may choose to furnish the ingredients for the soup, or have students bring in the ingredients (thus highlighting the importance of teamwork). You may want to begin this lesson in the morning so that the soup is hot and ready to eat by the afternoon.

## **Procedure**

1. Write the term "generosity" on the board. Ask students to brainstorm what this term means. Ask them to give examples of times that they have been generous. Why is generosity important?
2. Read aloud or have students read Stone Soup.
3. Post-Reading Questions: What happened when the travelers got to the village? Why wouldn't the villagers share their food? How did the travelers trick the villagers? What would you have done? How did you feel about the story? What would have happened if the villagers hadn't each shared an item?
4. Tell students that you will be making your own special Virginia Stone Soup to share. Tell them that you will be using the following ingredients, because they are major products of Virginia: chicken, tomatoes, wheat (macaroni), corn, peppers, and potatoes. Use a map to identify the regions where these products are grown.

## **Extension**

Have students act out the plot.

Create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting two different versions of the story.



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).