

```html

# Lesson Plan: Pumpkin Investigators - A Day of Discovery!

## Materials Needed:

- 1 small- to medium-sized pumpkin (one that the child can help handle)
- A large tray, mat, or newspaper to cover the work surface
- A large bowl for pumpkin guts and seeds
- Child-safe scooping tools (large spoons, ice cream scoop)
- Washable markers, paint, and paintbrushes
- Craft supplies: construction paper, glue, scissors (adult-supervised), googly eyes, pipe cleaners, etc.
- Magnifying glass
- Paper towels for cleanup
- Optional: A simple picture book about the pumpkin life cycle (e.g., "From Seed to Pumpkin" by Wendy Pfeffer)

---

## Subject Areas Covered:

Science, Math, Art, Literacy, and Fine Motor Skills

## Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify and name the four main parts of a pumpkin: skin, stem, pulp, and seeds.
- Use descriptive words (e.g., bumpy, smooth, slimy, stringy) to describe the pumpkin's textures.
- Practice one-to-one counting and sort objects (seeds) into small groups.
- Exercise creativity by designing and decorating a pumpkin based on their own ideas.
- Strengthen fine motor skills through scooping, painting, and gluing.

## Lesson Activities

### 1. The Hook: A Pumpkin Mystery (5 minutes)

- **What to do:** Place the pumpkin on the table and present it as a "mystery object." Encourage the child to be a scientist and investigate the outside first.
- **Guiding Questions:**
  - "What color is it? What shape is it?"
  - "How does it feel? Is it smooth, bumpy, hard, or soft?"
  - "Tap on it. What sound does it make?"
  - "What do you think is hidden inside?"

### 2. The Investigation: Exploring a Pumpkin's Insides (15 minutes)

- **What to do:** Place the pumpkin on the covered surface. The adult should carefully cut a lid around the stem. Let the child have the first look inside.
- **Sensory Exploration:** Encourage the child to reach in and feel the contents. Let them use their hands and the scooping tools to pull all the "pumpkin guts" (pulp and seeds) into the large bowl. This is a fantastic sensory experience!
- **Vocabulary & Science:** As you explore, introduce the vocabulary words.
  - Hold up the stringy, wet stuff: "This is the **pulp**. It feels so slimy!"
  - Point to the little white ovals: "And look at all these **seeds**! A new pumpkin can grow

from each seed."

- Use the magnifying glass to look closely at the pulp and a single seed.

### 3. Math Fun: Super Seed Counting (10 minutes)

- **What to do:** Separate some seeds from the pulp and place them on a paper towel.
- **Counting Game:** Ask the child to count the seeds. "Let's see how many seeds we can count!"
- **Sorting & Grouping:** "Can you make a small pile with 5 seeds? Now can you make another pile with 10 seeds?" This builds foundational skills for understanding quantities.

### 4. Creative Application: Pumpkin Decorating Studio (20 minutes)

- **What to do:** Clean out and dry the inside of the pumpkin shell. Now, instead of a traditional jack-o'-lantern, let the child's imagination lead. This activity focuses on creativity, not just copying a face.
- **Project Ideas:**
  - **A Funny Creature:** Use markers to draw a silly face, and use pipe cleaners for hair or arms. Glue on googly eyes.
  - **A Fairy House:** Turn the pumpkin on its side so the opening is a door. Use paint to add windows and a path. Use leaves or twigs from the yard to decorate.
  - **A Drip-Paint Masterpiece:** Place the pumpkin on newspaper. Help the child squeeze or drip different colors of washable paint from the top of the pumpkin and watch the colors run down the sides.
- **Why this works:** This open-ended art project gives the child full creative control, which is highly motivating and builds confidence.

### 5. Wrap-up & Review: Show and Tell (5 minutes)

- **What to do:** Admire the child's creation! Ask them to "show and tell" you about their decorated pumpkin.
- **Checking for Understanding (in a fun way):**
  - "Can you point to the stem of your pumpkin?"
  - "What did we find inside the pumpkin?" (Pulp and seeds)
  - "What was your favorite part of being a pumpkin investigator today?"
- **Connect to the Life Cycle:** Briefly mention, "Remember how we found seeds inside? If we plant one of those seeds, it can grow into a whole new pumpkin for next year!" (You can reference your picture book here if you used one).

### Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **To Simplify:** If the child is hesitant about the slimy texture, provide gloves or focus on using the scooping tools. For counting, stick to numbers 1-5. For art, provide pre-cut shapes they can glue on instead of drawing.
- **To Extend/Challenge:** Have the child try to draw the pumpkin life cycle after reading about it. You can measure the pumpkin's "waist" with a string and then measure the string. Write and label the parts of the pumpkin on a piece of paper.

...