

Lesson Plan: The Great Conker Creature Adventure!

Subject: Science & Art

Topic: The Life Cycle of a Horse Chestnut Tree & Creative Expression

Grade Level: Kindergarten / Year 1 (Ages 5-6)

Group Size: 6 students

Setting: Online (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet)

Time Allotment: 30 minutes

Materials Needed

(Parents should be notified to gather these items before the lesson begins)

- **For each student:**

- 1-3 conkers (horse chestnuts). *Alternative: A small ball of brown playdough or a large, smooth stone.*
- A small collection of craft supplies. Ideas include: googly eyes, pipe cleaners, matchsticks, small twigs, leaves, yarn, small pieces of felt or fabric, non-toxic glue or a glue stick.
- A safe tool for poking small holes in the conker (**for adult use only**, e.g., a small screwdriver, a skewer, or a gimlet). Please stress that an adult must do this part.
- A piece of paper or a paper plate to work on.

- **For the teacher:**

- A conker, still in its spiky green case if possible.
 - Simple, clear pictures or a short (1-2 minute) video showing the horse chestnut life cycle (seed -> sprout -> tree -> flower -> green case -> conker).
 - A pre-made example of a "conker creature" to inspire the children.
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Lesson Breakdown

1. Introduction & The Mystery Object (5 minutes)

- **Goal:** To capture attention and activate prior knowledge.

- **Activity: "Conker Spy"**

1. Welcome the children and tell them you have a mystery object from nature.
 2. Hold up the conker still in its green, spiky case (if you have one). If not, just hold up the shiny conker itself.
 3. Say, "I spy with my little eye, something that is..." Give clues one at a time.
 - "...spiky on the outside." (if in the case)
 - "...smooth and shiny on the inside."
 - "...round like a ball."
 - "...brown."
 - "...grows on a very tall tree."
 4. Let the children guess. Once they guess "conker," praise them! Ask them to hold up their own conkers to the camera.
 5. Ask engaging questions: "What does it feel like? Is it heavy or light? What do you think it's for?"
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2. The Story of a Conker (7 minutes)

- **Goal:** To understand the basic life cycle of the horse chestnut tree in a simple, narrative way.
- **Activity: Picture Story**
 1. Say, "Every conker has an amazing story! It's actually a seed. Let's see how it grows."
 2. Share your screen to show simple, bold pictures of the life cycle. Tell the story as you click through the images:
 - **Image 1: A conker on the ground.** "Our story starts here, with a little seed, a conker, sleeping in the soil."
 - **Image 2: A small sprout.** "When spring arrives, the conker wakes up and sends a tiny sprout up, up, up into the sunshine!"
 - **Image 3: A big horse chestnut tree.** "That tiny sprout grows for many years into a giant, strong tree with big, fan-shaped leaves."
 - **Image 4: The tree with flowers (candles).** "In the spring, the tree grows beautiful white or pink flowers that look like candles."
 - **Image 5: The green, spiky case.** "After the flowers, the tree grows a spiky, green, secret package. It's like a little treasure chest!"
 - **Image 6: The case open with a conker inside.** "And what's inside the treasure chest? Our shiny conker! When autumn comes, it falls to the ground, ready to start the story all over again."
 3. Keep it short, simple, and wondrous. Ask one quick question like, "So what is a conker really? Is it a rock? No, it's a... SEED!"

3. Main Activity: Create a Conker Creature (12 minutes)

- **Goal:** To apply knowledge creatively and develop fine motor skills.
- **Activity: Hands-On Creation**
 1. Say, "Now it's our turn to be creative! We are going to turn our conker seeds into amazing Conker Creatures. They can be animals, monsters, or aliens—anything you can imagine!"
 2. Show your pre-made example (e.g., a spider with matchstick legs and googly eyes) to give them an idea.
 3. Instruct the children to gather their materials.
 4. **Important Safety Step:** "This is a job for your grown-up helper! If you need any legs or arms for your creature, please ask your grown-up to carefully poke a small hole for you."
 5. Give clear, simple instructions: "First, decide what you want to make. Maybe a snail? Or a funny monster? Then, use your glue to stick on eyes. You can use pipe cleaners or twigs for legs, arms, or antennae!"
 6. Play some gentle, creative background music. Circulate virtually by commenting on what you see the children doing. "Wow, Leo, I love the fuzzy pipe cleaners you chose!" "Sarah, those big googly eyes are so funny!"

4. Sharing Circle & Wrap-Up (6 minutes)

- **Goal:** To practice communication skills and build confidence by sharing creations.
- **Activity: "Show and Tell"**
 1. Give a one-minute warning to finish up.
 2. Ask each child, one by one, to hold their Conker Creature up to the camera.
 3. Ask each child two simple questions:
 - "What is your creature's name?"
 - "Tell us one special thing about your creature." (e.g., "It has six legs," "It can fly," "It loves to eat leaves.")
 4. Celebrate every child's creation with lots of positive reinforcement from the teacher and other students (e.g., "Let's all give a silent wiggle-cheer for Maya's awesome spider!").
 5. Conclude by saying: "Great work, everyone! You learned that a conker is a special seed,

and you turned them into incredible works of art. Look for more conkers next time you are outside and remember their amazing story!"

Differentiation & Assessment

- **For extra support:** Suggest simpler creatures (like a snail or a bug) that require fewer materials. The playdough alternative is excellent for children who struggle with fine motor skills, as they can easily push materials into it without needing holes poked.
- **For an extra challenge:** Encourage children to create a whole family of conker creatures or to build a small habitat for their creature on their paper plate using leaves and twigs.
- **Formative Assessment:** The teacher will assess learning through observation.
 - Did the student actively participate in the opening discussion?
 - During the "Show and Tell," can the student describe their creation?
 - Does their creation show engagement with the materials?

The completed Conker Creature itself serves as the primary artifact of learning and creative application.