

Garden Explorers: Discovering the Parts of a Plant

Lesson Overview

Target Age: 4 Years Old

Goal: Students will identify and name the four main parts of a plant (roots, stem, leaves, and flower) and understand their basic functions through sensory play and movement.

Materials Needed

- A real potted plant (one with visible leaves and a flower if possible)
- A clear cup with water and a stalk of celery (optional: food coloring)
- Construction paper (brown, green, and any bright color for a flower)
- Glue or glue stick
- Brown yarn or string
- Cupcake liners or tissue paper
- A small spray bottle with water

Learning Objectives

- The learner will point to and name the roots, stem, leaves, and flower.
- The learner will describe the stem as a "straw" that moves water.
- The learner will demonstrate how a plant grows using their body.

1. The Hook: The Mystery Friend (Introduction)

Activity: Bring out a real potted plant covered with a cloth. Say, "I have a living friend under here who doesn't have a mouth, but it still eats! It doesn't have feet, but it still stands up tall. Do you know who it is?"

The Big Reveal: Uncover the plant. Ask the child to touch a leaf gently. Ask: "What colors do you see? Is it soft or bumpy?"

2. I Do: Meet the Plant Parts (Instruction)

Use the real plant to point out each part. Use 4-year-old friendly analogies:

- **Roots:** "These are like the plant's **toes**. They hide under the dirt and wiggle around to find water to drink."
- **Stem:** "This is like a **giant straw**. It holds the plant up tall and sucks the water up from the roots to the rest of the plant."

- **Leaves:** "These are like the plant's **hands**. They reach out to catch the sunlight. They use the sun to cook food for the plant!"
- **Flower:** "This is the plant's **pretty face**. It's where the plant makes seeds so more flower friends can grow later."

The Straw Experiment: Show the celery in water. If you use food coloring, explain: "Just like you drink juice through a straw, this stem is drinking the colored water!"

3. We Do: "Be the Plant" (Interactive Practice)

Stand up together and use your bodies to review the parts.

- **Step 1:** "Crouch down small like a seed in the dirt."
- **Step 2:** "Wiggle your toes! Those are your **roots** growing deep."
- **Step 3:** "Stand up very straight and tall. Your body is the **stem**!"
- **Step 4:** "Put your arms out wide. These are your **leaves** catching the sun. Wiggle your fingers!"
- **Step 5:** "Make a big circle with your hands around your face and smile. You are a beautiful **flower**!"

4. You Do: Build-a-Plant (Creative Application)

Provide the craft materials and guide the child to build their own plant on paper from the bottom up.

1. **Bottom:** Glue the brown yarn at the bottom of the paper (The Roots).
2. **Middle:** Glue a long green strip of paper standing up from the yarn (The Stem).
3. **Sides:** Glue small green ovals onto the sides of the stem (The Leaves).
4. **Top:** Glue a cupcake liner or crumpled tissue paper at the very top (The Flower).

Success Criteria: The child should be able to tell you which part they are gluing as they work.

5. Closure & Recap

Summary: "You did a great job today! We learned that plants have roots to drink, a stem to stand tall, leaves to eat sunshine, and flowers to look beautiful."

The "Watering" Check: Give the child the spray bottle. Ask, "Which part of our real plant should we spray if it's thirsty?" (Guide them toward the soil/roots). "Which part catches the sun?" (The leaves).

Adaptations & Extensions

- **For Advanced Learners:** Discuss "Photosynthesis" as a "magic trick" where the leaves turn sun into sugar. Explore the "seeds" inside the flower/fruit.
- **For Active Learners:** Go on a "Plant Hunt" outside. Find three different shaped leaves and one flower.
- **Sensory Adaptation:** Use real dirt in a bin to "plant" and "un-plant" a plastic flower to feel the difference between the "roots" and the "stem."

Assessment (How do we know they got it?)

- **Formative:** During the "Be the Plant" game, does the child move the correct body part when you say "Stem" or "Leaves"?
- **Summative:** Look at the finished craft. Ask the child: "Point to the part that acts like a straw." (They should point to the stem). "Point to the part that wiggles in the dirt." (They should point to the yarn/roots).