

Overview

After reading *First Peas to the Table* by Susan Grigsby, students will learn about plant life cycles as they grow their own pea plants and compete to see who can get the “first peas to the table.”

Engage & Explore

Read *First Peas to the Table* by Susan Grigsby.

Announce to the class that you will also be holding a “first peas to the table” competition, just like Thomas Jefferson and the class in the book.

Activity

Students can work individually, in partners, or in small groups.

1. Give each student or group their own packet of pea seeds. The packets should be several different varieties. Announce the following rules to the class.
 - They may keep their seeds or trade them with other classmates or groups.
 - Each group will be given 1 square foot to plant their seeds.
 - They must determine when to plant, whether to plant indoors and transplant or plant outside, how many seeds to plant, and how to build a trellis for their peas.
 - They will be responsible for planting, watering, and caring for their pea plants.
 - They must keep a journal to record their notes.
 - The winner will be determined by the first group to fill up the bowl with fresh shelled peas.
2. Allow students time to research their peas. Give them a set time to trade peas with other groups if they wish.

Grade Level: 3*

**Designed for third grade but could be used to teach standards in multiple grade levels.*

Subject Area: Science / Social Studies

Time Frame: Ongoing. Start mid-February.

Materials:

First Peas to the Table by Susan Grigsby
 One packet of pea seeds for every student or group (as many different varieties as possible).
 ½ cup bowl for peas
 Various items that could be used to make a trellis (optional)
 Journal

Additional Resources:

How to Hold Your Own 'First Peas to the Table' Contest
A Teacher's Guide for 'First Peas to the Table': How Thomas Jefferson Inspired a School Garden
Farmers Almanac - Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Pea Plants
Farmers Almanac - Building a Trellis

Standards:

3.L.2.1
 3.L.2.2
 3.L.2.3
 3.H.1
 3.F.1

3. Assign each group a square foot of the garden bed to use for their peas.
4. Allow students to amend the soil in their bed if they wish as long as it is not harmful.
5. Set guidelines for journaling based on what information you would like them to record.
6. You may want to have small prizes for the first plant to reach a predetermined height, first plant to flower, first pod to develop, etc.
7. Show students what supplies they may use to build a trellis or allow them to bring in materials from home.
8. Take pictures throughout the competition (possibly the same day each week) so that you can go back and discuss the progress of the pea plants.
9. Plan how you will celebrate the "First Peas to the Table."
10. Have each group create a poster to document the life cycle of their pea plant.

Extension/Curriculum Ideas

Have students research Thomas Jefferson and his influence on the United States. Research where peas are grown and their economic influence on the community. How many products are made from peas?

Your Notes & Ideas

First Peas to the Table

Name: _____

Variety of Pea	Date Planted	Date Seedlings Appear	Date of 1st Flower	Date of 1st Pod	Date of Harvest

First Peas to the Table

Name: _____

Pea Seed	Pea Plant
Pea Flower	Pea Pod

First Peas to the Table

Name: _____

Measure and observe your pea plant the same day every week. Draw a picture and record the height.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Height:	Height:	Height:
Drawing:	Drawing:	Drawing:

First Peas to the Table

Name: _____

Measure and observe your pea plant the same day every week. Draw a picture and record the height.

Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Height:	Height:	Height:
Drawing:	Drawing:	Drawing:

First Peas to the Table

Name: _____

Measure and observe your pea plant the same day every week. Draw a picture and record the height.

Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
Height:	Height:	Height:
Drawing:	Drawing:	Drawing:

First Peas to the Table

Name: _____

Choose three pods and record the following information.

Pod #	Length	Predicted # of Peas	Actual # of Peas