



Compost game

Grade Level: Preschool

Season: Spring

Larger IGS Unit:

Soil, In the School Garden

Essential Questions

What are decomposers?

What do they do?

What are the ingredients in compost?

Objective

Students roll dice to collect cards with different ingredients for compost. This game is an introduction to the term “decompose”, “compost”, and “decomposer”.

Materials

Compost game cards (with cards for Brown/Carbon, Decomposers, Green/Nitrogen and Plastic)

Die

Intro

Ask if anyone knows what compost is. What is it made of? How do we use it in the garden? Explain that we will play a game to build our own compost pile.

Lay cards out with numbers facing up. Demonstrate how to roll a die, count the number of dots and find a card with corresponding number. Show students what is on the card. Explain that students will take turns rolling the dice and collecting cards with different ingredients of compost.

Activity

Students play the game. As they collect cards ask them questions about what is on them and if it is an ingredient of compost. When they get a decomposer card be sure to use the word and ask them what a decomposer is. Explain that decomposers break things down. Discuss examples of decomposers in the garden (roly polys, centipedes, worms, spiders, ants, and so on). When they pull a plastic card ask them: can we compost plastic?

After all of the cards have been collected it's time to make a compost pile! Each card is color coded by type (Black=decomposers, brown=carbon, green=food, red=plastic). Have students sort their cards by color/type. “Recycle” the plastic in the middle of the table.



Give them the recipe for compost. With older kids you can explain that it's two parts brown/carbon to one part green/nitrogen and lots of decomposers. With younger kids explain that the recipe is a lot of brown, a little bit of green/worm food and some decomposers. Have them check that they have the ingredients they need, and if they don't they can trade.

Wrap up/ Assessment

Review what can be composted.

Extension

Build a classroom worm bin (<http://compost.css.cornell.edu/worms/steps.html>)