

Classroom Activities

Science

Plastic Greenhouse

Put a layer of small rocks and two or three inches of potting soil in a clear, plastic cup or in a bottom of a 2-L soda pop bottle. Plant one or two small plants in the soil. Place a second plastic cup upside down on top of the first one or top of bottle and tape together.

Tea Bags

Flatten a spent tea bag and lay it in the center of a paper towel. Cut a hole in the top of the tea bag. Put a seed in the wet tea bag and place in a bowl. Put the bowl in a sunny place and add a little water to the tea bag each day. When your seedling has grown enough, you can replant it, tea bag and all, in the garden or in a pot with soil.

Compost Jar

Collect canning or glass jars for a team of students to observe how materials decompose. Poke holes in the lid and add 1/4 full of soil or compost, food scraps (egg shells, coffee grounds, fruits, veggies, and breads), 1/4 soil and several spoonfuls of water. Add newspaper and other items to see how long they take to breakdown.

Leaky Soil

Place a small paper or plastic cup with holes poked in bottom on two Popsicle sticks over a large cup. In small cups, test soils (potting soil, sand, clay, rocky, etc.), and pour the same amount of water in each. Have students observe how long it takes for water to drain and how much water was absorbed by the soil.

Math

Catalogs

Start saving mail order catalogs for math practice. Give each student a catalog, making sure that the original worksheet or order form is enclosed. Students choose 3-5 items to purchase and fill out the order form. Be sure the student includes the cost, postage and handling (if possible), tax (if applicable), and the final total of the order. Use old or starter checks to put the final touch on the order.

Reading and Writing

TV Guides

Old television program listings can be useful tools for teaching students how to write short summaries. Have students study several viewing guides, noting the style used in describing movies and programs. After a class discussion of several examples of the mini-plot summaries, show a short film or ask students to read a short story. Then ask your students to write about what they've seen or read.

Magazines

Collect different magazines for students to read and do activities such as summarize a longer article, guess the audience of the magazine or ad, write a story based on ad pictures, etc. When you are finished, pictures in the magazine can make collages.