



Name:

Seeds We Eat

Summary: What seeds do you eat? Most people eat seeds every day, even if they don't realize it. Edible seeds come in many forms and make up a large part of human diets. In this lesson, you'll think about seeds you eat, do a coloring activity, and learn about different categories of edible seeds.

Time: 20-40 minutes

Materials:

- Colored pencils, crayons, or markers.

RESPOND:

What was the last seed that you ate?

How many types of edible seeds can you name? Put one minute on a timer and write as many as you can.

COLOR: Spend a few minutes coloring in the [Seeds We Eat coloring sheet](#) and notice the different types of seeds we eat. As you color, see if you can think of more examples for each category.

READ: Humans eat hundreds of different types of seeds. Seeds are nutrient rich foods for us because they are full of the building blocks that help the seed grow into a plant. Many seeds we eat are categorized into different groups by the type of plant that produces them. Read up on these categories and notice the examples within them.

- **Nuts** are seeds contained within a hard shell that come from fruit trees. Almonds, walnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, cashews, and acorns are all nuts.
- **Grains** are small dried seeds that we eat. The two main types of grains are **cereals** and **legumes**.
 - Cereal is the technical term for what we commonly think of as grains. Cereals include rice, corn, wheat, oats, and rye. Cereals are seeds from grasses. Many cereals are ground into flour and used in baking.
 - The term “breakfast cereal” or just “cereal” comes from the fact that most breakfast cereals are made from cereals.
 - Legumes are the seeds of plants in the Fabaceae family. Humans eat lots of different types of legumes, including beans, peas, lentils, and peanuts. Some legumes are eaten fresh like green peas and green beans, while others are eaten

only after they are dried like lentils and black beans. Dried legumes can also be ground into flour.

- **Pseudocereals** are seeds that are similar to cereals but are not grown from grasses. Pseudocereals include amaranth, buckwheat, and quinoa.
- **Spices** are often seeds. Seeds used as spices to flavor food include cumin, coriander, caraway, cardamom, fennel, mustard, nutmeg, sesame, star anise, and vanilla.
- **Seed oils** are cooking oils made from seeds. Most “vegetable oils” are made from seeds. Many types of seeds are used to make oil, including corn, olive, peanut, rapeseed (used to make “canola” oil), coconut, and soybean.

RESPOND: What is your favorite edible seed from each of the categories defined above?

Nut: _____

Cereal: _____

Fresh legume: _____

Dried legume: _____

Spice: _____

Which category of seeds do you eat the most of? **Check one**

Nuts Cereals Fresh Legumes Dried Legumes Spices

Are there any foods you eat that you didn't know were made from seeds?

Now that you've learned about the many types of seeds humans eat, see if you can list more edible seeds than you could at the start of the lesson. Put one minute on a timer and write as many as you can.

Student Notes: You can extend this lesson and learn more with the following activities:

- Want to learn more about starting plants from seeds? Check out this [Direct Seeding lesson](#).
- Seed packets contain lots of information. Learn how to understand it all in this [How To: Read a Seed Packet lesson](#).
- See how many edible seeds you can find your kitchen. How many seed products (oils, flours, ground spices) can you find?

Notes for Teachers and Parents

- This activity supports students in understanding how the foods they consume are produced.
- This activity supports students to connect the food they eat to the plants that produce them.
- Extend this lesson by encouraging students to count how many edible seeds or seed products (flours, oils, ground spices) they can find in the home kitchen.