Activities

Fresh Fall Ideas

Grades: PreK–K, 1–2, 3–5, 6–8

Overview
A hands-on spider activity, a pumpkin patch where each fruit is labeled with a historic event in October, mask-making, etc.

My class hosts a “Pumpkin Party” every fall. I invite parents to donate pumpkins and spend the afternoon exploring with us. We have four learning stations: measuring, weighing, estimating and counting seeds, and sink-or-float predictions. It’s great for math and science, and students and families love it! —Sarah Wilson, first grade, Casselberry, FL

Or..
I like to remind kids that this month is special for many other reasons. I create a “Pumpkin Patch” bulletin board with a different October subject written on each pumpkin, such as “Columbus,” “The Great Chicago Fire,” “The Demonstration of the Electric Light,” “National Fire Prevention Week,” and “The Dedication of the Statue of Liberty.” Students “pick” a pumpkin and write a short report. They’re always surprised to learn that October is about much more than costumes and candy! —Cornelia Brown, third grade, Chicago, IL
For Halloween, we do a “hands-on” spider activity. First, students make a web by dipping a marble in paint and rolling it across construction paper. When the webs are dry, I let them dip their hands in black paint to create handprint spiders on top. (If students curl in their thumbs, the spiders have the right number of legs.) The finishing touch is a pair of googly eyes: Boo! —Patricia Robl, kindergarten, Newtown, PA

October is a great time to learn about masks. Much more than “costumes,” masks are an important part of the heritage of many different cultures. As part of our unit on Africa, we made tribal masks from stiff manila folders and construction paper. The project gave students a real appreciation for African artistry and workmanship—and they'll always remember that masks are used for more than trick-or-treating! —Stephanie Harker, second grade, Springville, UT

- Subjects:
  Arts and Crafts, Counting and Numbers, Time and Measurement, Math, Culture and Diversity, Autumn, Halloween, History, Folklore