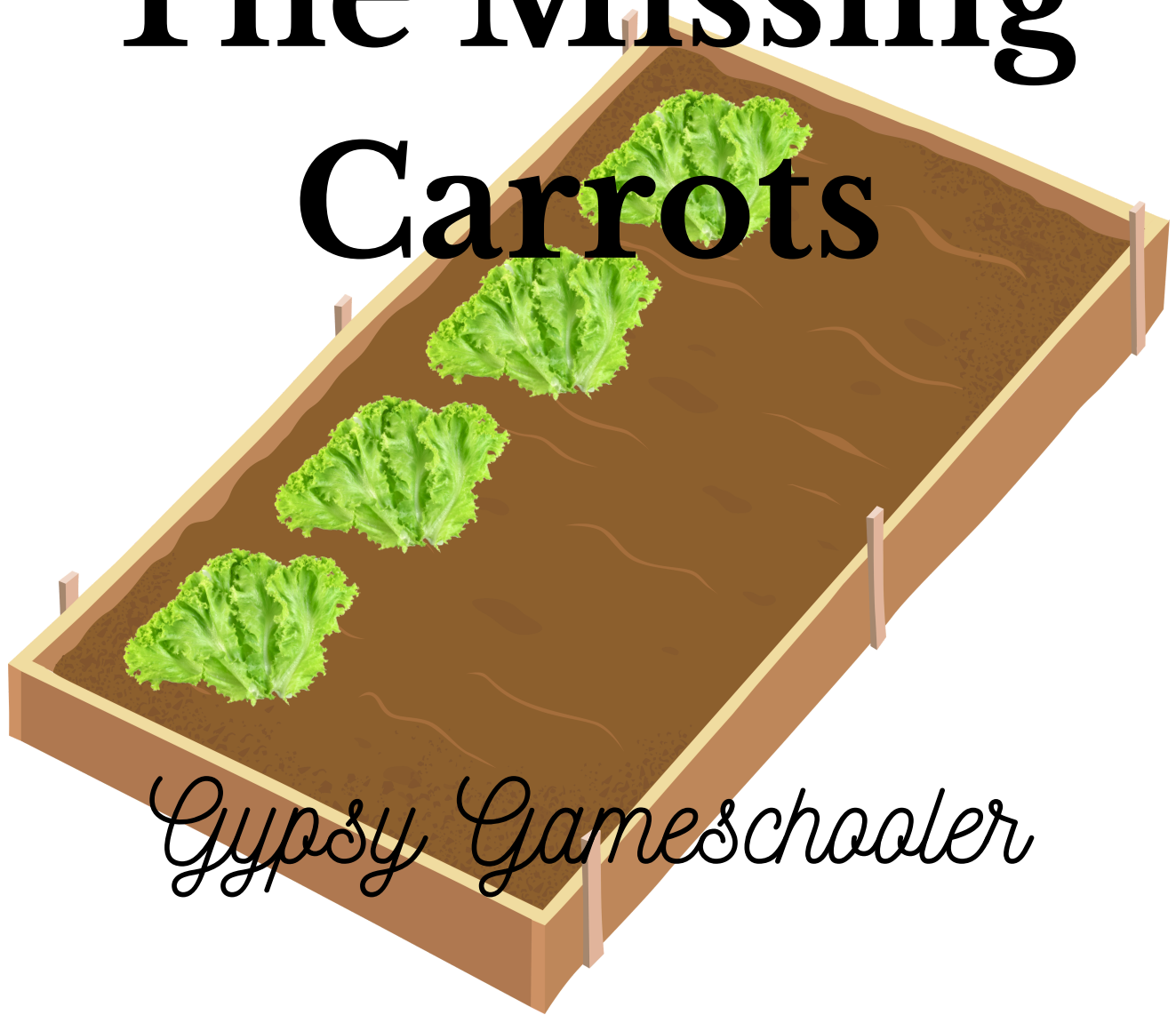


The Missing Carrots



Gypsy Gameschooler

TERMS OF USE

Copyright © Gypsy Gameschooler. All rights reserved. This product is to be used by the original downloader only. No part of this document may be reproduced, distributed, sold or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder. This product may not be distributed or displayed digitally for public view. Failure to comply is a copyright infringement and a violation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). Clipart and elements found in this product are copyrighted and cannot be extracted and used outside of this file without permission or license. **PERSONAL USE ONLY.** All pages in this download are copyrighted. You may not create anything to share or sell based on this download.

YOU MAY

- ☒ Use the resource for personal use only.
- ☒ Print and make copies of downloadable resources as necessary for your own use.
- ☒ Share my cover page on social media as long as you include the product link for my store.

YOU MAY NOT

- ☒ Change or alter the product in any way aside from omitting pages you do not want to use.
- ☒ Share this download with other people, friends, colleagues, family, for their own usage, etc. Additional licenses can be purchased at a lower rate.
- ☒ Create anything to share or sell, in part or in whole, based on this download, including for your own commercial gain.
- ☒ Upload this resource to websites, applications, shared drives or other sites or services that enables access by anyone other than you.

OVERVIEW

Make your kids' Spring Unit Study unforgettable with the Missing Carrots! Featuring a story, 5 evidence pages, and 4 additional information pages, this fun and engaging printable game will be a huge hit for kids ages 6 and up. Whether you're planning a party for your child, a co-op game day, a sleepover, or just need some rainy-day activities for family game night, this spring game is perfect for you.

Looking for a mystery experience at home without all the fuss? Look no further! Our printable mystery game is perfect for you. With no complicated shapes to cut out, and no folding or taping required, our low-prep mystery allows you to experience the thrill of the mystery game right away.

Our mystery game is designed to be easy to set up and play, with no props or complicated instructions required. Kids can examine the evidence individually or in small groups, making it a great activity for classrooms, youth groups, or team-building exercises. With our mystery game kit, you'll have everything you need to create an exciting adventure for your little ones from the comfort of your own home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE INSTANT DOWNLOAD?

PDF game guide (8.5 x 11)

Frequently asked questions

Set up instructions

Story

5 Pages of evidence

4 Pages of additional information

Hints

Solution

Gameplay: 20-60 minutes

Ages: 6+

Number of players: As many as you want!

DIRECTIONS



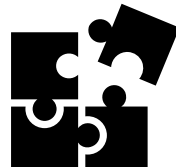
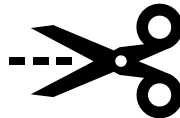
The story is on page 6. This can be printed out or read from the computer.

The evidence is on pages 7-15. It can be examined from your device (without printing) or you can print it. Make sure you have enough copies so that all members of your group can look at something.



If your kids get stuck, take a look at the hints one at a time until something clicks.

Once all 5 pages of evidence and all 4 pages of additional information have been printed, read the story out loud on page 6. Next, let the fun begin! Let kids know that they can examine the evidence in **ANY** order.



PRINTING THE GAME

Make sure you **download** the file to your computer **FIRST**, then **print**. Sometimes your computer opens the PDF in the default web browser (which makes black boxes appear around images when you print). It happens when trying to print from the preview URL when it opens in a new tab. Make sure you are using the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader (FREE) – rather than a preview application on Macs or web browsers. Grab Adobe here: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>

F.A.Q.

How long does this activity take to complete?

It really depends on a lot of things. Estimated completion time is 20-60 minutes but it's based on the kids' puzzle skills, group size, and age. We recommend ages 6+.

How many kids can play at once?

Kids can play individually, with friends or siblings, or in large groups. There really is no limit to the number of players.

What if the kids get stuck on one of the pieces of evidence?

It might be best to set it aside and come back to it later. With more of the information, the importance of the evidence might become more clear. This is also when having more people can come in handy; different people will notice different things.

Where do kids start?

Start with the story, but then the evidence can be examined in any order.

How do you know if their answers are correct?

The solution is provided in the PDF.

How do I set up the activity?

Just print and play! Everything you need is included in your download. You don't need locks, envelopes, or special equipment. You can hang or hide the evidence or just spread it out on the kitchen table.

Do I have to print out the game materials for every kid?

Not necessarily, though if you have a large group, it might be best to divide them up into smaller groups and print multiple copies. Alternatively, the evidence can be examined right from your computer screen!

The Case of the Missing Carrots

Disclaimer: Locations are real but people are fictional. The evidence is manufactured but possible.

Setting: Cookeville, TN, spring 2025

Juan Andrés grows a garden every year. Gardening is one of his favorite hobbies, but it is also something he enjoys sharing with his daughter, Delia. When Delia was younger, she mostly helped by carrying the watering can or dropping seeds into the soil. Now that she is getting older, she helps plan what to plant each season. This year, she is especially excited by the carrots.

By late spring, the carrot tops were tall and leafy, which meant the carrots underground were probably almost ready to harvest. Juan and Delia were looking forward to pulling them up soon.

One morning, they walked out to the garden to check on the plants. The sun was just coming up over the trees behind their yard, and the ground was still cool from the night.

Delia looked toward the carrot bed first—and stopped.

“Papa... where are our carrots?!”

Juan stepped closer and saw what she meant. The feathery carrot tops that had filled the two rows the day before were gone.

Their entire carrot crop had disappeared.

Juan and Delia looked carefully from the edge of the garden without stepping into the path. Something had clearly taken the carrots during the night, but what? Gardens can attract many visitors. Juan’s yard backs up to a wooded area, so animals sometimes pass through. Several neighbors live nearby, including Opal Reid, who enjoys cooking and gardening as well. At the same time, there are children nearby—including Delia and Opal’s young nephew—who occasionally play in the yard.

Later that day, Juan and Delia stopped by the local garden center, Art’s, to ask for advice. An employee named Rebecca listened to their story and nodded thoughtfully.

“Carrots are sweet,” she explained. “Lots of creatures enjoy them. But the garden may still have clues.”

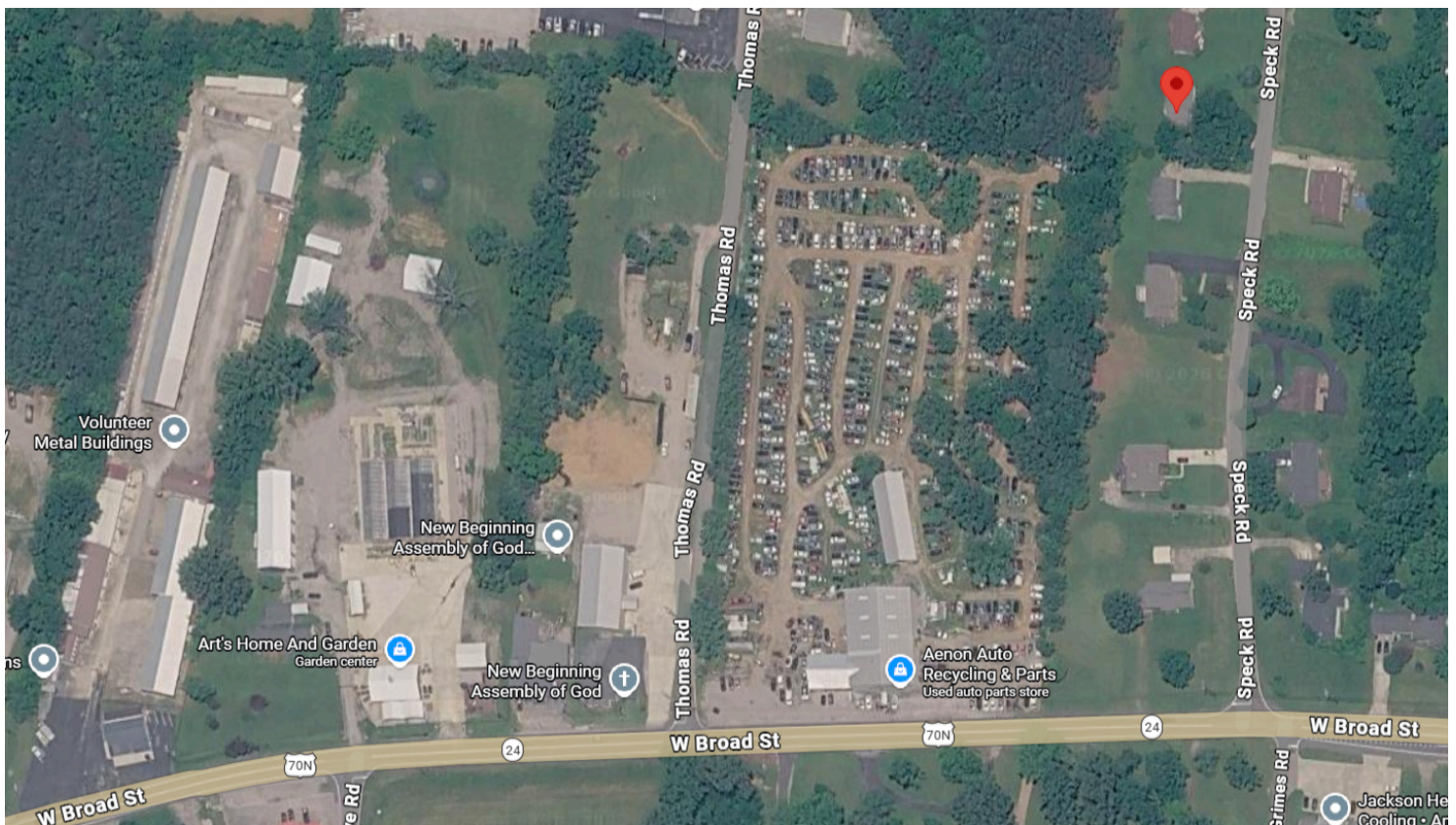
She suggested looking for signs like tracks, digging patterns, or other evidence that might show who had visited the garden.

Now Juan and Delia need help examining the evidence. **Who took the carrots?**

Cookeville, TN:



André's Residence:



Garden (Backyard) Map

Woods

Juan's House

Opal's House

Woods

Deck w/ potted plants

Missing Carrots

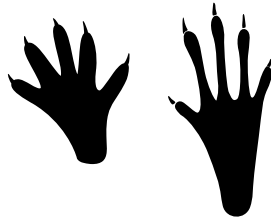




Animal Track Identification



Deer



Raccoon



Rabbit



Bear



Skunk



Wild
Boar/Pig



Cat



Opossum



Armadillo



Dog/
Coyote



Groundhog



Squirrel



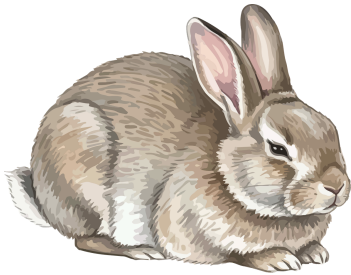
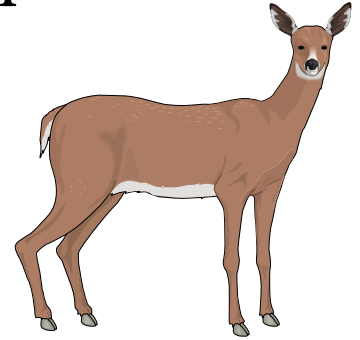
Porcupine



Mole

Animal Information

Deer live across much of North America, Europe, and Asia, and are especially common in forests, meadows, and suburban edges where trees and open feeding areas meet. They are herbivores, eating leaves, grasses, buds, fruits, and garden plants. Deer typically browse gently, tearing plants with their lower teeth and leaving ragged edges. They are most active at dawn and dusk and often travel along the same paths each day.



Rabbits are found throughout North America, Europe, and many other parts of the world, living in grasslands, fields, forests, and neighborhoods with dense ground cover. They eat grasses, clover, vegetables, bark, and tender shoots. Rabbits nibble cleanly and leave sharp, angled cuts on stems. They are cautious animals that stay close to shelter and are most active in early morning and evening.

Bears live in forests, mountains, and wilderness areas across North America, Europe, and Asia. They are omnivores, eating berries, roots, insects, fish, and occasionally small animals. Bears often root through soil, logs, and compost with their powerful claws, leaving large disturbed areas behind. They are generally solitary and spend much of their time searching for food, especially before winter hibernation.



Wild boar and pigs live in forests, grasslands, and wetlands across many continents, including North America. They are omnivores that eat roots, insects, small animals, crops, and fallen fruit. These animals root through soil with their snouts, leaving large patches of turned earth. They are strong, social animals that often travel and feed in groups.

Raccoons live throughout North America and parts of Europe and Asia, commonly in forests, wetlands, and urban areas. They eat fruits, insects, eggs, garbage, and small animals. Raccoons use their dexterous front paws to grab, pull apart, and manipulate food. They are mostly nocturnal and are excellent climbers.



Animal Information, cont.



Members of the **dog family**, called canines, live on every continent except Antarctica and include domestic dogs as well as wild species such as wolves, foxes, and coyotes. They live in many habitats, including forests, grasslands, deserts, and human settlements. Canines are omnivores and carnivores, eating animals, insects, fruits, and scavenged food depending on the species and environment. They often tear and chew their food, leaving tooth marks, scattered remains, or disturbed soil, and many use their strong sense of smell to track prey or locate food.

Members of the **cat family**, called felines, live across most of the world and include domestic cats as well as wild species such as mountain lions, bobcats, and lynxes. They live in forests, grasslands, mountains, and sometimes near human settlements. Felines are carnivores that hunt animals such as rodents, birds, and other small prey. They are quiet, stealthy hunters that stalk and pounce, usually leaving bite marks and sometimes carrying prey away to eat elsewhere.



Skunks live across North America in forests, grasslands, and suburban areas. They eat insects, grubs, small animals, fruits, and garden crops. Skunks dig small, cone-shaped holes while searching for insects in the soil. They are mostly active at night and are well known for spraying a strong-smelling liquid to defend themselves.

Opossums live throughout North and South America, especially in forests and near human homes. They are omnivores that eat insects, fruits, small animals, and carrion. Opossums often scavenge and may leave scattered food remains behind. They are nocturnal and are known for “playing dead” when threatened.



Animal Information, cont.



Armadillos live mainly in the southern United States, Central America, and South America, favoring warm grasslands and forests. They eat insects, grubs, and other small invertebrates. Armadillos dig shallow holes in soil while searching for food. They are mostly active at night and rely on digging both for feeding and shelter.

Groundhogs, or woodchucks, live across North America in fields, forests, and open areas near burrows. They eat grasses, vegetables, fruits, and bark. Groundhogs use their strong teeth to chew plants, often leaving clean bite marks. They dig extensive burrows and are most active during the day, especially in warmer months.



Squirrels live in forests, parks, and neighborhoods throughout much of the world. They eat nuts, seeds, fruits, bark, and sometimes insects. Squirrels nibble food and leave small gnaw marks, often carrying food away to store for later. They are active during the day and spend much of their time climbing and foraging.

Porcupines live in forests across North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. They eat bark, leaves, stems, and fruits. Porcupines leave distinctive gnaw marks on wood as they chew. They are slow-moving and mostly active at night, using their sharp quills for protection.



Moles live underground in grasslands, gardens, and forests across North America, Europe, and Asia. They eat insects, worms, and other small soil creatures. Moles tunnel through the soil, creating raised ridges and small mounds. They rarely come above ground and spend most of their lives digging and hunting underground.

Opal's Carrot Soup

Ingredients - Soup

- 2 Tbs unsalted butter
- 1 large white onion, chopped
- 2 lbs carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp white pepper, optional
- 4 Tbs heavy cream, divided

Garnish:

- Paprika
- Fresh chives, minced

Cheesy Toast Dippers

- 8 baguette slices, about 1/2-inch thick
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. In a large pot over medium heat, add the butter and onions. Cook until the onions turn translucent, 3 to 4 minutes, but don't let them brown at all. Season with a pinch of salt.
3. Add the carrots, garlic, and dried thyme, and stir together. Cook for 30 seconds, just until garlic becomes fragrant.
4. Add the stock and bring mixture to a simmer. Cover and simmer for 15 more minutes until the carrots are very tender.
5. Make the cheesy toast dippers: Spread baguette slices out on a baking sheet and drizzle them with olive oil. Sprinkle generously with finely grated Parmesan cheese.
6. Bake toasts at 400°F until edges are browned and Parmesan cheese is starting to turn a light tan color around the edges, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove the toasts and set aside.
7. Finish the soup: When the carrots are tender, use an immersion blender to blend soup until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.
8. Ladle the soup into bowls and swirl in about a tablespoon of heavy cream into each bowl. Garnish the soup with a sprinkle of paprika and fresh minced chives. Add a cheesy toast dipper!
9. Leftover soup keeps well in the fridge for 5 days, or you can transfer it to freezer-safe ziptop bags and freeze it for up to six months. Reheat the soup gently over low heat on the stovetop.

Hints

(no need to print)

Hints for Investigators

If players get stuck while working through the mystery, use the following hints to gently guide them. Try giving only one hint at a time and allow players time to think and discuss before moving on to the next one. The goal is to help them practice observing evidence, comparing information, and making logical conclusions.

Start by listing all possible culprits—people and animals that could reach the garden. Then, look at the map: what animals or visitors could access the yard from nearby environments?

Next, have players review the animal guide. Which animals actually eat carrots or vegetables? Which are unlikely suspects?

Players should then carefully examine the photographs of the garden bed. What do they notice about the soil where the carrots used to be? Do the carrots appear to have been dug up, pulled out, or something else? The way the soil looks can provide clues about how the carrots disappeared.

Then, study the tracks in the mud. Compare shapes and sizes to the animal guide. Are the prints big or small? Do they match one type of animal or more than one?

Players can also consider when the carrots likely disappeared. Juan and Delia saw the carrots the day before, but they were gone the next morning. What kinds of animals are active at night? Which ones might visit a garden after dark?

Another helpful step is to think about the behavior of the suspect animals. Some animals nibble plants above the ground, while others dig into the soil. Since carrots grow underground, the culprit would need to pull or dig them out.

Finally, encourage players to think about likelihood. Even if something could have taken the carrots, is it likely? Consider the animal's diet, the type of tracks left behind, and how the carrots were removed from the soil.

Once they connect the clues, they should be able to identify the culprit.

Solution

(no need to print)

Where Did the Carrots Go?

After carefully examining all the evidence, it becomes clear who took Juan and Delia's carrots—and how they were used. While the garden was full of potential suspects, the clues all point to one person: Juan's neighbor, Opal Reid.

Start with the photographs of the garden bed. The soil shows signs of deliberate pulling rather than random digging or nibbling. The carrot tops are missing completely, with the surrounding soil undisturbed except for the rows themselves. This suggests someone intentionally harvested the carrots, rather than an animal eating a few at a time. The clean removal of all the carrots from both rows is unusual for wildlife, as rabbits, deer, and squirrels tend to leave partial crops or leave telltale bite marks.

The tracks in the mud between the beds provide another important clue. While rabbit, domesticated cat, armadillo, and opossum tracks are present in the path, none of these animals could have been the culprit. Armadillos eat insects and grubs, while cats are carnivores. Rabbits and opossums will eat carrots, but could not reach the raised bed from the path and would not cleanly pull all of the carrots while leaving the rest of the garden.

Next, consider the likelihood of each suspect. While Delia or other children might have been curious about the carrots, the photos show only a few child's prints running through the path. Juan's own routine and supervision make it unlikely that Delia had removed all the carrots without being noticed. That leaves an adult with access to the yard.

Finally, the recipe for carrot soup provides the final piece of the puzzle. Opal Reid is known in the neighborhood for her cooking and often shares meals with friends. The fact that the recipe matches a plausible reason for someone to harvest an entire row of carrots explains why the carrots were taken in a precise, careful manner. She had a clear motivation: to make the soup. The combination of adult shoe tracks, intentional pulling of carrots, and the presence of a recipe that matches the quantity of carrots taken all point directly to Opal.

When all the evidence is considered together, it paints a consistent story. The garden bed shows deliberate harvesting, the tracks indicate a human visitor, the animal guide rules out wildlife, and the carrot soup recipe explains the purpose. Opal Reid, Juan's 29-year-old neighbor, visited the garden and harvested the carrots to make her carrot soup. All the pieces fit, and no alternative explanation accounts for the clues as neatly.

Are you ready for more? Don't miss the full Spring Unit Study!

Use code UNIT5 for \$5 off!

Experiments

1. Effect of temperature on plant growth. Fill three identical containers with soil. In the first, keep the soil at room temperature. In the second, keep it at 10°C above room temperature. In the third, keep it at 10°C below room temperature. Plant a seed in each container. Measure the height of the seedling every day. Record the results.

2. Effect of light on plant growth. Fill three identical containers with soil. In the first, keep the soil in the dark. In the second, keep it in the light. In the third, keep it in the light but with the light source 10 cm away. Plant a seed in each container. Measure the height of the seedling every day. Record the results.

3. Effect of water on plant growth. Fill three identical containers with soil. In the first, keep the soil dry. In the second, keep it moist. In the third, keep it saturated. Plant a seed in each container. Measure the height of the seedling every day. Record the results.

4. Effect of soil type on plant growth. Fill three identical containers with different types of soil (sand, silt, clay). Plant a seed in each container. Measure the height of the seedling every day. Record the results.

5. Effect of container color on soil temperature and plant growth. Plant seeds in containers of different colors (black, white, clear) and track soil temperature and plant growth rate.

6. Effect of container shape on soil temperature and plant growth. Plant seeds in containers of different shapes (square, round, oval) and track soil temperature and plant growth rate.

7. Effect of container material on soil temperature and plant growth. Plant seeds in containers made of different materials (plastic, wood, metal) and track soil temperature and plant growth rate.

8. Effect of container size on soil temperature and plant growth. Plant seeds in containers of different sizes (small, medium, large) and track soil temperature and plant growth rate.

9. Effect of container depth on soil temperature and plant growth. Plant seeds in containers of different depths (shallow, deep) and track soil temperature and plant growth rate.

10. Analyze the results of the experiments.

May Day Basket

Print the patterns out on colorful construction paper to make a paper basket and flowers. Alternatively, you can print the flowers out on white paper and then color them before you cut them out. Or, use a raffia link basket-making kit to make an actual basket and fill it with cut flowers from your garden. Deliver to a neighbor or friend to brighten their day!

Flower Patterns

Flower Centers

Use different colors to make the centers stand out!

Explore the Spring

1. Growth cycles. Using a diagram show stages from seed to fruit and why.

2. Animals. Research a native animal and its habitat. Note where it winters, its food, and how it survives.

3. Plants. Using a diagram show stages from seed to fruit and why.

4. Weather. Research a native plant and its habitat. Note where it grows, its food, and how it survives.

5. Ecosystem. Design a garden, incorporating native plants and animals. Use a diagram to show the flow of energy and matter.

6. Spring. Using a diagram show stages from seed to fruit and why.

7. Summer. Research a native animal and its habitat. Note where it lives, its food, and how it survives.

8. Fall. Research a native plant and its habitat. Note where it grows, its food, and how it survives.

9. Winter. Research a native animal and its habitat. Note where it lives, its food, and how it survives.

10. Ecosystem. Design a garden, incorporating native plants and animals. Use a diagram to show the flow of energy and matter.

Table of Contents

- How To Use This Unit Study
- The Science of the Seasons
- Equinoxes and Solstices
- Science Around the World
- Spring Activities in Plants
- Spring Activities in Animals
- Science of Spring Experiments
- Effect of Snow or Ice on Soil Temperature
- Evolution and Adaptations
- Parts of a Plant
- What Plants Need to Survive
- Types of Plants
- Parts of a Flower
- Flowers
- Spring Through the Ages
- Spring Coloring Page
- Spring Holidays
- List of Spring Holidays
- Spring Holidays Calendar
- Suggested Reading
- Recipes
- Individual Holidays
- Coloring Sheets
- Writing Prompts
- Crafts
- Games
- Vocabulary
- Science Experiment Pages
- Writing Assignments Pages
- Subjects Covered
- Grading Rubrics
- Answer Keys

Subjects Covered

Throughout this unit study, your student has covered:

- Math: Cooking, Time, Puzzles, Games
- Science: Physics, Ecology, Evolution, Experiments, Vocabulary
- Botany
- Reading: Subject-Matter in Science, History, and Cultures
- Suggested Reading
- Writing: Suggested Activities, Writing Prompts, Writing Assignments
- History: Spring Through the Ages, History of Holidays
- Geography: Holidays
- P.E.: Science of Spring Activities

Subjects Covered

Throughout this unit study, your student has covered:

- Math: Cooking, Time, Puzzles, Games
- Science: Physics, Ecology, Evolution, Experiments, Vocabulary
- Botany
- Reading: Subject-Matter in Science, History, and Cultures
- Suggested Reading
- Writing: Suggested Activities, Writing Prompts, Writing Assignments
- History: Spring Through the Ages, History of Holidays
- Geography: Holidays
- P.E.: Science of Spring Activities