

# Fresh Story | Cucumbers



## Cucumbers are widely grown in home gardens and greenhouses.

Farmers grow cucumbers outdoors in the summer and indoors all year round! Cucumber plants grow really fast in the warm and humid environment of a greenhouse. Long, creeping vines wind up trellises or wires reaching for the sunlight. Greenhouses allow growers to regulate the climate for their plants 24 hours a day.



**English (seedless) cucumbers and mini (Persian) cucumbers** are the two varieties of cucumber that can be grown in a greenhouse. English cucumbers are considered the classic cucumber and are long and slender with a sweet inner flesh and crunchy skin. Mini cucumbers are much smaller and enjoyed for their snacking size. Also known as Persian cucumbers, they are very similar to English cucumbers with soft edible seeds, a sweet interior and crunchy skin.

Other varieties of cucumbers are typically grown in fields. The size of crops can be small, like for someone who has a garden as a hobby, or they can be grown on a large scale as a farmer.



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## Activities for Primary

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS –** Learners can listen to a story book about planting a vegetable garden. Talk about what kinds of plants might be grown in your vegetable garden at home.

## Primary/Grade 1

**MATHEMATICS –** Learners can learn about applied mathematics by counting the number of cucumber pieces they would need to have to share with their friends. This could be done using real cucumbers that are eaten afterwards or could be visually or physically represented using models or cutouts.

## Activities for Grade 2

**MATHEMATICS –** Learners can further their understanding of simple addition and subtraction by counting cucumbers in a garden before and after a family of rabbits comes to the garden for their dinner. Students can discuss this with their peers and model their observations on the number of cucumbers in a written expression.

## Grade 3

**MATHEMATICS –** Learners can test their estimation skills by guessing the length of an English cucumber and apply their measuring skills by measuring its length in both standard and non-standard units. After this introductory activity, the teacher can break learners into small groups or pairs. Learners can use their cucumber lengths to estimate how tall their peers are in cucumbers.

## Activities for Grades 4-6

**MATHEMATICS –** Mini Cucumbers are typically sold in packages of multiple fruits. Learners can investigate how to calculate the unit price by analysing the real-life example of a package of cucumbers. For example, if a package of 8 mini cucumbers costs \$4.99, what does each cucumber cost?

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS –** Teacher can ask students to do some research and create a recipe or story about the ways their family might use a cucumber in cooking.

### QUESTIONS

- What are the ways to prepare a cucumber?
- Have you ever had a cucumber in a salad? Served with vinegar? Made into a pickle?

**SCIENCE –** Learners can investigate the relationship between bugs living on a cucumber farm. Some insects, considered by humans to be “pest bugs” such as aphids and thrips, live amongst cucumbers to eat them – this damages crop yields for farmers. Other bugs, such as lady bugs, live on these farms because they eat the aphids and thrips.

Have students create a food web or food chain that includes cucumbers, weeds, herbivorous insects, and carnivorous insects. Below is an example of a food chain and a food web.

### QUESTIONS

- What might happen if one of the organisms on your food web disappeared?
- What are natural ways that a farmer could bring down the number of bugs eating their crops?

