



MYSTERY #2

THE HISTORY OF CORN

2nd - 5th Grade Teacher Guide

KANSAS CORN STEM

This teacher guide is broken into the different sections with suggestions of how to use the reader in the classroom and provide ideas on how to extend the learning for your students. A PDF version of this teacher guide with active links can be found at kansascornstem.com under Mystery Corn Reader.

Grades 2-5

This reader can be used in small groups or whole group for reading or science.

Outcome

- Students will be able to understand the origin and evolution of corn.
- Students will have knowledge of the targeted vocabulary words.
- Students will be able to understand how a plant scientist picks desirable seeds to plant for the following harvest.

Vocabulary Words

- Nomadic: living a life without a fixed habit.
- Adapted: to change so that it is easier to function in a particular place or situation.
- Edible: able to eat as food.
- Characteristic: something that makes a person or thing different from others.
 - Example: Flint corn can have colorful kernels while dent corn in yellow.
- Introduce these words before you begin reading. Ask students if they have heard or recognize the words before. Then, read the definitions and talk about them as a class. Do more of the students recognize the words now? See if students can use the vocabulary words in sentences.

Front Cover

Allow time for students to share their thoughts on the questions that were asked. Teachers can write down their ideas on the board so it can be revisited after reading.

Inside

- When you come to a vocabulary word, take the time to stop and redefine the words.
- After reading the content, revisit what students brainstormed from the front cover questions.
 - Were any of their ideas mentioned in the reading?

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resources at kansascornstem.com



Top Secret Fill in the Blank Challenge

- This activity is a great way for students to check their knowledge and understanding of the text and of the photographs. This activity is also a great way for students to show how they can reread text to find information.
- This activity can be done individually or as a whole group.
- These words can be provided as a word bank: 9,000, teosinte, calendars, Mesoamerica
- Students should be encouraged to highlight the sentence where they found their information. This will reinforce rereading while looking for specific information.

Activity

- An Edpuzzle can be pushed out on Google Classroom for students to watch as a class or independently. It is an interactive video about the history of corn that will stop to ask students questions as they watch.
 - <https://bit.ly/3MjwGRY>
- Using the Types of Corn worksheet, have students watch Farmer Bill's video provided by the QR Code in the reader. While they watch, have students fill out their own Types of Corn diagram listing characteristics in each column.

Plant Breeding Activity

- This activity is a great way for students to decide what characteristics would make corn desirable and which would not.
- For upper grades use the corn kernels that are blank and have students come up with desirable and undesirable characteristics on their own.
- Optional: The corn kernels with the characteristics on them can be used as a starting point for students and students can come up with other characteristics for the kernels that are blank.
- This activity can be done individually or in small groups.

Additional Kansas Corn STEM Resources

This reader can be used as a stand-alone activity, or you can pair it with other Kansas Corn STEM offerings.

- **Free Education Kit and Lesson** – The best resource to pair with this reader is one of our corn lessons that comes with a free education kit. The kit contains all the supplies needed to conduct a series of lessons that meet NGSS, are inquiry-based and hands-on. No training or prior knowledge about corn is needed to teach these lessons. Request your free kits at <https://kscorn.com/request-materials/>
- **Lesson Library** - With a lesson library of over 90 lessons and labs, you can find numerous resources to use. Make sure to check out our TEACH-FLEX lessons that use easy to find classroom materials. <https://kscorn.com/lesson-library/>
- **Breakout Box Challenge** - Challenge your students to learn more about corn using a breakout box. A breakout box challenge is available for each grade level, K-5 and is a great way to also assess learning. Challenges are available online or for physical breakout boxes. Check out the challenges at <https://kscorn.com/topic/breakout-box/>
- **Guest Speaker** - Request a guest speaker to visit the classroom and expand learning about ethanol and corn. <https://kscorn.com/guestspeaker/>