

# Seven Fun Pumpkin Activities to Try (Pre-K to 2nd Grade)

## 1. TOO LONG, TOO SHORT OR JUST RIGHT?

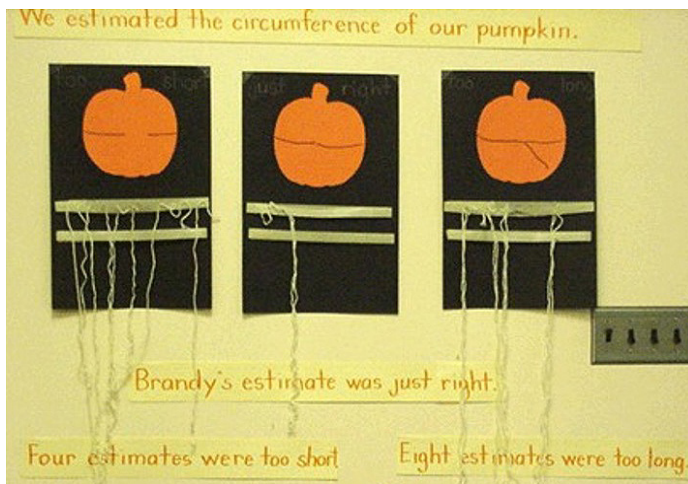
Learning about circumference, measuring, estimating, and comparing.

### Materials:

- One large pumpkin.
- Yarn.
- Poster board.
- Construction paper.
- Marker.
- Painter's tape.

### Instructions:

- On a poster board create a display using double-sided tape to compare circumference estimates.
- Ask each child to examine the pumpkin.
- Pass around several skeins of yarn. Ask the children to estimate the circumference of the pumpkin and to cut a piece of yarn to represent what they think it is.
- Ask each child (while others look on); to wrap their yarn around the pumpkin to see if their estimate was too long, too short, or just right!
- Ask children in turn to attach their yarn in the corresponding category on the poster.
- Count out together the number of estimates in each category, write total on display.



Example of a display for circumference estimates from [www.littlegiraffes.com](http://www.littlegiraffes.com)

## 2. HOW TALL THIS FALL?

Learning about height, measuring, and comparing.

### Materials:

- Large pumpkin from Activity 1.
- Painter's tape.

### Instructions:

- Use painter's tape to mark the height of each pumpkin on each child's pants leg.
- Remind children what "comparing" means (Activity 1).
- Ask the children to each compare the height of the pumpkin in relation to parts of their body: hand, waist, and knee.
- Ask them to make two groups: Pumpkin above the knee and pumpkin below the knee.
- Count the number in each group together.
- Talk more about "comparing" using other examples.

## 3. SINK OR FLOAT?

Learning to "test a guess" (hypothesis) and to practice comparing (basic STEM observation skill).

### Materials:

- Large pumpkin from Activity 2.
- Deep plastic storage container filled with water.

### Instructions:

- Ask each child to try to lift pumpkin from the floor.
- Is it heavy? YES!
- Ask the children to guess whether the pumpkin will float or sink in the water.
- Test the guess (hypothesis) by placing the pumpkin in the water-filled storage container.
- Ask the children why they think the pumpkin floated.
- Talk about what happens at the swimming pool?
- Cut the top of the pumpkin to show that the pumpkin is hollow.
- Ask each child to look inside and describe what they see. Mention seeds (lead into Activity 4)
- Test what floats or sinks with other objects in the classroom - or better yet, gathered together from outdoors.

#### 4. WHAT'S INSIDE A PUMPKIN?

Learning through the tactile sense to observe, compare, sort, and classify (basic STEM).

##### Materials:

- Large cut pumpkin from Activity 3.
- Mini pumpkins and ornamental gourds of various sizes.

##### Instructions:

- Ask the children about the seeds in the cut pumpkin.
- Ask them to guess which seeds are bigger? In the large pumpkin, miniature pumpkins, or gourds?
- Cut open miniature pumpkins and ornamental gourds.
- Ask the children to scoop out the pumpkin and gourd "guts" using their hands.
- Encourage children to compare the insides of the pumpkins and gourds.
- How does it feel? Probe for words and comparisons to other things or experiences.
- Ask the children to compare the size of the seeds and to sort into piles based on size (small, medium, and large).
- Discuss results!

#### 5. HARVEST REGATTA

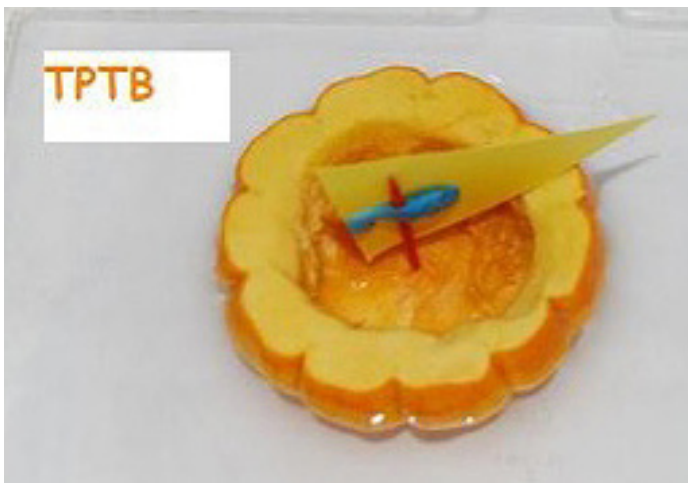
Learning to creatively convert one thing into another (up cycling).

##### Materials:

- Cut pumpkins and gourds from Activity 4.
- Deep plastic storage container filled with water from Activity 3.
- Craft supplies (drinking straws, construction paper, paint, etc.) to transform pumpkins and gourds into boats.

##### Instructions:

- Discuss with the children the idea of transforming the emptied miniature pumpkins and gourds into boats using the craft supplies.
- Go at it! Have fun!
- Discuss and compare results.



A miniature pumpkin boat from [www.thepreschooltoolboxblog.com](http://www.thepreschooltoolboxblog.com)

#### 6. PUMPKIN PLANTER

Learning about a first step in the gardening proves.

##### Materials:

- Cut pumpkins, gourds, and piles of seeds from Activity 5.
- Planting pots (recycled containers).
- Potting soil.
- Seeds.

##### Instructions:

- Cut a hole in the bottom of the hollow pumpkin or gourd for drainage.
- Fill the pumpkin/gourd with potting soil.
- Plant the seed in the soil.
- Water.

#### 7. ROTTING PUMPKIN

Learning observation through a decay experiment in the life cycle of plants.

##### Materials:

- Cut pumpkins and gourds from Activity 6.
- Sealable plastic baggies
- Marker to write child's name and type of seed on bag.

##### Instructions:

- Place a miniature pumpkin/gourd into a sealable plastic bag and place outside some in sunny spot, some in shade.
- Document the decaying process. Which pumpkin rots first? What does rotting look like?
- Discuss descriptive words.
- Compare the rate of decay among the pumpkins and gourds.
- Talk about time in nature. Annuals vs perennials. Trees vs pumpkins.