

# Pumpkin Jack

Book by Will Hubbell

Unit study prepared by Carrie Piper and Celia

## **Social Studies:**

### Geography

Where might Jack live? Could it be in your state or neighborhood? The location of this book is not specific, but it is somewhere that pumpkins grow easily. Discuss why it cannot be certain places such as the desert southwest of America (too hot, not enough rain. etc.) Choose a place on the map to be Tim's home.

### Occupation - Pumpkin Farmer

Ask your child where he thinks pumpkins come from? They come from farms as do all produce. Make a simple book and have your child illustrate it. The page captions can go something like this:

The farmer grows pumpkins in a field.

When the pumpkins are ripe they are picked off the vine.

Then the pumpkins are loaded on a truck and taken to the grocery store (or market, etc...)

We can buy the pumpkins at the store (or market, etc...)

### Character Building -- Generosity

"There were many [pumpkins], for the plant had been generous. Tim was generous, too. He gave away all but one."

Generosity is being willing to give...and to give large amounts of something. Does your student willingly share things that he owns? Can your student think of a time when someone was generous with him? A time when he was generous? What did he give away? (time, treasures, talent?) You may also wish to discuss the opposite of being generous-- being stingy.

### Culture-- Holidays

Many holidays are mentioned in this book. Holidays are usually the best days of

the year; they are days on the celebrated calendar that are repeated each year. Most people get a break from their regular jobs, friends and family gather together to eat, play games, and remember why they are celebrating that day. Most holidays have a very special meaning (for instance, Easter is celebrated because Jesus rose from the dead, Christmas marks Jesus' birth, etc.)

Can your student remember which holidays were mentioned in the story? (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day). Can your student make a list of other holidays that weren't mentioned? (St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Independence Day, etc.) What special traditions does your family have for each holiday mentioned?

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## Language Arts:

### List Making - Describing Pumpkins

Get 2 or 3 pumpkins or mini pumpkins. Make a list of words that describe your pumpkins. Make sure to feel, look at closely, and even smell your pumpkins in order to think of as many descriptors as possible. Ex. rough, bumpy, spotty, orange, etc... Call attention to the words used to describe Jack throughout the book. Introduce that these words are called adjectives if appropriate.

### Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them (as in *drowning in money* vs. drowning in water-- money is being compared to water). Unlike a simile, a metaphor does not use *like* or *as*. Draw attention to the metaphors in the book and discuss the meaning of each. Try to think of some metaphors on your own. You could also draw pictures of the literal meaning such as a person in a pile of money for *drowning in money*.

Here are some metaphors from the book.

"Time scraped a *thin blanket* of earth over the last bits of his pumpkin."

"...*yellow stars* that twisted shut forever..."(pumpkin blossoms)

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## **Art:**

### Pumpkin Painting and/or Carving

Pumpkin carving has become an art form. Many carvers go far beyond the simple jack-o-lantern. You could attempt an intricate design using tiny pumpkin saws. For younger children let them paint the pumpkins with simple tempera paints.

Pumpkins can also be drawn on with washable markers and then rinsed off and drawn on again. Little ones love this!

### Medium - Water Color Pencils

The illustrations are done with colored pencils and solvent wash effects. You can get the same effects with water color pencils. Water color pencils can be found in any art supply store. They can be used at least three ways: draw on a pre-moistened paper, draw on paper and spread color with paint brush and water, or on a separate piece of paper color a spot of heavy color and then pick up the color with a wet paint brush. Enjoy exploring this new medium.

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## **Applied Math:**

### Comparing Pumpkins

Compare and contrast 2 or 3 pumpkins or mini-pumpkins. Measure the circumference of each pumpkin. For each pumpkin wrap a piece of yarn around the middle and cut it to length. Compare each yarn piece to see which pumpkin has the greatest circumference. It is fun to have the children predict which one will be bigger before you do this.

Compare the pumpkins weight. A bathroom scale will do. Be sure to make predictions as to heaviest and lightest beforehand.

### Multiplication Word Problems

The illustrations show Tim covering 5 pumpkin seeds with dirt, but he harvests many more pumpkins. Using a manipulative such as small blocks or beans, help your child figure out some simple multiplication word problems.

"Time planted 3 pumpkin seeds. Each pumpkin seed grew a vine that produced 2 pumpkins. How many pumpkins grew in all?" Vary this as needed. Have your child ask you some word problems.

For younger children do simple addition and subtraction. "Tim grew 3 pumpkins and gave 1 to a friend. How many pumpkins does Tim have now?"

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## Science

### Pumpkin Life Cycle

The book clearly illustrates the life cycle of the pumpkin. Discuss this with your child drawing attention to what stage occurs in which season.

Seed - comes from mature pumpkin

Sprout - spring

Vine with flowers - Early summer

Vine with green (immature pumpkins) - Late summer

Almost ripe pumpkins - Mid October, pumpkins continue to ripen after picked.

### Pumpkins Are Fruits

Carve out a pumpkin and show your child all the seeds. This makes pumpkins fruits. Tomatoes and cucumbers are also fruits. Fruits are the mature fertilized ovary of the flower the preceded the fruit. The seeds are wrapped in these tasty packages so that animals will eat them and then disperse the seeds with their waste (yes, I mean poo). It is their way of spreading their seeds around. Approach this topic to the level you feel is appropriate. For more information about flower anatomy and fruits try these links.

### Mold

"Mold spread over Jack's bright orange skin. As the days turned colder, Jack grew flatter."

Mold is fungus. It is important to the decomposition process. When Jack is beginning to rot, he is tossed outside into the garden. The story notes that every time Tim went out in the garden, Jack looked different. He began to get flatter. Mold had begun to grow (feed) on Jack.

Mold starts as spores floating in the air. When these spores land on moist food, they grow into mold. Unlike plants that contain chlorophyll, mold cannot make its own food, so the mold produces chemicals which will make the food begin to rot. The mold feeds on this and grows, while the food decomposes until gone. This process sounds pretty gross, but God knew we needed mold! What if nothing

decomposed? God designed mold to decompose things and return them to the earth, where they become nutrients for other plants to grow! Isn't it amazing how God planned that!

#### Experiment:

Take a jar with a lid (larger baby food, a peanut butter or jelly jar, mayonnaise jar, etc.). Put inside several pieces of left over foods like fruits, vegetables, etc. Tightly seal the jar with its lid. Duct tape it to ensure it is not removed. Watch what happens to the foods inside over several weeks. Have your student record his observations weekly, perhaps taking pictures weekly. Be sure to note whether any of the items originally put in the jar had preservatives and note the amount of mold on those items during the experiment period. When done with this experiment, throw the jar away without opening it.

While discussing mold and decomposition, you may wish to also introduce/review the food chain. The decomposers are the last in the food chain (and often overlooked in teaching). Producers are first, the consumers are second, and the decomposers are last. Research further if desired.

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#### **Just for Fun:**

- Cook and mash pumpkin just for the sensory experience! It's great gooey fun.
- Make pumpkin pie. Follow the directions on any can of pureed pumpkin easily found in any grocery store.
- If you can read this book in the fall and save some pumpkin seeds to plant in the spring, you will have your own pumpkin patch!
- Roast the seeds from your pumpkins. Rinse seeds and remove all strings. Coat seeds with a little oil. Spread the seeds out on a baking pan and roast slowly at 250 degrees until golden brown. Season to taste. We like salt.

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# Which Pumpkin is the Heaviest?

Which pumpkin do you think is the heaviest?

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How much does each pumpkin weigh?

Pumpkin 1

Pumpkin 2

Pumpkin 3

Which pumpkin is the heaviest?

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# Which Pumpkin is the Biggest Around the Middle? (biggest circumference)

Which pumpkin do you think will measure the biggest around the middle?

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Wrap a piece of yarn around the middle of the pumpkin and cut it off when it goes all the way around one time. Tape each piece of yarn below.

Pumpkin 1

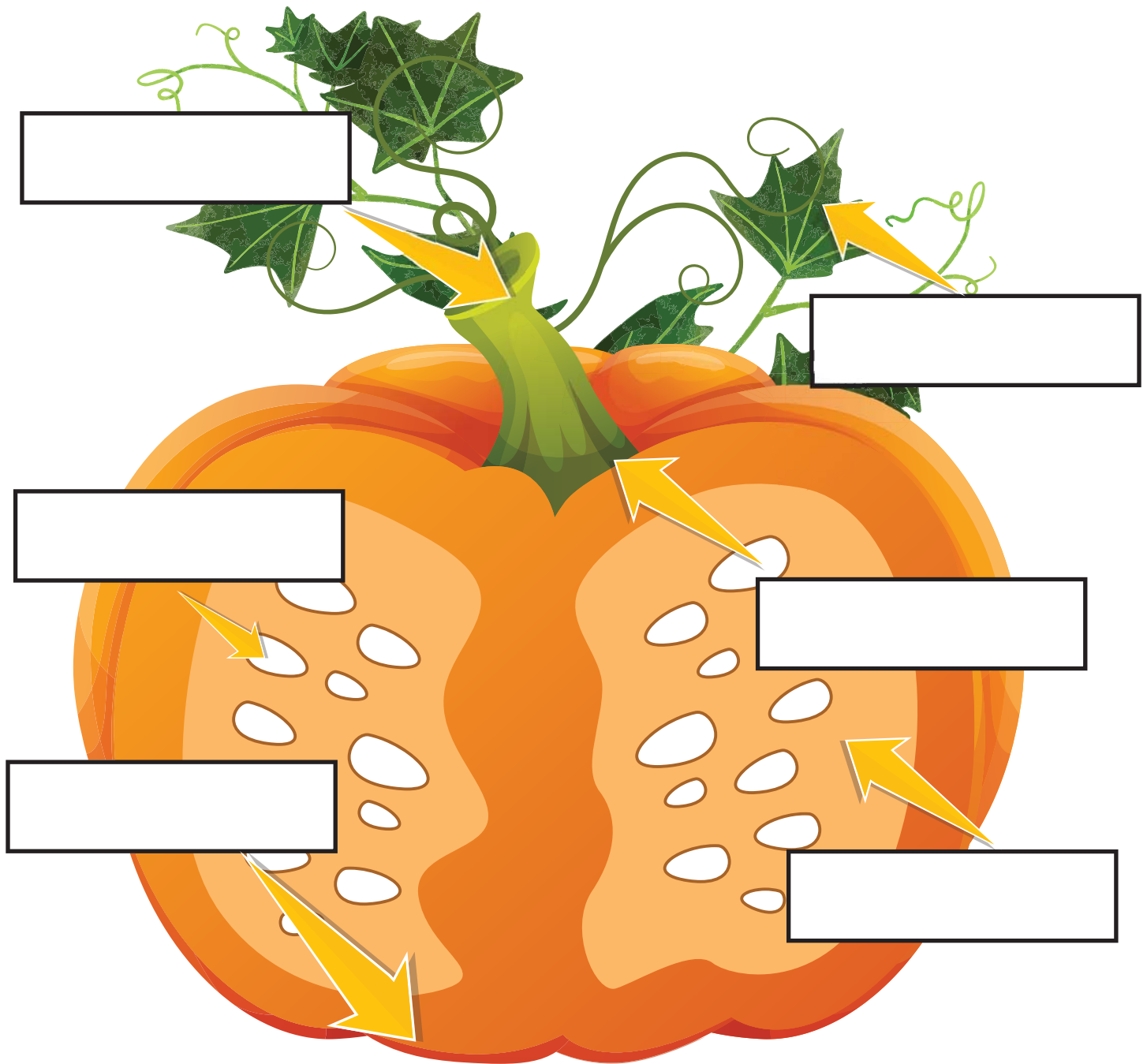
Pumpkin 2

Pumpkin 3

Which pumpkin was the biggest around?

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# Parts of a Pumpkin



SKIN

VINE

SEEDS

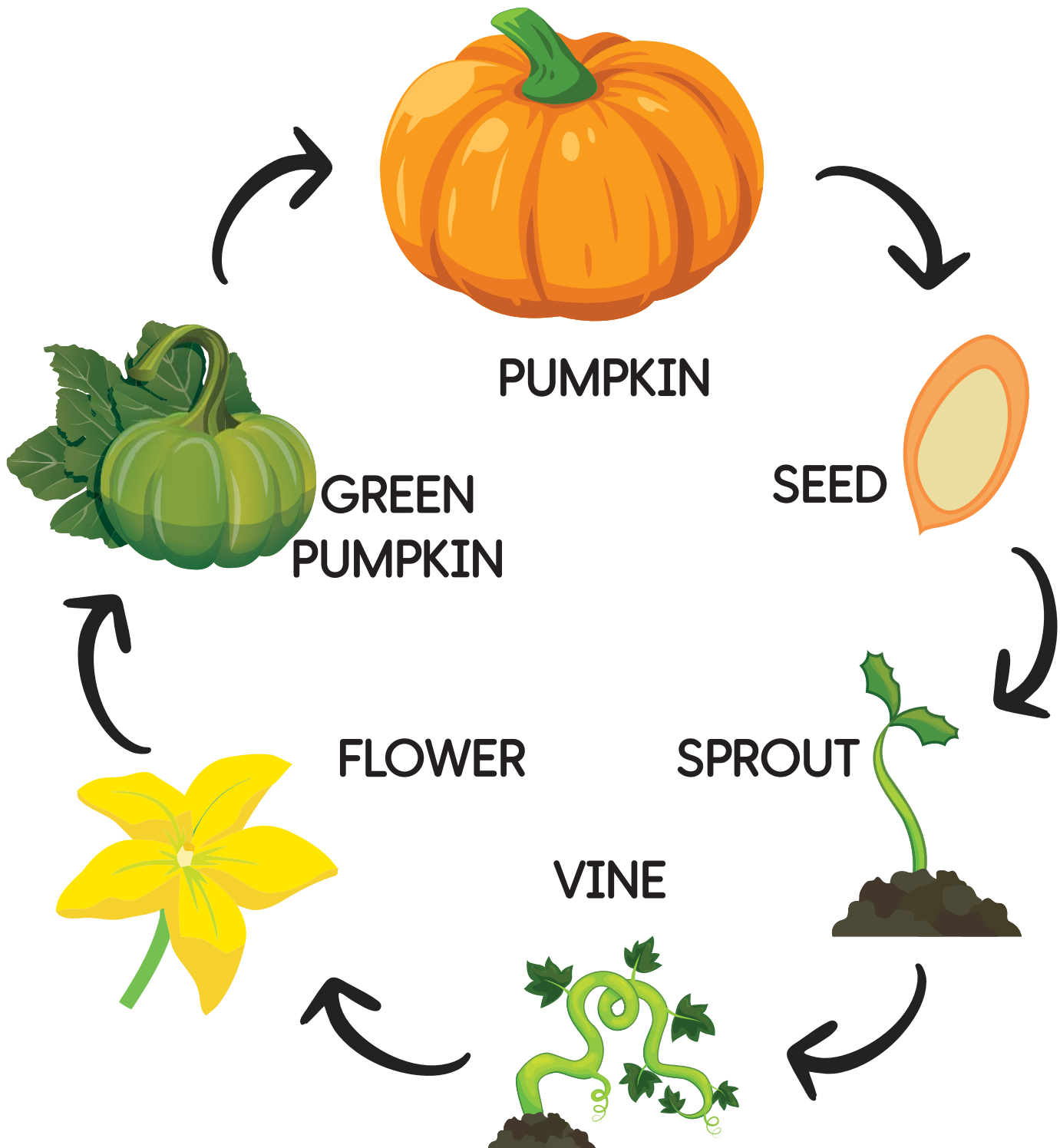
LEAVES

STEM

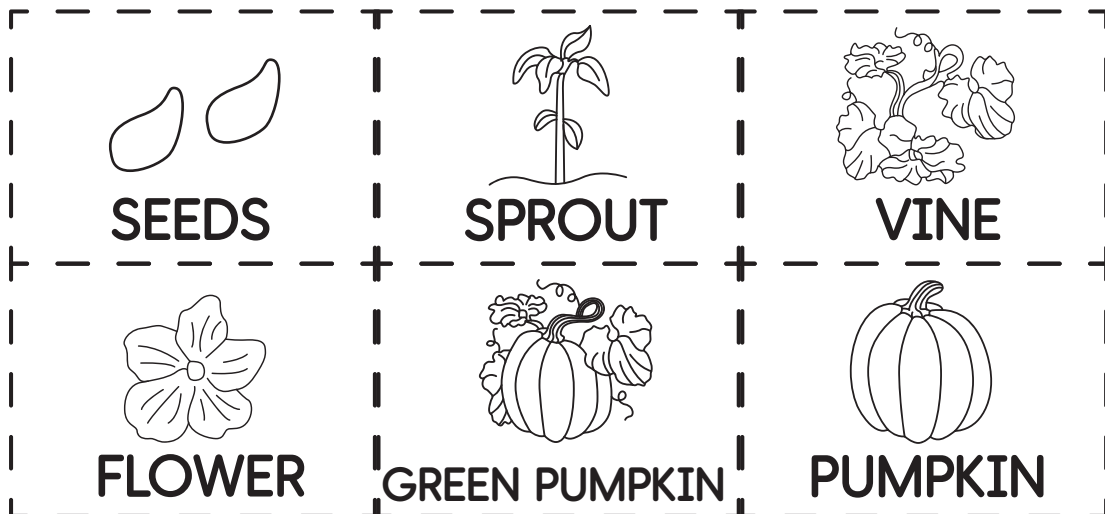
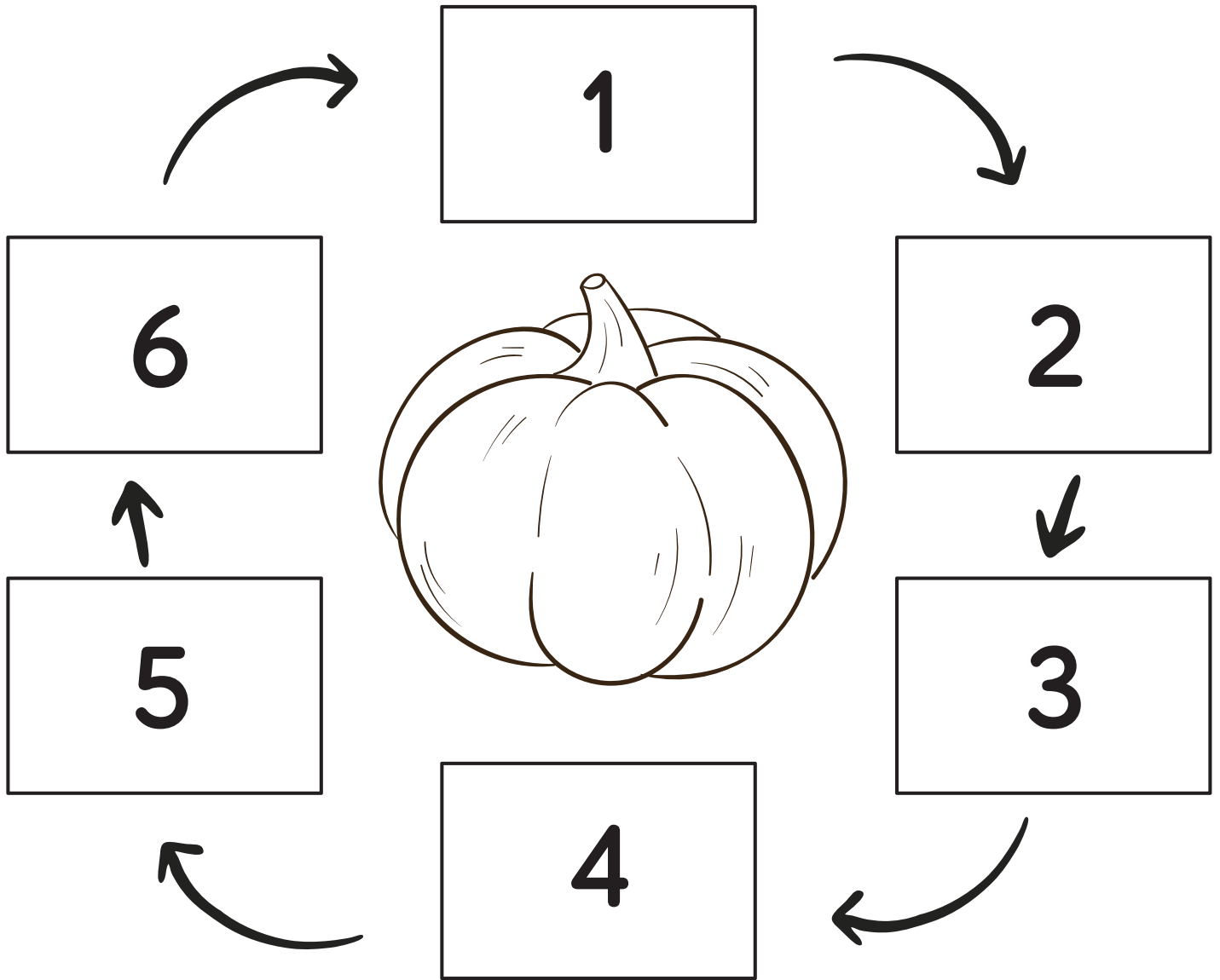
PULP



# LIFE CYCLE OF A PUMPKIN

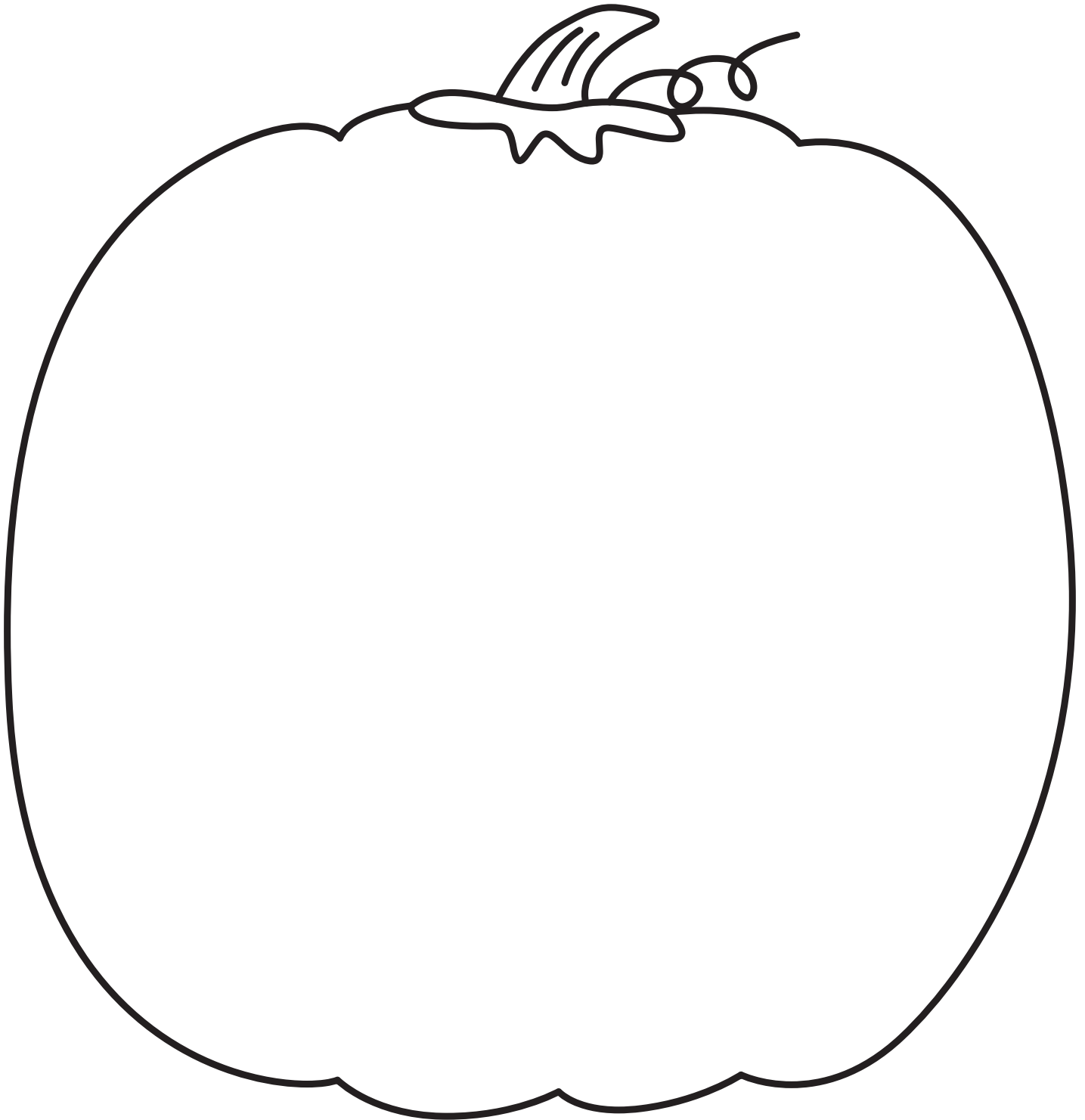


# Pumpkin Life Cycle



# Make a Pumpkin

Draw a face on the pumpkin to make your own jack-o-lantern.



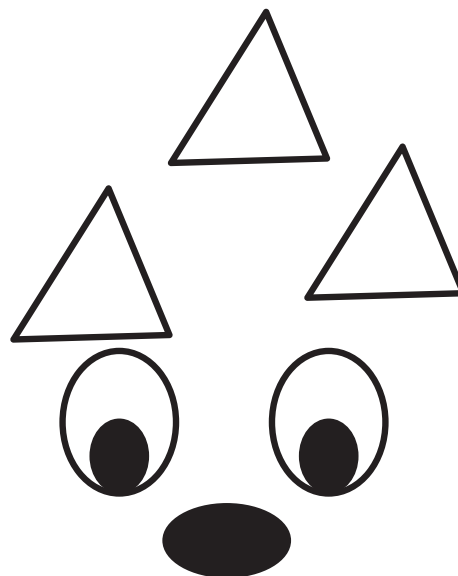
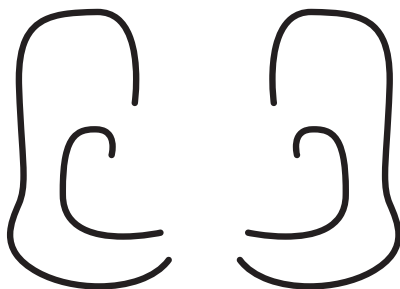
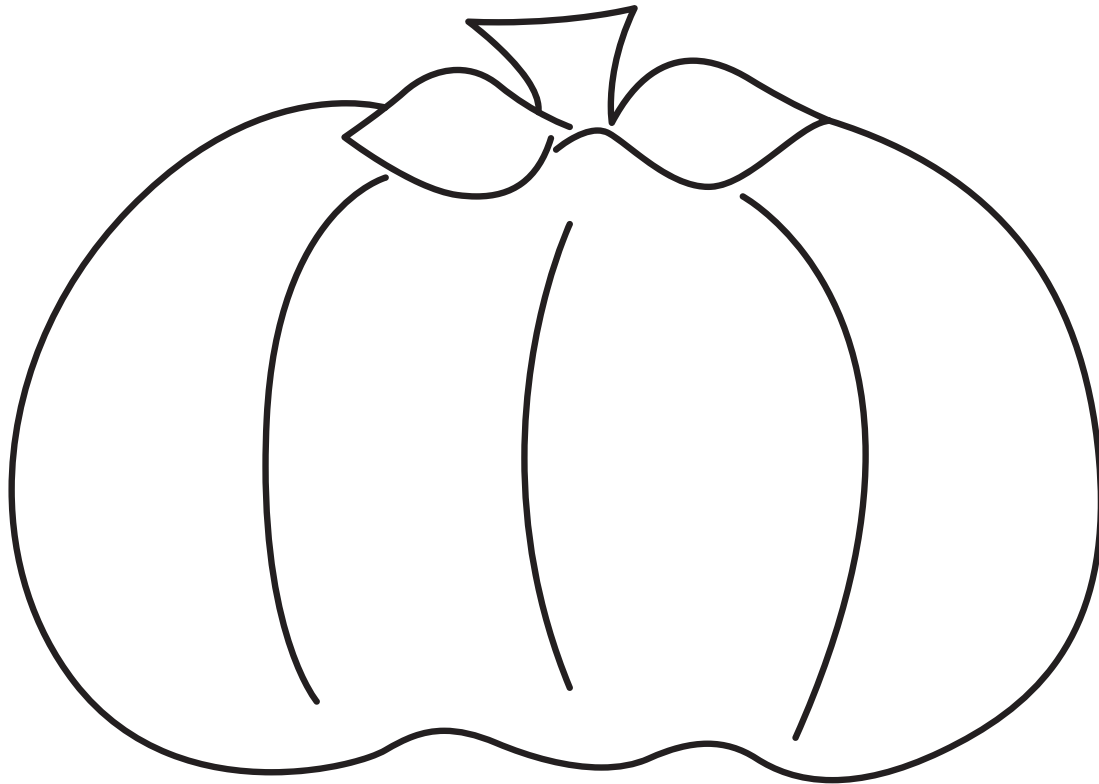
# Pumpkin Facts

Directions: Color the pumpkins with sentences that are true.



# Cut and Paste Pumpkin

Directions: Color the pumpkin.  
Cut out the shapes and make different faces with the pumpkin!



# Pumpkin Investigation

Words that describe my pumpkin.

☐

FLOATS

☐

SINKS



Number of Seeds

Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_