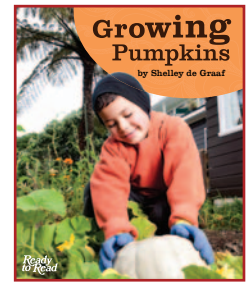


# Growing Pumpkins

by Shelley de Graaf

This text is levelled at Orange 2.



## Overview

In this fact-based text, a boy describes how he and his grandad grow pumpkins from seeds and make pumpkin soup. The information and ideas are well supported with photographs and text boxes.

*Growing Pumpkins* provides opportunities for students to “flexibly use the sources of information in text, in combination with their prior knowledge, to make meaning and consider new ideas” and “draw on a wider range of comprehension strategies to help them think

more deeply about what they read” (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 13).

There is an audio version of the text on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45 CD* as well as on an MP3 file at [www.readytoread.tki.org.nz](http://www.readytoread.tki.org.nz)

## Cross-curriculum links

Science (levels 1 and 2, life processes) – Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive.

## Text characteristics

The students are working towards the standard for after two years at school. Many characteristics of Turquoise texts are also in texts at earlier levels but in simpler forms. These characteristics are shown in the boxes with a solid outline. Other boxes show additional characteristics.

A mix of explicit and implicit content that provides opportunities for students to make simple inferences, for example, that there are things that help plants grow (compost, water, bees), that pumpkins do most of their growing during spring and summer, and that you can store pumpkins for a long time

My grandad has a big garden.  
He grows vegetables.  
He saves the seeds from his plants so he can grow more vegetables the next year.

At the beginning of spring,  
Grandad got the soil ready by digging in **compost**.



Compost is a mix of rotted food scraps and leaves.  
Gardeners like to dig compost into the soil because it is full of good things that help plants to grow.

2




When bees crawl inside the pumpkin flowers, they get covered with yellow powder called **pollen**. They carry this pollen into other pumpkin flowers. This needs to happen before pumpkins will grow.

5

Some settings and contexts that may be outside the students' prior knowledge but can easily be related to it, for example, the sequence of the seasons, the details about how pumpkins grow, and the supporting information about compost and bees

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences, so that students are required to notice and use punctuation and key words that signal links between ideas (for example, “so”, “by”, “because”, “that”, “When”, “As”, “to”) as a guide to phrasing and meaning

Small green bumps started to grow at the bottom of the flowers.  
As the bumps grew,  
the flowers dried up.  
The bumps grew bigger and bigger.  
They started to look like pumpkins.



6

Some visual language features such as text boxes, bold text for topic words that are linked to explanations in the text boxes, and close-up and inset photographs

The indicators of time – “At the beginning of spring”, “Then”, “Ten days later”, “All through spring and summer”, “When”, “As the bumps grew”, “In autumn”, “over the winter”, “Next autumn”

Mostly familiar words, but some new topic words and descriptive language that are supported by the context and/or by definitions, explanations, and illustrations, for example, “appeared”, “autumn”, “carry”, “compost”, “covered”, “digging in”, “dried up”, “flowers”, “Gardeners”, “leaves”, “middle”, “plant”, “pollen”, “powder”, “rotted food scraps”, “soil”, “spread”, “spring”, “summer”, “through”, “tiny green shoots”, “vegetables”  
The suffixes in “bigger”, “biggest”, “Gardeners”  
The irregular verb forms “chose”, “flew”, “grew”, “spread”

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## A suggested reading purpose

To find out how pumpkins grow

## Setting a learning goal

(*What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically about” texts?*)

**Select from and adapt** the opportunities below to set your specific learning goal or goals. In addition to using the information you have gathered about your students from a range of reading assessments, be guided by their particular strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8, Knowledge of the learner, page 6*).

The characteristics of this text provide opportunities for students to:

- make connections to their prior knowledge to help them to identify and summarise the main ideas
- draw on multiple sources of information in the text, for example, grapho-phonetic information, known words, sentence structure, punctuation, context, and visual language features, in combination with their prior knowledge, to make meaning and consider new ideas
- monitor their own reading and self-correct where necessary, for example, by rereading text or checking further sources of information.

## Introducing the text

Read the title and discuss the cover photograph.

- Ideally, have a pumpkin or piece of pumpkin to show the students. *What do you know about pumpkins?* Use prompts as required, for example: *What do they look like? What do people use them for?* Record the students’ ideas on a chart.
- Prompt the students to draw on their knowledge of plants or gardening to share their ideas about how plants grow and what they need. Use this discussion as an opportunity to use and explain subject-specific words, such as “soil” and “compost”. If your students are unfamiliar with gardens and gardening, you could walk around the school looking at the types of plants and discuss what plants need in order to grow.
- For students who need support with the language and concepts connected with pumpkins and gardening, you could use the discussions above as the context for co-constructing class vocabulary lists on charts. These lists could be in the form of graphic organisers, such as word maps or tables.

- If you are using this text as part of a science topic, adjust your introduction according to your instructional purpose and what you know about the students’ prior knowledge.
- Share the reading purpose.

## Reading the text

Below are the sorts of behaviours you want your students to demonstrate as they read and discuss this text on the first or subsequent readings. These are shown in bold. The behaviours are followed by instructional strategies you can use to support students to demonstrate those behaviours. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students’ needs and experiences.

**The students make connections to their knowledge of gardening, plants, and pumpkins to help them to identify and summarise the main points about the life cycle of pumpkins.**

**The students draw on multiple sources of information to make meaning and consider new ideas.**

- **Title page** – *Does this photograph give you any new ideas about pumpkins?* Add new ideas to the chart (for example, you can make soup from them; they have lots of seeds inside them).
- **Page 2** – Prompt the students to use the photograph and the words “My grandad” to establish who is telling the story. This page introduces several important and possibly unfamiliar ideas, so allow plenty of time for discussion. Encourage the students to share their own experiences of growing plants, especially from seeds.
- If necessary, explain that the seeds in the small photograph have come from inside the yellowish seedcases in the pumpkin and that’s why they look different from those inside the pumpkin on the title page.
- Discuss the seasons. Briefly explain that different kinds of plants have different needs, for example, some grow better in warm weather, and some grow better in cold weather, so they need to be planted in different seasons.
- Draw attention to the use of bold print for the word “compost”. Remind the students of the introductory discussions and tell them that when a word is in bold print, there will be an explanation close by. Direct them to the text box under the photograph for further information about compost. Prompt them to draw on the photograph and their knowledge of digging to clarify what “digging in compost” means.

- Remind the students of the reading purpose and start a summary chart about how the pumpkins grew, using the seasons as a framework. An example of a possible chart is shown below. *Where should we write this information about digging in compost? How do you know?*

### How did the pumpkins grow?

Grandad dug in compost to get the soil ready.	
Spring	Summer
Winter	Autumn

- Page 3** – Listen to the students read quietly to themselves. Note how they manage the two parts in the first sentence and any unfamiliar vocabulary. Discuss what “shoots” are and how the inset photograph provides further information.
- Prompt the students to draw on their knowledge of what plants need to help them grow. *Why did they water the plants often?*
- Ask the students to identify the main points about how pumpkins grow. Add these to the chart. If necessary, support the students to notice the time words to help them with their summary.
- Page 4** – Support the students to identify and summarise the main points. Add these to the summary chart. Because growth happens through spring and summer, students may need help to place information in both the spring and summer parts of the chart. If necessary, clarify that the flowers appeared in summer.
- Page 5** – Clarify that the text box provides further information about what the bees do.
- Page 6** – After the first sentence, ask the students what the small green “bumps” will grow into. Expect them to search the page and make the link to the main photograph. Have them read the rest of the page to confirm. Continue drawing the students’ attention to words like “as” that signal time and sequence relationships and discuss as necessary. Update the summary chart.

### How did the pumpkins grow?

Grandad dug in compost to get the soil ready.	The plants grew and spread out.
They planted the seeds.	Yellow flowers appeared.
After ten days, tiny green shoots came up.	Bees carried pollen from one flower to another.
They watered the plants often.	Small green bumps started to grow.
The plants grew bigger.	The flowers dried up.
	The bumps grew bigger and started to look like pumpkins.
Spring	Summer
Winter	Autumn

- Page 7** – Ask the students to form hypotheses about what the boy is planning to do with the pumpkin. Note whether they make links to the introductory discussions and/or the title page photograph.
- Allow time to discuss the idea of storing pumpkins over the winter. Encourage the students to compare this with what happens to many other fruits or vegetables when they are stored for a long time.
- Page 8** – *Have you ever made pumpkin soup? What will Grandad have to do before he can use the seeds to grow more pumpkins?* Prompt the students to refer back to the text and photograph on page 2. Add information to the summary chart.
- Read through the summary chart together and discuss any changes the students want to make. Your chart might look like the one below. Review the reading purpose. Have the students think, pair, and share about an interesting new idea or piece of information they discovered from reading this text.

### How did the pumpkins grow?

Grandad dug in compost to get the soil ready.	The plants grew and spread out.
They planted the seeds.	Yellow flowers appeared.
After ten days tiny green shoots came up.	Bees carried pollen from one flower to another.
They watered the plants often.	Small green bumps started to grow.
The plants grew bigger.	The flowers dried up.
	The bumps grew bigger and started to look like pumpkins.
Spring	Summer
Winter	Autumn
They put away pumpkins to use over the winter.	The pumpkins were ready to pick.
Grandad saved the seeds ready to plant next spring.	

## Monitoring during the reading

The students monitor their own reading and self-correct where necessary.

- You may have noticed students doing some self-monitoring during the first reading, but you can monitor more closely as they reread the text quietly to themselves or to a partner. Note their ability to use punctuation and key words (“so”, “by”, “because”, “that”, “When”, “As”, “to”) to support phrasing and expression within the simple and complex sentences.
- When students make an error, wait till the end of the sentence or page before intervening, unless they stop reading. Waiting gives them the opportunity to notice the error and fix it themselves.

- Draw attention to the students' use of strategies by asking questions or giving feedback. For example, *How did you know that bit was wrong? Or: Well done. I noticed that you reread that bit when you got confused. How did rereading help you?*
- Base your prompts on what you know about the students' prior knowledge. For example, asking an English language learner if a word sounds right may not be useful if they are not familiar enough with English phonemes and vocabulary to know the answer. In this case, an explanation and further examples would be more effective.
- If students are making errors without noticing a problem, use appropriate prompts to draw their attention to the error. For example:
  - If a student says “pumpkins” for “vegetables”, or “dirt” or “garden” for “soil”, on page 2, prompt them by asking, for example, *Can you see something that would help you here?* If they need more help, say, *Do you think it looks like “pumpkin”? What does “pumpkin” start with?*
  - If a student has difficulty with “shoots” on page 3, prompt them to read to the end of the sentence and say, *What would make sense here?* If necessary refer to the inset photograph to confirm the meaning.
  - If a student has difficulty with “appeared” on page 4, say, *What would you do now?* If necessary, prompt them to look for the largest chunks they know (ap-pear-ed) and reread the sentence to check for meaning.
- Create charts to remind the students about the strategies they could use when they read. Give feedback when you notice them adopting these new strategies.
- For further suggestions about ways to support students to self-monitor (to cross-check, confirm, and self-correct), see *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*, page 130.
- Identify some topic-specific words in the text (for example, “pumpkins”, “seeds”, “soil”, “compost”, “spring”, “summer”, “autumn”, “winter”, “flowers”, “pollen”) and ask the students to work in pairs to create their own definitions, referring to the text for support.
- Provide a set of key statements from the text and have the students arrange them in order. They can add illustrations.
- Photocopy the photographs on the title page and pages 2–7 and have the students arrange them in sequence and write a summary sentence about each one. They can create their own sentences using the summary chart to help them. For students who need extra scaffolding into this task, you could provide a word bank to help them construct their sentences, and/or sentence frames (sentences with gaps in them), or sentence starters.
- Using the summary chart, select the information that is specifically about the life cycle of the pumpkin. From the text, give the students phrases signalling time and/or sequence. Have them put the phrases in order and then make complete sentences to describe the life cycle of the pumpkin.
- Have the students work in pairs to construct a flow chart to show the life cycle of a pumpkin.
- Organise a classroom helper to supervise the students making pumpkin soup or encourage the students to make the soup at home with their families.
- Investigate the school garden if you have one and observe aspects of it, such as the plant types and gardening activities, that are the same as or different from what is in the text.
- Find out more about how bees help plants to grow. The Ready to Read text *Honey-makers* has some information on this.

## Related text

- A text about bees: *Honey-makers* (Orange)

## After reading: practice and reinforcement

After-reading tasks should arise from monitoring of the students' needs during the lesson and should provide purposeful practice and reinforcement.

**Select from and adapt** the suggested tasks according to the needs of your students.

- The students can build their comprehension and fluency by rereading the text while listening to the audio version on the CD or MP3 files. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.