

# February

..... HARVEST OF THE MONTH .....

## SWEET POTATO

### NC Standard Course of Study

#### Health:

**K.NPA.2** Understand the importance of consuming a variety of nutrient dense foods and beverages in moderation.

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**1.L.2.1** Summarize the basic needs of a variety of different plants (including air, water, nutrients, and light) for energy and growth.

**2.NPA.2** Understand the importance of consuming a variety of nutrient dense foods and beverages in moderation

### Materials needed:

- Sweet Potato to pass around
- Writing utensils (markers, crayons, colored pencils)
- Construction Paper
- "The Vitamin Alphabet" handouts

### Goal:

Using sweet potato as an example, this lesson is designed to deepen students' understanding of vitamins and their benefits. We will discuss the importance of a varied diet rich in different fruits and vegetables.



### Activity Length:

Flexible. 45 minutes ideal



### Location:

Classroom

# Sweet Potatoes Life Cycle

## Question for the class:

How do our SWEET POTATOES GROW? What does it need to grow?

Invite students to join in narrating or acting out the process:

**Possible script:** *A Sweet Potato starts out as a tiny SEED like all plants. But when most people plant Sweet Potatoes, they don't plant the actual SEEDS. They plant SLIPS, which are little sprouts that grow out of a mature Sweet Potato. The SLIPS are planted in the ground to become Sweet Potato plants. If the plant gets SOIL + WATER, the SLIPS will send ROOTS down into the SOIL. Then the plant sends up its STEM toward the sky. It sends out its LEAVES to collect more sun. The ROOTS begin to spread out under the ground, and the Sweet Potatoes grow at the ROOTS' ends. A mature Sweet Potato can be saved to grow more SLIPS, and the cycle begins all over again!*

## Optional warm-up songs:

Roots, Stems, Leaves by the Banana Slug String Band

Sun, Soil, Water & Air by the Banana Slug String Band

**Bonus:** Have students act it by starting as a tiny little seed (ball on the floor), pressing their roots (feet) into the floor, stretching their stem (body) towards the sky, and opening leaves (hands).

# Supply Chain

## Question for the class:

WHERE do SWEET POTATOES GROW?

➤ They grow on a farm or they can grow in a garden (do we have them in our garden?).

Where can we get or buy SWEET POTATOES?

➤ We can buy them at the grocery store, farmer's market, or we can eat them at the cafeteria.

HOW did the SWEET POTATOES get from the farm to our plate? WHO helps?

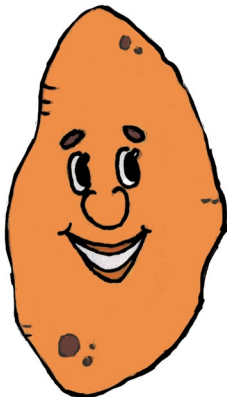
➤ **Harvest:** The farmer had to harvest (pick) them

**Transport:** A driver had to drive them from farm to store or market

**Process:** Maybe someone chopped them before they got to the store

**Prepare:** Someone (a chef, family member, ) had to wash them, and cook them

**Eat:** And finally... after all that... YOU get to eat them!



# Harvest of the Month Moment!



Before diving into the lesson, introduce the featured produce!

If space, gather in a circle or around the poster. Feel free to use this space to share your own experiences with the harvest and celebrate what students know.

*The Harvest of the Month for FEBRUARY is SWEET POTATOES!*

- *They grow well most of the year in central North Carolina.*
- *We eat the root of the sweet potato plant*
- *North Carolina is the largest producer of Sweet Potatoes in the United States!*
- *Fun fact: February is Sweet Potato Month and February 22nd is National Sweet Potato Day*
- *Sweet Potatoes are full of Vitamin A and other important nutrients! Let's dive in to learn more about what different vitamins do for our bodies*

Ask students to find the harvest on the What's Growing On? Poster. If available, pass around the harvest and invite students to share observations (*How does it feel, look, smell, sound? Does it remind you of another harvest we've done this year?*).

Consider asking some warm-up questions for students:

*Have you tried it? When did you try it?*

*How does your family like to prepare this fruit/vegetable?*

*Do you have anything that you know about this harvest that you'd like to share?*

## What's Growing On?



### 1. Eating the Rainbow

Divide students into 5 groups. Assign each group one of the color categories on the chart below: Red, Orange/Yellow, Green, Blue/Purple, and White

- Give the groups time to talk about what fruits and vegetables are their assigned color. Try and come up with as many as possible!
- Write student answers on the board in their respective color categories

## 2. Discuss Eating the Rainbow

*Wow, that's a wonderful list! So, do you think you'd like to draw with one color for the rest of your life? Do you want to eat the same color food?*

*Different color fruits and vegetables have different nutrients, vitamins, and minerals that do good things for our body!*

*Today we've been talking about yummy sweet potatoes! They're orange and like other orange foods like carrots and pumpkins, they have a lot of Vitamin A*

- Invite students to make a big letter A with their arms above their heads.
- Vitamin A helps with eyesight, growth and development.

*Eating different colors can give our bodies the vitamins they need*

*In our next activity, we will learn more about all the things vitamins and minerals can help us do!*

## 3. Fruit and Veggie Superheroes!

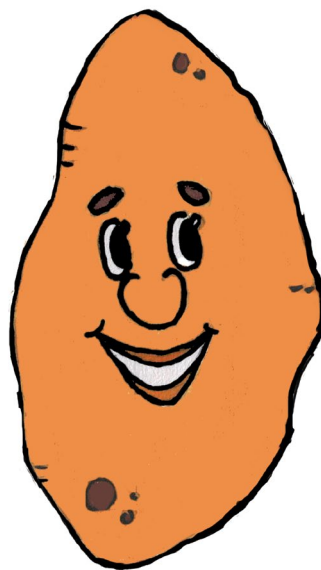
Pass out "Vitamin Alphabet" worksheet to each group of students or display on the board in your classroom.

Look over the worksheet together, and read about what each vitamin does for our bodies, and what fruits and vegetables contain each vitamin

Discuss, *It can be hard to remember what every vitamin does and where we can find it. How might we make sure we are getting what we need to be healthy? Eat the Rainbow!*

Tell each student to select their favorite fruit or vegetable from the worksheet and design a superhero version of that vegetable, giving it a power based on the vitamin it is richest in!

- For example, the Superhero "Carrot Woman" has a lot of Vitamin A, so she might have the power of super vision!
- Have students spend about ten minutes coming up with their superhero, drawing it, and giving it a super name and costume!
- Invite students to share their superhero with their group, or do a gallery walk where the whole class can see everyone's superheroes!



# “Crustless” Sweet Potato Pie Bites



## Ingredients

- 3 Sweet Potatoes, cooked and mashed
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 3 eggs
- 2 ½ tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Pinch of ground cloves
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

## Instructions

- Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl, then pour into a greased rimmed baking sheet.
- Bake at 350 degrees for about 20-25 minutes.
- Slice into small squares and enjoy!

# The Vitamin Alphabet

**Vitamin A** plays a really big part in your eyesight. It also helps your body fight off sickness by boosting your immune system. Fruits and vegetables that are high in **Vitamin A** are: *leafy greens, apricots, cantaloupe, carrots, winter squash, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes!*

There are many types of **B Vitamins**, including **Vitamin B1, B2, B6, and B12**. The **B Vitamins** help your body store energy and release it whenever your body needs it! **B Vitamins** can be found in *whole grains like wheat and oats, leafy green vegetables, beans, and peas!*

**Vitamin C** helps your body stay well by fighting off infections and boosting your immune system. Many fruits and vegetables are high in **Vitamin C**, including: *citrus fruits such as oranges, lemons, and limes, cantaloupe, strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage, kiwi, and sweet red peppers!*

**Vitamin D** helps your body absorb calcium, which helps build our bones and keep them strong. Vegetables that contain **Vitamin D** are: *spinach, kale, okra, collard greens, soybeans, and white beans!*

**Vitamin E** helps protect your cells and tissue from damage. It also helps the blood flow smoothly throughout your body. **Vitamin E** can be found in foods like: *whole grains like wheat and oats, leafy green vegetables, vegetable oils like sunflower, canola, and olive, nuts, and seeds!*

When you cut your finger, it may bleed for a little while, but then the bleeding stops, and your body begins to heal. You can say thank you to **Vitamin K** for that! **Vitamin K** helps your blood clot when you have a cut or scrape. Vegetables that are high in **Vitamin K** are: *dark leafy greens, brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower!*