

Reading with children can improve their language, literacy, and social-emotional skills, increasing their knowledge of the world around them. With the right book choices, reading can introduce children to healthy eating habits too!

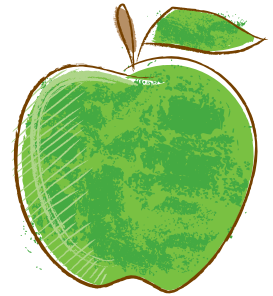


APPLES, APPLES, APPLES

by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

What It's All About

Minna and Pip's family go apple picking at Long Hill Orchard. They learn all about apples: how they are grown, what the different varieties are used for, and even what an apple looks like on the inside! After their busy day at the farm, they come home to do apple crafts and an apple surprise!



Discover a World of Words

Throughout the story, introduce new vocabulary words using gestures, tone of voice, pointing to illustrations, or providing brief explanations. Examples include:

- *Autumn*: fall
- *Varieties*: different kinds (of apples)
- *Simmer*: to cook gently



Dig into the Story

Develop children's comprehension of the story by discussing higher-level information (e.g., link characters' feelings to their actions and/or events in the story, predict what might happen, summarize chunks of text). Use prompts throughout the story, such as:

- *What varieties of apples should Mom get if she wants to use apples to do crafts?*
- *Why did Minna yell "hold on to your apples" while the family rode back down the hill?*
- *How did everybody help make Minna's surprise?*

Make Connections Beyond the Book

After reading the story, make connections to an aspect of the child's real life by:

- Making Minna's surprise recipe.
- Trying the apple printing craft.
- Singing the "Apple Song".
- Visiting an orchard or other place where you can pick your own fruits or vegetables.

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Some definitions taken from Biemiller, A. (2010). *Words worth teaching: Closing the vocabulary gap.*

Jumpstart

Jumpstart is a national early education organization working toward the day every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed. Learn more at jstart.org.

Together Time Activity

Just like the apples in this book, each fruit and vegetable has its own amazing story. Together as a family, pick one to investigate and taste!

- 1** Choose any fruit or vegetable from the grocery store to study. Purchase at least one piece or enough for everyone in the family to taste it when you're done with your investigation.
- 2** Begin the investigation with a list of question you would like to answer. Sit down at the table as a family and invite everyone contribute their ideas to the list. Examples: Where does it grow? When is it in season? What type of plant does it grow on (tree, vine, shrub)? How thick is its skin? What does it look like on the inside? Can you find its seeds and how many are there? How does it reproduce? What does it taste like? What animals eat it? What can you make with it?
- 3** Research the answers online or at the public or school library. Older children can each pick out a few questions to research independently and create diagrams, charts and graphs, a report, or summary. Younger children will enjoy researching alongside an adult and can draw or paint a picture of something they learned about, such as the place it grows. If you find out the food grows nearby, go ahead and visit a farm together or interview the farmer!
- 4** Record and discuss your findings. What was the most interesting or surprising fact you learned?
- 5** Taste the fruit or veggie. Perhaps someone found a great recipe during the research phase. If so, prepare it together as a family. If the food is usually eaten raw, simply slice it up and enjoy!



Talking Points:

- What did you learn about the nutrition content of the food you researched? What are the main nutrients it provides? What quantity of this food counts as a “serving?”
- Does your family eat enough fruits and vegetables? If not, what’s stopping you? What would you change about daily routines and habits in order to eat more?
- What are some different ways to enjoy the food? Try preparing it again a different way. Can you think of a way to include it in your lunch box? Can you add it to a sandwich or a smoothie?
- How would you create a complete, balanced meal that incorporates this fruit or vegetable? What other things should be on your plate in order to do so? (Hint: Eating a rainbow of colors is one way to help get a variety of nutrients in each meal.)
- Did your family benefit from the fruit or vegetable investigation? Are you curious about other fruits and vegetables? Take a grocery trip with the entire family and allow each person to pick a new food to investigate.