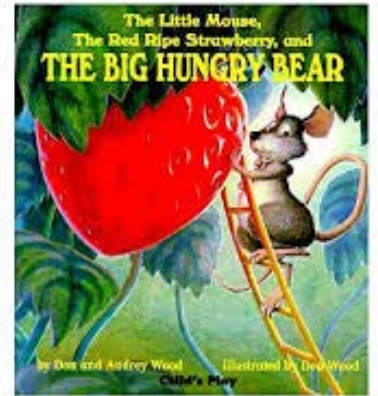


## May 2014 Book of the Month

*The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and The Big Hungry Bear*

By: Don Wood

The little mouse has just found a red, ripe strawberry, when he is warned about the big, hungry bear who loves strawberries. The little mouse tries several ingenious ways of protecting the strawberry from the big, hungry bear but the mouse is convinced that none of these methods will work. The little mouse has to solve the problem in a practical way, but the readers may wonder if the mouse has been tricked.



**These activities are not listed by subject area as they are easily integrated into all subject areas.**

### Strawberry Facts:

- Strawberries are the first fruit to become ripe in spring.
- Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside.
- Strawberries are members of the rose family.
- It takes strawberries 3 days to complete their cycle of turning from green to white to red.
- Strawberries are not berries or fruit at all, but enlarged ends of the plant's stamen.
- For best flavor, strawberries should be served at room temperature.
- Over ninety four percent of households in the US consume strawberries.

**\* PLEASE NOTE: Be aware of children with food allergies when tasting the various foods.**

### Label the parts of a Strawberry Plant

Have students examine real strawberry plants. Introduce the parts of the plant. (Runner, roots, crown, leaves, flower, fruit) In a science journal, have students write, draw, and label the parts of a strawberry.

### Measurement

Bring in a strawberry plant for students to observe. Students can measure the roots and runners of the plants and compare them to other strawberry plants. Have students compare the roots of a strawberry plant to other seasonal plants.

### **Ways We Can Eat Strawberries**

Review with students how strawberries are planted and harvested, and how they end up in grocery stores. Ask the students ways they can eat strawberries and list on paper. Then show pictures of strawberries in different forms: whole, pies, cakes, preserves, gelatin, shortcake, etc. Have students vote on their favorite way to eat strawberry products and chart it on a graph. Have the students analyze data from the graph and count or tally the votes. Finish the activity with a strawberry party with “their” favorite product as a snack.

### **Fraction Fun**

This story is a great introduction to fractions (one half). Reread the story and refer to the pages where the mouse cuts the strawberry in half. Ask students their opinions for cutting a strawberry in half. Model their predictions and determine if the halves are equal or unequal. Then slice a strawberry in half the correct way (in the middle, top to bottom for two equal parts).

### **Recreate the Story**

Have students rewrite the story. They should try to convince the bear why he shouldn't eat the strawberry. They will have to be creative because strawberries are a healthy snack!

### **Graphing Our Favorite Berry**

Show students a strawberry, blueberry and raspberry plant (real plants if possible). Have them compare and contrast the differences (ex. Seeds on outside of fruit, size, color, shape) Allow students to taste each kind and graph his or her favorite berry. Analyze and discuss the data.

### **Create a Recipe**

Have students use creativity and write a recipe in his or her own words of their favorite type of strawberry dessert.

### **Strawberry Playdough and Activity**

Have students create a strawberry from the story using playdough. Then have them make other strawberries from the playdough in various sizes and compare and order them based on size. Here is a great recipe!

- 1 cup flour
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (I used baby oil)
- 1 package un-sweetened strawberry Kool-Aid
- 1/4 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1 cup water

Mix flour, salt, cream of tartar and Kool-Aid in a medium saucepan. Add water and oil. Stir over medium heat 3 to 5 minutes. When mixture forms a ball in pan, remove. Knead until smooth. Store in a covered plastic container.

**Here is a link for a Read-Aloud of The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry and the Big Hungry Bear: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ttt7Hzx1h1g>**

Activities and lesson plans for Prek – 5<sup>th</sup> grade based on strawberries can be found North Carolina Ag in the Classroom website at:

<http://www.ncagintheclassroom.com/Curricula.aspx>

Be sure to type “Strawberry” in the search box.