

An Ode to
FALL
Activity Booklet



Autumn Equinox Facts & Folklore

The autumnal equinox—also called the September or fall equinox—is the astronomical start of the fall season in the Northern Hemisphere and of the spring season in the Southern Hemisphere.

FALL EQUINOX FAQs

Q: ARE DAY AND NIGHT PERFECTLY EQUAL ON THE EQUINOX?

A: Some say that during an equinox, day and night is equal. Well, not exactly. It depends on where you live.

On the equinox, the center of the Sun is indeed above the horizon for 12 hours. However, “sunrise” is said to begin when the upper edge of the Sun’s disk becomes visible above the horizon (which happens a bit before the center rises) and ends when the entire Sun has set. In this case, daylight is still a bit longer than nighttime.

Not only that, but the Sun is actually visible when it is below the horizon, as Earth’s atmosphere refracts the Sun’s rays and bends them in an arc over the horizon. Yes, you can see the Sun before the edge actually reaches the horizon! This causes daylight to be longer than 12 hours as well.

Q: IS THE AUTUMNAL EQUINOX REALLY THE FIRST DAY OF FALL?

A: Based on the astronomical definition of seasons, yes, the autumnal equinox does mark the first day of fall (in the Northern Hemisphere). However, according to the meteorological definition of seasons, which is based on temperature cycles and the Gregorian calendar, the first day of fall is September 1.

Q: CAN YOU BALANCE AN EGG ON THE EQUINOX?

A: There’s an old-wife’s tale that you can stand an egg on its end of the equinox. Well, yes, it’s true (and fun to try). But it’s not only on the equinox.

ANCIENT AUTUMN TRADITIONS

- The fall equinox has been a day of celebration for cultures since ancient days. People tracked the transitions of the Earth’s journeys around the Sun.
- At Machu Picchu in Peru, an ancient stone monument called Intihuatana—which means “Hitching Post of the Sun”—serves as a solar clock to mark the dates of the equinoxes and solstices.
- In Mexico, the Mayans built a giant pyramid called Chichen Itza. On the equinoxes, it looks as if a snake made of light slithers down the pyramid’s steps.
- In England, Stonehenge was also built with the equinoxes and solstices in mind.



Let's Play Fall Jeopardy!

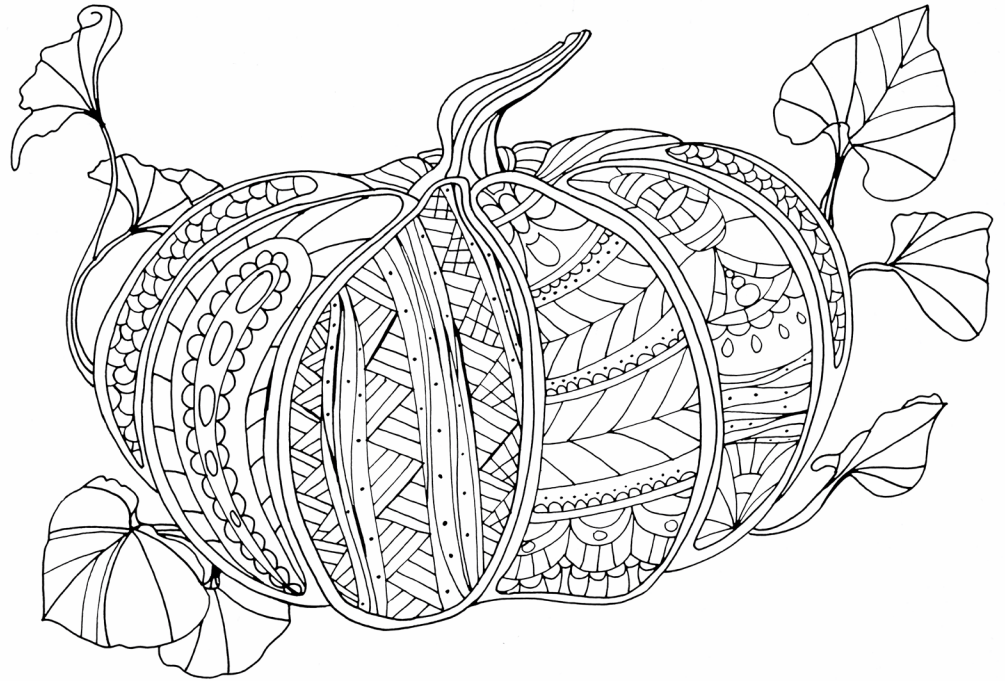
The good thing about this Jeopardy game is that you can play it any way that you like! Keep up with the points you earn and see how many you score. Remember to state your answer as a question, and take away points for wrong answers.

Pumpkins	Thanksgiving Dinner	Science of Fall	Fall Facts	Pilgrims
100 In this fairytale a pumpkin is used as a very important means of transportation	100 How does the Thanksgiving day parade conclude?	100 The full moon which occurs closest to the autumnal equinox.	100 Another name for heat waves, or summer weather that can happen, later into the fall season.	100 This is the number of days it took the Mayflower to cross the Atlantic.
200 What is the importance of Illinois to pumpkins	200 Under this president Thanksgiving became an annual holiday?	200 This is what the wobbly red piece of flesh on top of the beak of a turkey is called?	200 What sport do people commonly watch on Sundays during fall?	200 What eating utensil was not found at the harvest of 1621?
300 About how many seeds does each pumpkin have?	300 This food was present at the first Thanksgiving but is rarely eaten at Thanksgiving now.	300 What is it called when we set our clocks back an hour?	300 What fall activity involves finding your way in a field?	300 This Native American taught the Pilgrims how to grow corn and to fish.
400 This is what a pumpkin becomes once it's carved.	400 Thanksgiving in the USA is celebrated on the 4th Thursday of Nov., but when is Canada's Thanksgiving?	400 These trees stay the same color during fall?	400 What are the two most common pies eaten on Thanksgiving?	400 The pilgrims were members of this religious group.
500 In this century the first pumpkin pies as we know them were made.	500 How long did the first Thanksgiving celebration last?	500 What do birds begin to do during the fall?	500 Despite it's name, this fall holiday is celebrated at the end of September.	500 This culture actually produced the idea of the cornucopia, the horn of plenty.



It's All About the Pumpkins!

In the United States, pumpkins go hand in hand with the fall holidays of Halloween and Thanksgiving. An orange fruit harvested in October, this nutritious and versatile plant features flowers, seeds and flesh that are edible and rich in vitamins. Pumpkin is used to make soups, desserts and breads, and many Americans include pumpkin pie in their Thanksgiving meals.



PUMPKIN FACTS

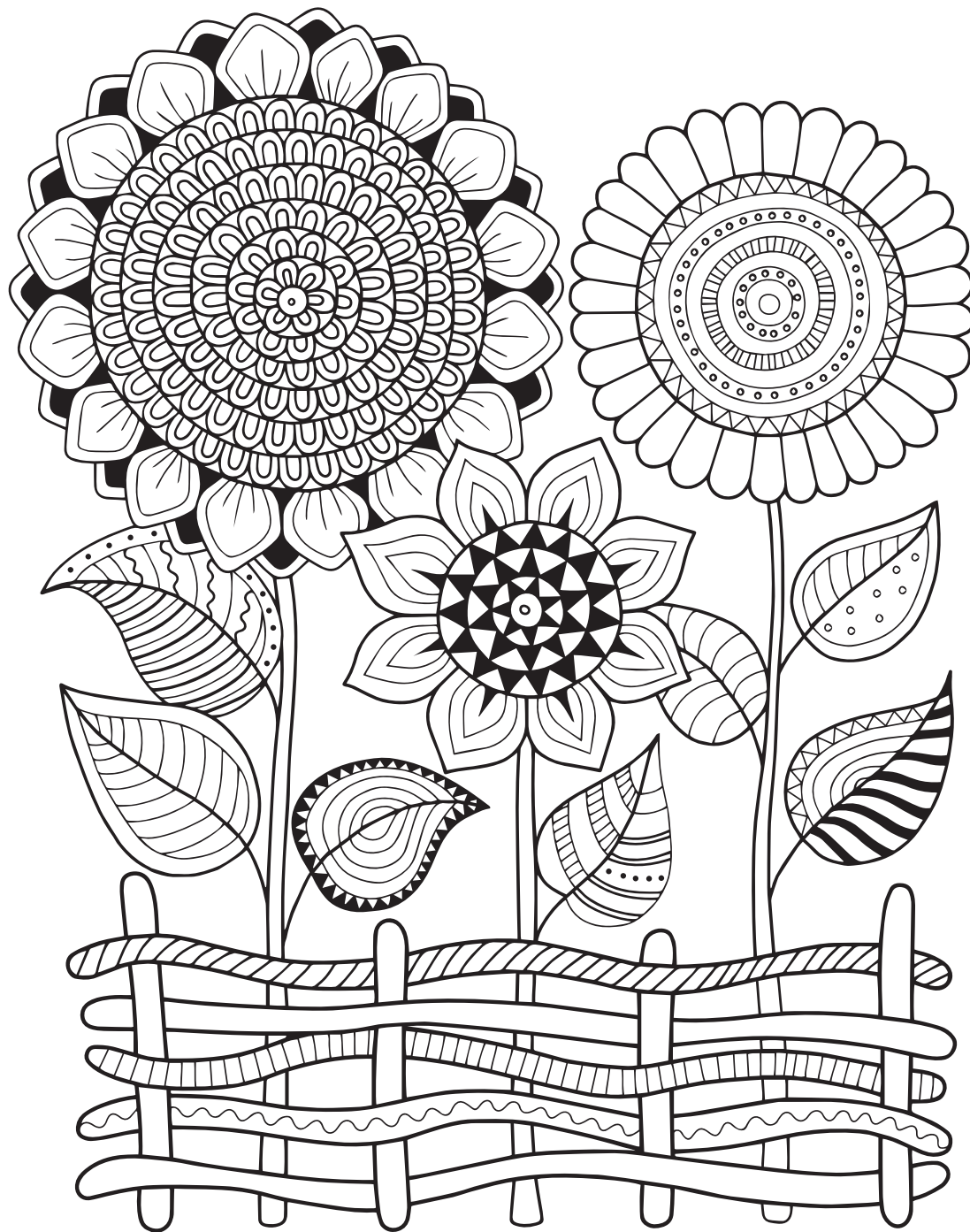
- Pumpkins are a member of the gourd family, which includes cucumbers, honeydew melons, cantaloupe, watermelons and zucchini. These plants are native to Central America and Mexico, but now grow on six continents.
- The largest pumpkin pie ever baked was in 2005 and weighed 2,020 pounds.
- Pumpkins have been grown in North America for five thousand years. They are indigenous to the western hemisphere.
- In 1584, after French explorer Jacques Cartier explored the St. Lawrence region of North America, he reported finding “gros melons.” The name was translated into English as “pompions,” which has since evolved into the modern “pumpkin.”
- Pumpkins are low in calories, fat, and sodium and high in fiber. They are good sources of Vitamin A, Vitamin B, potassium, protein, and iron.
- The heaviest pumpkin weighed 1,810 lb 8 oz and was presented by Chris Stevens at the Stillwater Harvest Fest in Stillwater, Minnesota, in October 2010.
- Pumpkin seeds should be planted between the last week of May and the middle of June. They take between 90 and 120 days to grow and are picked in October when they are bright orange in color. Their seeds can be saved to grow new pumpkins the next year.



All Things Fall

Fill in the missing letters to complete the fall items listed below

1. L _ _ _ V _ _ _
2. F _ _ _ T _ _ _ A L
3. T _ _ R _ _ _ Y
4. S _ _ A _ _ E _ _ R _ _ _
5. A _ _ _ L _ _ S
6. P _ _ M _ _ _ I _ _
7. H _ _ _ _ O _ _ E _ _ N
8. F _ _ A _ _ T
9. C O _ _ _ U C _ _ _ I A
10. C _ _ D _ _ R
11. F _ _ O T _ _ A _ _ _
12. G _ _ U R _ _
13. H _ _ Y R _ _ D _ _
14. C _ _ R _ _ M _ _ _ E
15. R _ _ _ E
16. S Q _ _ A _ _ _



SUNFLOWER

By Nicolette Lennert

Sunflower, sunflower
Turn toward the sky
Grow like a beanstalk
Ten feet high

Large golden petals
A center full of seeds
Give hungry birds
The food they need



PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

JEOPARDY ANSWERS

Pumpkins	Thanksgiving	Science of Fall	Fall Facts	Pilgrims
100 What is Cinderella	100 What is the arrival of Santa Clause?	100 What is a harvest moon?	100 What is an Indian Summer?	100 What is 66 days?
200 What is Illinois? 95% grown in Morton, IL	200 Who is Abraham Lincoln	200 What is a snood? (underneath is a waddle)	200 What is football?	200 What is the fork?
300 What is 500?	300 What is deer (venison)	300 What is daylight savings time?	300 What is a corn maze?	300 Who is Squanto?
400 What is a Jack-o-Lantern?	400 What is the second Monday of October?	400 What is the Evergreen tree?	400 What is apple and pumpkin?	400 What were Separatists?
500 What is the 17th century (1600s)	500 What is 3 days?	500 What is migration south?	500 What is Oktoberfest?	500 What is the greek culture?

ALL THINGS FALL ANSWERS:

1. Leaves
2. Festival
3. Turkey
4. Scarecrow
5. Apples
6. Pumpkin
7. Halloween
8. Feast
9. Cornucopia
10. Cider
11. Football
12. Gourd
13. Hayride
14. Corn Maze
15. Rake
16. Squash