Egg-citing eggs!

**Description**

Students investigate, diagram, and dissect an egg. They then compare their observations with a labeled diagram of an egg.

**Objectives**

Students will: learn about the parts of an egg, discover eggs as an agricultural product.

**Procedure**

1. Have students work in groups to create a drawing of an egg, including its parts and their purpose (or the egg’s general purpose). Use the drawings to launch into a class discussion.

2. Begin this activity with a discussion of what students think an egg is actually for and what the inside looks like. What might be the purpose of the parts of an egg? Pass out the observation sheets and ask students to complete Part I (see Background Information).

3. Divide students into small groups and give each group an egg. They should be making observations as if they have never seen an egg before! (Certainly most, if not all, students have experience with eggs. This activity provides the opportunity for them to carefully notice things they may have not noticed before.) Before they do anything else, they should write descriptive words about their egg. Two groups of students can compare their eggs and look for differences.

4. Have students investigate why they think eggs are of different colors. How can they tell which hen laid them?

5. Once they have fully observed the egg, students gently break it open and diagram what they see. When all groups have diagramed their eggs, ask students what they saw.

6. Distribute labeled diagrams for students to compare with their own diagrams. Groups should fully identify the parts of the egg on their sheets. What purpose does each part have for a chicken? Accept all guesses, and facilitate a discussion to lead to role of each part.

7. Why do people eat eggs? How do students think chicken eggs compare to other bird eggs? If possible, show an example of another type of egg. Do students think it has the same parts inside? Why or why not?

8. What other animals lay eggs? Students can research the eggs of other animals and describe them (i.e.: reptile eggs have leathery skin, frog eggs are small gelatinous eggs, etc.).

**Materials**

For each group of students: a variety of eggs: brown eggs, white eggs, medium, large and extra large.

For each student: an observation sheet, a diagram of the inside of an egg (see Background Information). Instruct students about safety when handling raw eggs! Wash hands thoroughly after the lesson!

**Assessment**

Label a diagram of an egg and write a one-sentence description of each part of the egg.

**Extensions**

Science: Place an egg in vinegar. What do students think will be left over? If it soaks long enough, the shell will dissolve and there will be no shell, only a membrane. Is it true that you can only balance an egg on the stilts? Why or why not?

Social Studies: Research the role of the egg as a symbol of spring and good fortune. How did this symbolism originate?

From *Farm to Table*, a curriculum connecting agriculture and everyday lives by New England Heritage Breeds Conservancy and Hancock Shaker Village, 2001-2002