

Lesson Plan: Popcorn Science

Age Group: 4th – 5th grade

Mentors: Hattie Chung and Jaime McCandless

Supplies needed:

- microwave
- at least 3 or 4 different kinds of popcorn
- plates/napkins
- Skittles (for those who don't eat popcorn)
- a poster of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Introduction:

- To teach students the scientific method.
- Teach what independent, dependent, and control variables are.
- Make a list of different variables that affect popcorn popping.
- Teach what a hypothesis is.
- Let the students make an educated guess in picking what brand will have the most/least leftover kernels.

Instructions:

- Count how many kernels are left in different brands of popcorn.
- At the end of the class, the students will have a class discussion, and decide on the best popcorn brand to buy.
- While popping the popcorn, we will also talk about electromagnetic waves, and show where microwaves fall in the spectrum.
- Microwaves: they will cook your popcorn in just a few minutes! In space, microwaves are used by astronomers to learn about the structure of nearby galaxies, including our own Milky Way!

Follow-up:

- Compare different brands of popcorn
- Ask them: were their hypotheses correct?