



# Rice is Rice, Right?



Adapted from article by David J. Larwa • *Science & Children* • Vol. 39 • Issue 1

Time	Grade Level	Content Area [s]
Thirty minutes	Grades 3-5	Life Science, Plant Characteristics

## Materials

- *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Norah Dooley
- Six different types of packaged rice
- Paper cups
- Paper plates (white and dark colored)
- Hand lenses
- Science notebook
- Markers
- Ruler

## Objective

Students will observe a variety of types of rice, recording their similarities and differences.

## Activity Outline

- 1 Label the cups with the marker one through six. In each cup, pour one sample of each type of rice. Make several sets of cups of rice so the students can work in small groups.
- 2 Begin a discussion with the class and ask them if they have had rice as part of a meal at home with their family and to describe how the rice is cooked. Allow students to ask questions of each other regarding the different rice dishes.
- 3 Read *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Norah Dooley. Discuss as a class the different types of rice found around the world and how each is used in different cultures and connect it back to rice dishes that the students may have discussed.

- 4 Distribute the sets of different rice to the student groups and ask the students to make observations for each of the rice samples using hand lenses. Use a dark colored plate to view the light-colored rice (to better allow students to see the differences). Students should record and describe the rice's shape, color, size, and texture in their science notebook.
- 5 One of the points in the narrative discusses that regardless of the type of rice, all rice does have a classification of long grain, medium grain, and short grain rice. Share this point with the students along with what defines each.
  - a. Long grain – this type is 4-5 times longer than they are wide.
  - b. Medium grain – this type is 2-3 times longer than they are wide.
  - c. Short grain – Can be confused with medium grain, but is only slightly longer than it is wide.
- 6 Ask the students to return to their observations and see if they can also determine which type of rice grain each sample is.
- 7 Once students have had a chance to examine the different samples, show them an image of a rice grain that has the parts labeled. Share with them the following ideas and asks them to see if they can observe the differences.
  - a. White rice has had the husk, bran, and germ removed.
  - b. Brown rice has had the husk removed.
- 8 Place the rice packages with samples at a learning station on display. Have the students try to identify from their observations what type of rice they described. Older students can gather additional data or information from the packages to include the name of the rice, its observable features, features identified by the packaging, nutrition facts, cooking instructions, and any recipes listed. Then, compare and contrast the information from each of the packages.

## Extensions

### Social Studies

An extension for social studies can be used in this area by asking the students to find the different countries on a world map that are discussed in the story to help them see how many different countries have a rice dish. If student's family backgrounds are from additional countries, ask them to find those on the map as well. Ask students to research where rice is grown in the United States (see internet resources).

### Language Arts

If you were Carrie in the story, have students identify questions they would ask the different families about their rice dish as she looked for her brother.

### Mathematics

Create a graph that lists the different types of rice dishes mentioned in the story and ask the students to use post it notes to create a bar graph. Students should write their name on a sticky note and place it on the graph for each different type of rice dish mentioned that they have tried.

### Science

- Discuss with students the process for growing rice by having them watch the Rice is Growing Time Lapse Video. (see internet resources)
- Ask students to compare samples of rice to other grains that are used in different foods and compare and contrast these different grains.

## Internet Resources

Rice facts information: [www.organicfacts.net/rice-types.html](http://www.organicfacts.net/rice-types.html)

Rice is Growing Time Lapse Video: [youtu.be/tbUVNBSwyLQ](https://youtu.be/tbUVNBSwyLQ)

Diagram of Rice Grain: [www.researchgate.net/profile/Norhaizan\\_Me/publication/324246893/figure/fig1/AS:623813507174400@1525740138574/The-structure-of-a-rice-grain\\_Q320.jpg](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Norhaizan_Me/publication/324246893/figure/fig1/AS:623813507174400@1525740138574/The-structure-of-a-rice-grain_Q320.jpg)

Where Rice is Grown in the US: [www.thinkrice.com/on-the-farm/where-is-rice-grown/](http://www.thinkrice.com/on-the-farm/where-is-rice-grown/)



## Safety

Check for any possible allergies before beginning this activity.