How the Three Sisters Grow Together

Visual lesson



Too crowded in one mound?

Grandpa Rafi pats a small rounded hill of brown dirt — a mound — in his sunny backyard garden bed. He holds corn seeds, bean seeds, and squash seeds. "Wait," asks Nora. "Won't three different plants crowd each other in one tiny hill?"





First sister: tall corn

Grandpa tells them how Wampanoag farmers planted these three crops together for hundreds of years, calling them the Three Sisters. First, the corn sprouts fast and shoots straight up into tall, strong green stalks reaching for the warm sun.

Second sister: climbing beans

Next come the beans! Bean plants grow long curling vines that need something strong to hold onto, so they wind right up the sturdy corn stalks. Under the dirt, tiny helpers on the bean roots also feed the soil so the tall corn stays healthy.





Third sister: wide squash leaves

Last comes the squash, spreading wide green leaves all across the bottom of the mound. Look at the bright hot sun shining down on two spots in the garden: one bare patch of open dirt, and one patch tucked underneath the wide squash leaves!

TALK ABOUT IT

After a hot sunny afternoon, which soil will stay cool and damp?

A prickly leafy umbrella

Yes! Those huge leaves work like a shady sun-umbrella, keeping water inside the cool dirt so all three plants can drink. Even better, squash stems feel prickly! Owen giggles as a curious little rabbit sniffs a prickly stem and hops right back into the grass.

> **TALK ABOUT IT**
> Tap what acts like a shady umbrella for the damp soil at the bottom of the mound.





Every sister has a job

By golden autumn, Grandpa Rafi's mound is bursting with golden corn ears, plump bean pods, and bright orange squash! Nora and Owen trace how none of the three plants had to grow all alone — each one did a different job so the whole garden could thrive.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do the climbing bean plants help the tall corn grow strong?

Teamwork at our table

Inside Grandpa's cozy kitchen, warm roasted squash, sweet corn, and green beans steam gently in bowls on the table. Owen drops a paper autumn leaf with a tiny crayon pumpkin into the Thankful Jar. Just like the Three Sisters, families grow stronger when everyone helps!



Check your wonder

1 **What job does the tall corn do for the bean vines?**

- **A.** It stands tall like a sturdy ladder to climb
- **B.** It shades the dirt flat on the ground
- **C.** It scares away hungry rabbits with prickly stems

2 **Why do the wide squash leaves help on a hot sunny day?**

- **A.** They shade the dirt so it stays cool and damp
- **B.** They lift the corn higher into the sky
- **C.** They turn the dirt into rain

3 **How do the bean plants help the whole mound underground?**

- **A.** Tiny helpers on their roots feed the soil
- **B.** They dig tunnels for rabbits
- **C.** They paint the pumpkins orange

ANSWERS 1-A 2-A 3-A

1. Yes! The tall strong corn stalks give the bean vines a ladder to climb. 2. Right! The wide leaves work like a shady sun-umbrella over the soil. 3. Yes! The bean roots add food back into the soil so the corn grows strong.

THE END

Visual lesson



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