SCIENCE

Scientific Popcorn Party

Welcome students to a new school year with a popcorn party. Bring in a hot-air popper, unpopped popcorn, and a tea kettle and hot plate. Before beginning, give each student a popcorn kernel to examine. Ask: *Why do you think popcorn pops?* Discuss responses, then tell students you are going to give them a demonstration that will provide more information.

- Fill the kettle with water and bring it to a boil. Guide students to notice the steam escaping. Ask students to explain what is happening. (*As the water heats up it turns to steam, which rises out of the kettle.*)
- Explain that each popcorn kernel has a tiny bit of water hidden inside it. Ask: *Now that you see what happens when water is heated, can you guess why popcorn pops?* At this point many students will begin to understand that as the popcorn kernels are heated, the water expands as steam and literally pushes open the kernel and pops it.
- Now, you can finally make that popcorn and enjoy it with your new students! Share a popcorn poem, too! (See "Popcorn," right.)

Popcorn

Pop, pop, popcorn,
popping in the pot!
Pop, pop, popcorn,
eat it while it's hot!
Pop, pop, popcorn,
butter on the top!
When I eat popcorn,
I can't stop!

Helen H. Moore

Teacher Share

MATH

Knots on a Counting Rope

Keeping track of the number of days of school has to begin right away (especially if you want to celebrate that 100th day of school later on). Here's one fun and physical way to do it. Using a long piece of rope or clothesline (30 feet should be enough), tie a knot for each day of school. Let children paint every fifth knot yellow and every tenth knot red. Through this pattern, children can practice counting by ones, fives, and tens. The rope really helps children "take hold" of math skills and concepts, letting them see and touch patterns and relationships found in simple counting.

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