




# VICTORY GARDENS

Lesson and Activity Suggestions for Kindergarten - 2nd grade

## Sunflowers

As you learned in the first lesson, Victory Gardens were planted at home in the United States while American soldiers were fighting World War II far away in other countries. Food was in short supply and Americans were asked to plant gardens to make sure that families had healthy foods. Children planted Victory Gardens at their schools, adults planted Victory Gardens at their place of work, and no matter where they lived, in the city or in the country, families planted Victory Gardens together. When the fruits and vegetables were harvested, families, neighbors, and co-workers shared the food they had grown. Food could be eaten fresh or canned for later use in the winter. Everyone worked together and everyone shared.



**Who Could Participate?**

Victory Gardens were promoted as family fun, as good healthy recreation for all ages. Farmers were encouraged to plant gardens for family needs as well as their usual cash crop. Those living in small towns or suburbs were the best candidates for Victory Gardens. Interestingly, the Department of Agriculture discouraged city-dwellers from gardening, afraid of seed being wasted on poor soil and poor lighting.

**Where Were Gardens Grown?**

Victory Gardens sprang up on farms, in backyards, and on city rooftops. Even some windowboxes were converted from flowers to vegetables. Communal gardens were planted in parks and vacant lots and baseball fields. Sites for these gardens included San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, the Portland Zoo in Oregon, and Boston's Copley Square and Fenway Victory Gardens. The Fenway site is still an active Victory Garden today.

War plants often planted gardens on their properties for use in company cafeterias, and schoolyard gardens provided fresh vegetables for school lunches.

Included in your Victory Garden starter kit was a packet of sunflower seeds. Today, we are going to take a look at the lifecycle of a sunflower and do a fun art activity where you can make a family sunflower masterpiece.

# Sunflower Facts and Parts

The official flower of Kansas is the sunflower and our state is often called "The Sunflower State." In late summer through fall, you can see sunflowers blooming all over the ditches and fields of Kansas.

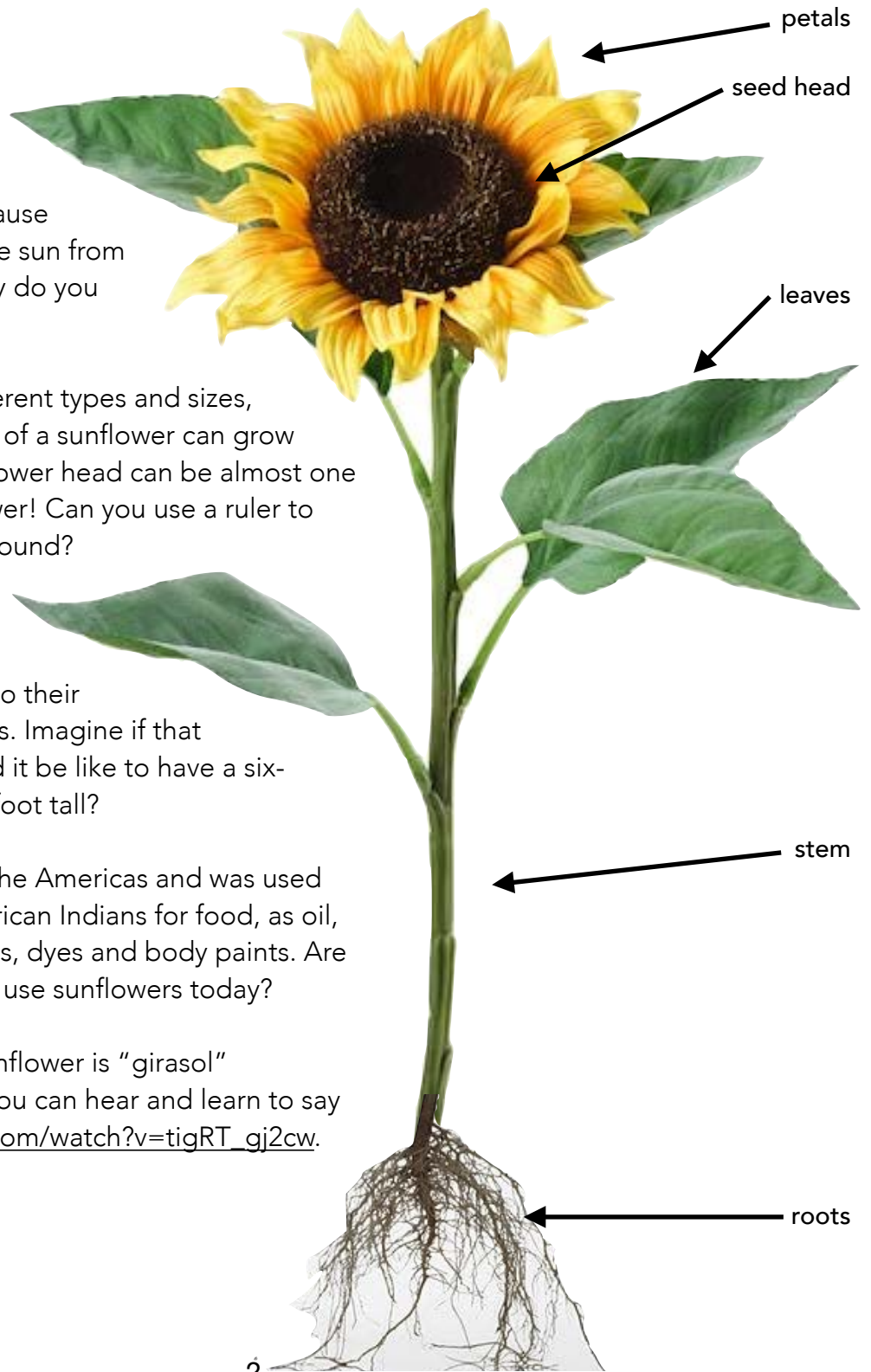
Sunflowers got their name not only because they resemble the sun with rays shooting out of a middle circle, but also because young sunflowers follow the sun from east to west every day. Why do you think they would do that?

Sunflowers come in all different types and sizes, but did you know the stem of a sunflower can grow up to 10 feet tall and the flower head can be almost one foot wide? That's a big flower! Can you use a ruler to measure that out on the ground?

Sunflowers are very fast growing plants. In the right conditions, they can grow to their full height in just six months. Imagine if that was a human?! What would it be like to have a six-month old baby who is 10 foot tall?

The sunflower is native to the Americas and was used extensively by Native American Indians for food, as oil, in bread, medical ointments, dyes and body paints. Are there other ways we like to use sunflowers today?

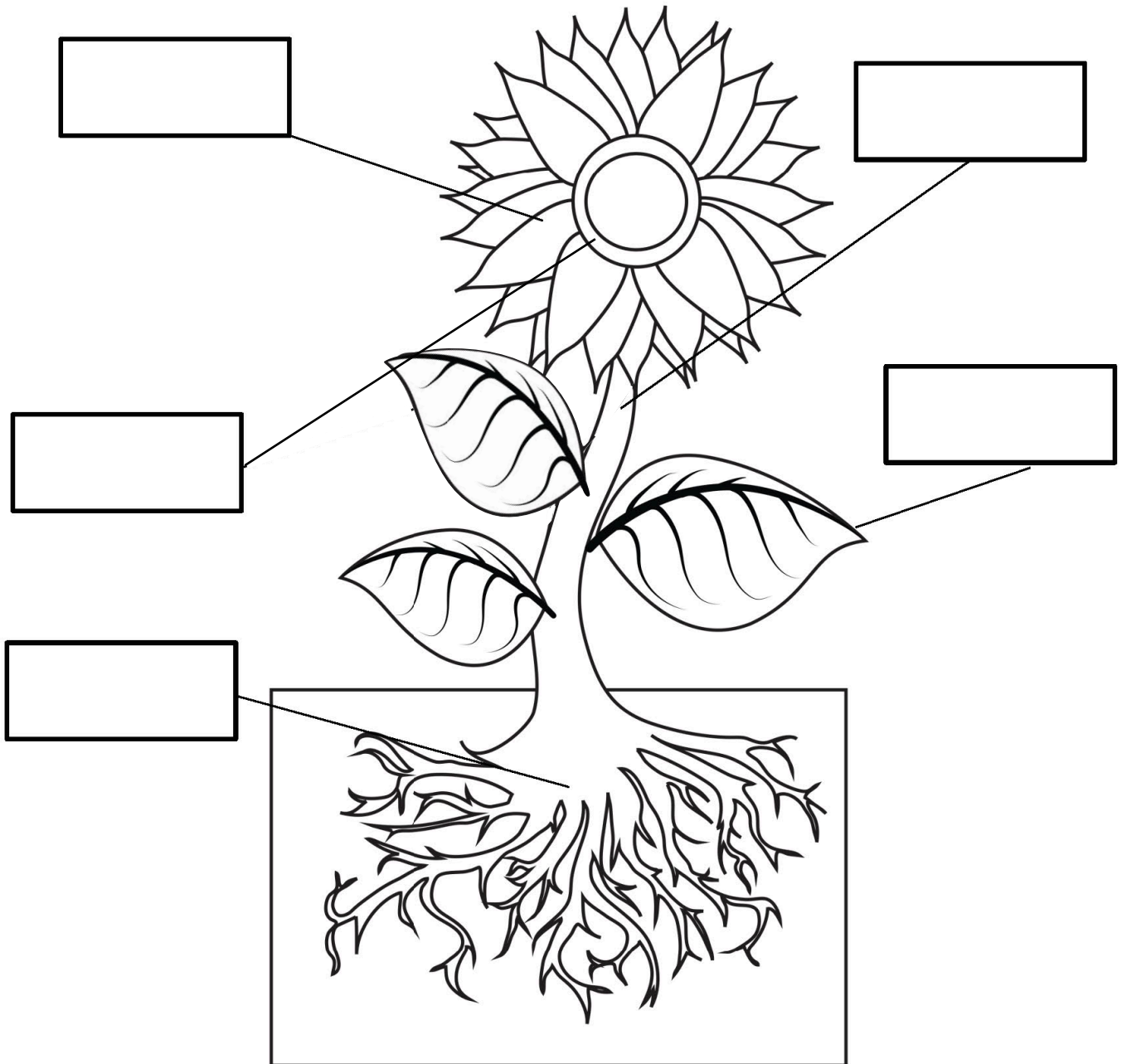
In Spanish, the word for sunflower is "girasol" pronounced "He-ra-sol." You can hear and learn to say it at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tigRT\\_gj2cw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tigRT_gj2cw).



# Label the Parts of the Sunflower

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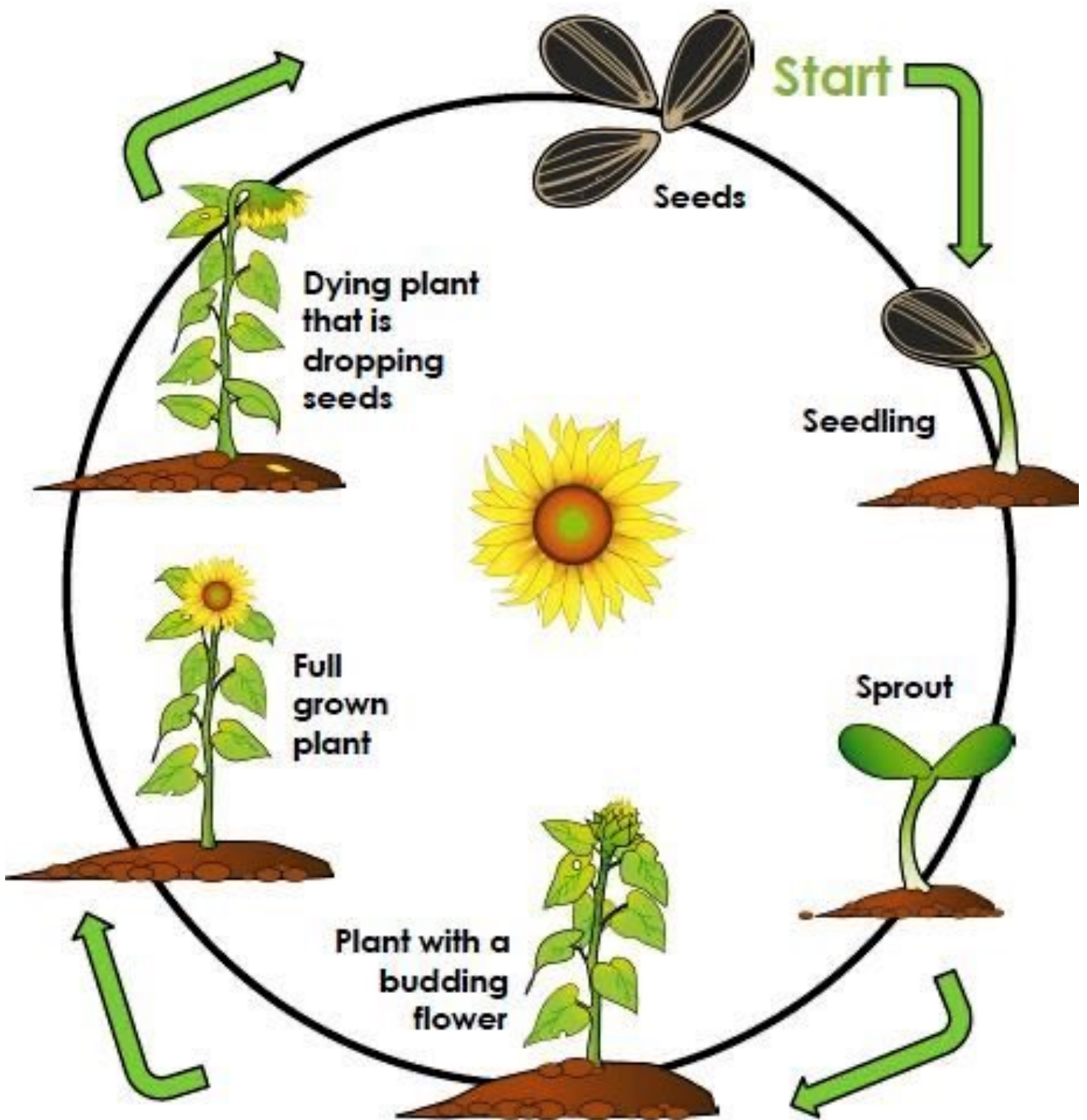
Use words from the bank to label the parts of the sunflower.  
Color it when you are finished.



**Word Bank:** leaves, seed head, roots, petals

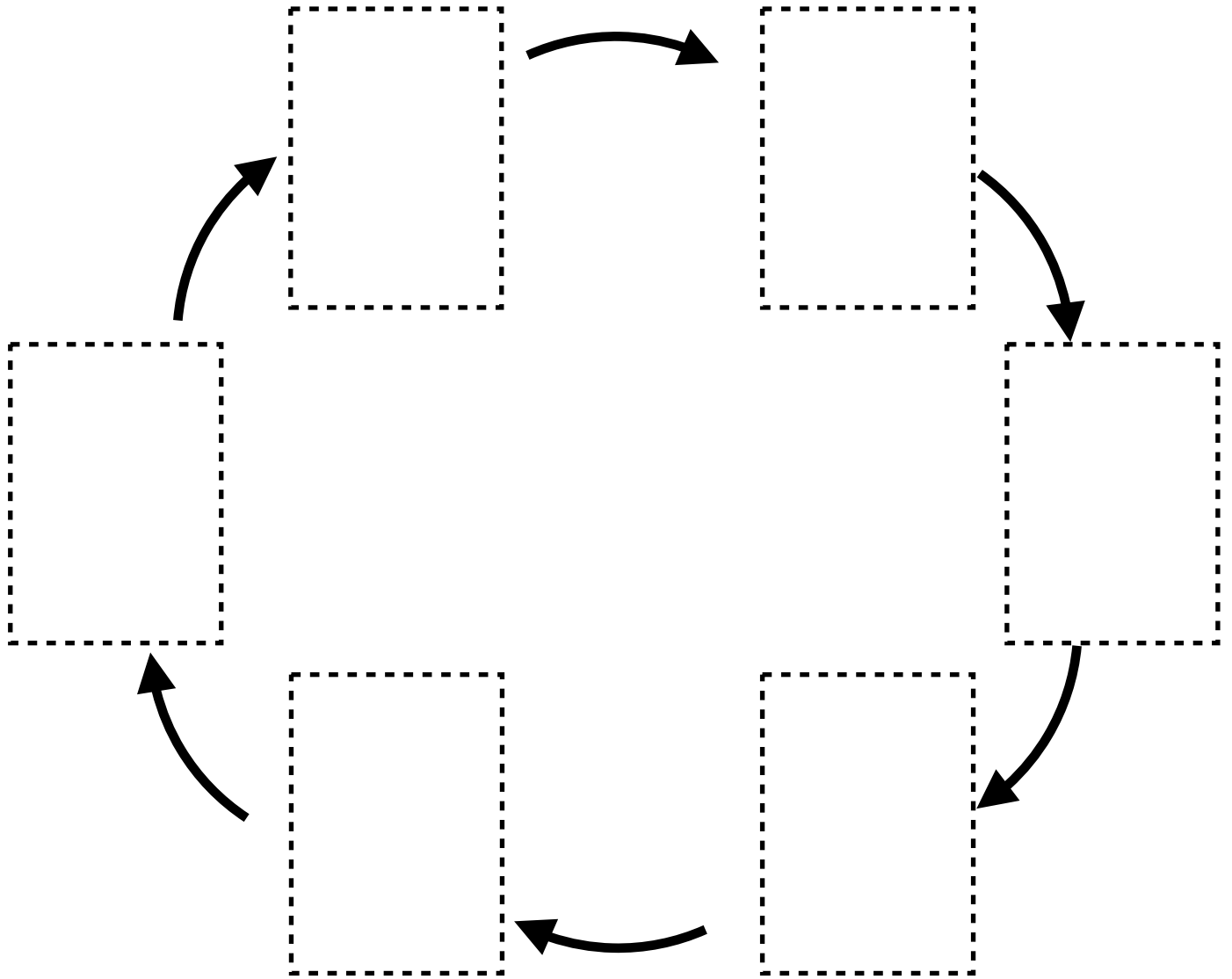


# Sunflower Life Cycle



# Life Cycle of the Sunflower

Cut out the pictures of the sunflower plant at different stages of life.  
Then paste them in the correct order.





## Van Gogh's Sunflowers

Famous Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh did a series of paintings of sunflowers in 1888 and 1889. He named them *Sunflowers*. Examine four of Van Gogh's versions (below). If you would like to see them closer, go to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunflowers\\_\(Van\\_Gogh\\_series\)#/media/File:Vincent\\_Van\\_Gogh\\_-\\_Three\\_Sunflowers\\_F453.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunflowers_(Van_Gogh_series)#/media/File:Vincent_Van_Gogh_-_Three_Sunflowers_F453.jpg).

Which one is your favorite Why?  
Which two versions are the most alike?

Can you spot the differences in each version?  
Which version is the most different?



## Now You Try!

Just as Van Gogh did many different versions of his sunflowers, many other people have tried to imitate his sunflower painting. Surely the world's largest replica is found along 1-70 at Goodland, Kansas. It is 24 feet wide by 32 feet tall and sits on an 80-foot easel that weighs about 40,000 pounds! If you're not driving that way any time soon, you can still visit it at <https://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/9183>.



Now try our hand at creating a vase of sunflowers.

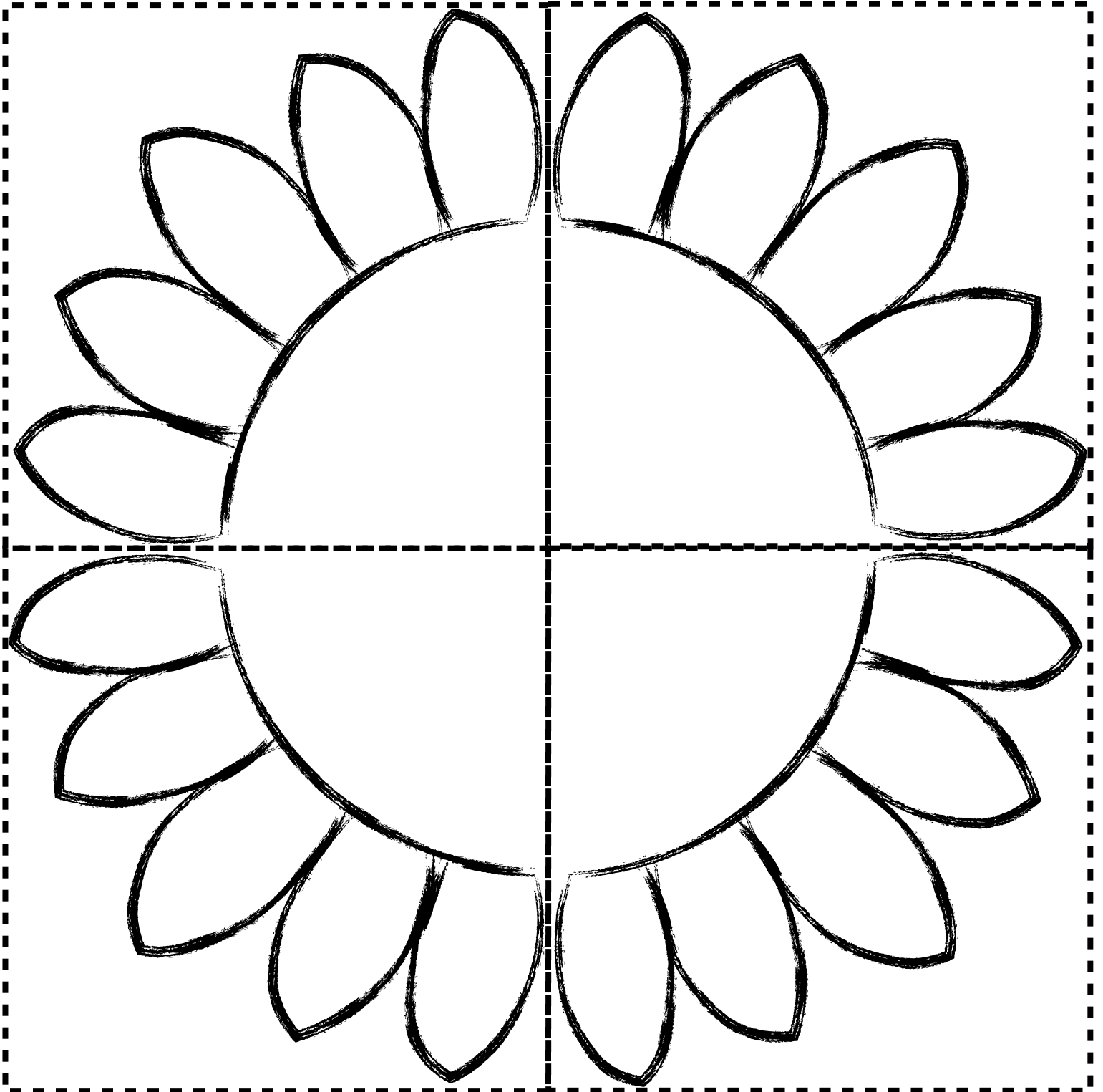
1. Make 4 copies of the outline of a sunflower head on the next page.
2. Divide them into fourths by cutting along the dotted lines.
3. Pass them all out to your family members (and yourself!)
4. Tell each person to color their pieces in any way they want and with any medium they want (medium examples: paints, crayons, colored pencils, or markers). The only rule is that they can only use the colors yellow, orange, green and brown.
5. Have everyone place their pieces on a table or floor with the colored side facing down. Mix them around so no one knows which pieces were which.
6. Each person takes a turn choosing four of the pieces to turn over and then put them together as one flower.
7. Use tape to secure the pieces together into four new flowers.
8. Tape or glue a straw, popsicle stick, or small branch to hold up each flower as the stem.
9. If you want, cut out some green leaves to also tape onto the stem.
10. Put your new flowers into a vase or cup.

Now, step back and admire your Sunflower masterpiece!

Take a photo and share it with us on social media!



Make 4 copies of this page and follow the directions on the previous page to create your own vase of sunflowers. If you do not have access to a printer, just put blank paper on top of the screen you are viewing this on and trace over the lines.





Following are some books that can be found on your Epic! app. Using the search bar, find the titles below to continue learning more about sunflowers.

