



Grade 4 Harvesting Demonstration Resource:

What You Should Know About Wheat

1. Wheat is a member of the grass family. In the field it can reach 0.6 to 0.9 metres tall.
2. There are five kinds of wheat grown in Canada – bread wheat, amber durum wheat, utility wheat, hard red spring and soft white winter wheat.
 - a. *Bread wheats* are usually spring wheats which are sown in early spring and harvested in the fall.
 - b. *Amber durum wheats* are used in manufacturing of pasta products.
 - c. *Utility wheats* are used mainly as feed for livestock but may also be used for food purposes.
 - d. *Winter wheats* are used for food or feed purposes. They are planted during the autumn and harvested the following summer
3. Wheat was first grown in Canada in 1604 by a small group of French colonists led by Samuel de Champlain.

Wheat growing expanded and in 1654 Canada exported its first cargo of wheat overseas. Eventually, this small trickle grew into an annual production of more than 13.6 million tonnes of wheat that has flowed to all countries of the world.

4. In Canada, wheat is grown on about 10 million hectares. Most of this land area is in the Prairie Provinces; Saskatchewan (7 million hectares), Alberta (2.2 million hectares) and Manitoba (1.5 million hectares).
5. Dry weather is very important so that the crop can be harvested at the peak of condition. There must be as little moisture as possible in the grain; otherwise, it will spoil in storage. The soil must be dry to allow heavy harvest machines to operate. When binders were used, they cut the grain stalks and tie them in bundles or sheaves. Sheaves were stooked and left in the field a few days to dry before being threshed. Swathers and combines have replaced binders in today's grain harvesting operations. Grain combines, as the name implies, combine two operations – picking up the grain from the field and threshing it at the same time.