

Here Today, Gone Tomato Game Instructor Guide

Use the “Here Today, Gone Tomato” slide deck to introduce the game and its instructions. Each game has 2 parts: a planting/growing season and a selling season. In the slide deck, each season has a “home base” slide with links to all of the possible scenarios; each scenario then links back to the “home base”. Alternatively, you may choose to print out each of the growing and selling scenarios on cardstock and play the game as a card game (randomly dealing scenarios for each season) rather than projecting and clicking through the slides. Either way is fine!

Before beginning the game, you’ll need to provide students (individually, in pairs, or in small groups) with the list of tomato modifications. Ideally, this will be printed, but it may also be projected. After reviewing the options, students will select a certain number or value of these modifications to include in their tomato crop. They need to note which modifications were chosen and will also be doing some math, so scratch paper will be helpful. For the purpose of the game, all 100 tomatoes in their starting crop will contain all of the selected modifications. It’s helpful to be transparent with the students about the purpose of this activity - we want them to have fun playing and trying to win, but we also want them to learn something new in the process. All of the modifications are pulled from the literature - many are not commercially available, but the science is factual. Many of the scenarios are rooted in reality, but some are obviously embellished.

Planting and Growing Season:

After all students/groups have selected their modifications, it’s time to plant and grow their modified crops. But just as in real life, events will occur that affect the growth - these events are random, and they will not all affect all tomatoes equally! To guide students through the base game growing season, you will randomly select* four scenarios. Process each scenario in order; students will gain or lose tomatoes from the starting number (100 in the base game) after each scenario. Some students’ tomato crops will not be affected by a particular scenario. Students will need time to read through the scenario and then determine whether their tomatoes were affected. Before moving on to the next scenario, discuss as a class which modification(s) were impacted. Some scenarios are more obvious than others, so this is an ideal time to discuss! After the last scenario is processed, students should have an ending number of tomato plants.

Selling Season:

It’s now time to sell the tomato plants! Just as in the growing season, events will occur that affect the market value of tomato plants. These events will not affect all types of tomatoes equally, and they will vary from game to game. Before starting, students will first convert their remaining tomato plants into a dollar value (in the base game, each plant is worth \$2). The scenarios will then affect the value of the crop sold. After students have determined their cash value, randomly select* three selling scenarios. After each scenario, the value of the students’ tomato crop may increase, decrease, or remain the same. Make sure to have the students calculate their value before moving on to the next scenario.

Determining a Winner:

The group or student who made the most money this year is the winner! Depending on your students, you may choose to reward them with a small prize - we’ve found that stickers and candy both go over well.

*Tips for random scenario selection: Use a random number generator, use a spin wheel (physical or online), or roll dice (physical or online). Students enjoy being involved in this process.

Game Variations:

We've found that students are eager to play the game multiple times. Here are some suggestions for replaying the game:

- Play the game in different configurations (individual, pairs, small groups)
- Limit or group the modifications that students can select. For example,
 - Make multiple versions of the modifications list; each list contains a subset of modifications to select from, so each game is different
 - Group the modifications into categories and limit the number of modifications that students can select in each category (e.g., up to 1 from group A, 2 from group B, etc.)
 - Print small modification cards so that only a limited number of students can select a particular modification. For example, print 6 copies of each modification for a class of 30 students.
- Play the "Money Manager" variation included in the "Here Today, Gone Tomato" slide deck.
- Challenge the students to write additional scenarios for the growing and/or selling seasons and then include those in the game.