

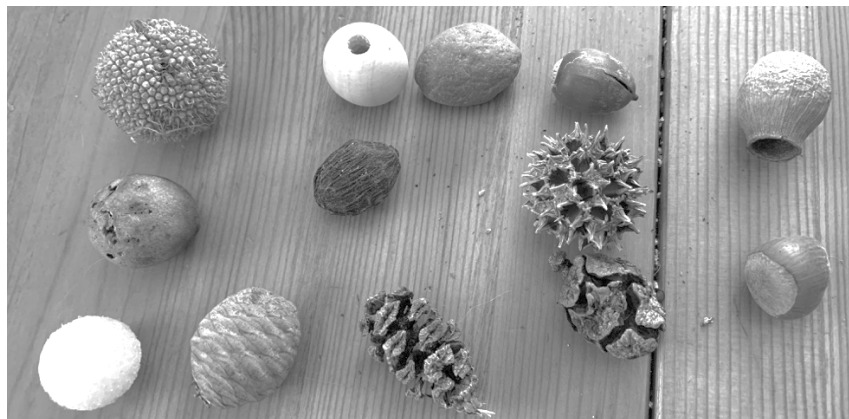
The Raccoon Game

Raccoons have very agile and sensitive paws. The sensitivity is improved when they put their food in water (they are not intentionally washing it). Wetting the food may also help soften it to pry it apart. Let's see how sensitive our "paws" are! Here's an activity to do with kids in the classroom.



Prep: Get six knee-high socks (or more), where you can't see into the toe by looking in the top. Collect various things of nature (with maybe a couple manufactured), including seed pods, that are round or round-ish, as many of each item as you have socks, plus a teacher's collection.

Below are what I found: Seed pods from sycamore, sweetgum (liquidambar), and eucalyptus trees, two different fir cones, a juniper cone, a dried olive, a stone, an acorn, a hazelnut; plus a wooden ball and a Styrofoam ball. Depending on where you live, you might find different items.



Put one of each of the items in the bottom of each sock, plus one in a container for yourself where you can see all the items. Give a sock to every seventh student. (You can make one for everyone, but that's a lot of socks, a lot of collecting, and a lot of storage space.)

Select an item, hold it up and name it, and ask each student holding a sock to reach in, without looking, and—just by feel—find the same item that you are holding. Each child holds up her/his item to see if it matches yours. The sock then passes to the next child, and you repeat. Keep going until at least every child has had a chance, and maybe twice around or more.