

# Oak Gall



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Look at that tree! Do you see those funny bumps on its leaves and branches? They are called oak galls!

Tiny insects, like little wasps, make these galls. A mommy wasp lays her tiny egg on an oak tree. Then, the tree grows a special bumpy home around the egg. This bumpy home is the gall.

The gall keeps the baby wasp safe inside. It also gives the baby wasp food to eat. When the baby wasp grows big enough, it makes a tiny hole and flies out!

Oak galls can look different. Some are round like little apples. Some are small bumps on leaves. They can be green, yellow, pink, or brown. Most of the time, oak galls do not hurt big oak trees. They are just a part of nature! Long, long ago, people even used oak galls to make special black ink for writing! Isn't that cool?



## Step 1: Egg

A tiny wasp lays an egg inside an oak's leaf bud or twig.

## Step 2: Injection

The wasp injects chemicals that hijack the tree's growth hormones.

## Step 3: Growth

The tree grows the gall tissue around the larva.

## Step 4: Shelter

The gall provides the larva with both food and a protective home.

1. What are the funny bumps on oak trees called?
  - (a) flower
  - (b) apple
  - (c) oak gall
  
2. Who makes oak galls?
  - (a) Birds
  - (b) Tiny insects (like wasps)
  - (c) Humans
  
3. What is inside an oak gall?
  - (a) Baby insect
  - (b) Fruit
  - (c) Small birds
  
4. What color can oak galls be?
  - (a) only green
  - (b) only brown
  - (c) SGreen, yellow, pink, or brown
  
5. What did people use oak galls for a long time ago?
  - (a) to make ink
  - (b) to eat
  - (c) to make toys

### **Fun Activities!**

Draw a Picture! Draw an oak tree with some oak galls on it. Make the galls look like little round homes for the baby insects!