



Pigs

Curriculum links:

- **Science** Living things
Environmental awareness and care
- **Geography** Human environments
- **SPHE** Myself and the wider world

Lesson objectives:

To revise material covered in previous modules. To make students aware that there is more than one breed of pig. To discuss the many different products that pigs provide us with.

Teacher guidelines

It is suggested that teachers ensure that students are familiar with the vocabulary and concepts introduced in the previous modules before starting this lesson.

Keywords and concepts introduced in previous modules:

sow boar piglet litter snout crubeen tail meat
ham rashers sausages farrowing teat pork bacon

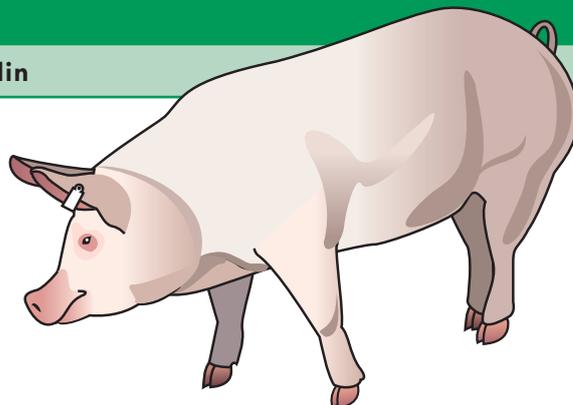
A female pig is called a sow, a male pig is called a boar and a young pig is called a piglet. Pigs eat meal, which is made up of cereals. A pig's foot is called a crubeen. Pigs are not dirty animals. They keep their beds very clean and go to the toilet in a dark corner away from where they sleep. Pigs provide us with pork, bacon, sausages, black and white pudding, leather and bristles to make brushes. Sows give birth to approximately thirteen piglets, this is called farrowing. The young piglets drink milk from the sows' teats.

Keywords for this lesson:

breeds truffles omnivores insulin

Fun fact!

Have you heard the phrase "to sweat like a pig"? This is not possible. Pigs do not sweat!



Pigs in Ireland

In the past, pigs were forest animals. Pigs are mentioned in Irish legends e.g. the story of Diarmuid and Gráinne. Wild pigs rooted around in woodland, using their snouts to search for acorns and seeds. Certain types of wild pigs still exist in parts of the world.

In Ireland there are no wild pigs left. Instead, pigs are farmed for their meat such as pork, bacon and ham. More than half of all pigs in Ireland are found in just four counties – Cork, Cavan, Tipperary and Waterford. We have many different breeds of pigs, with the Large White and the Landrace being the most common. Tamworth pigs are an ancient **breed** of pig also found in Ireland. They are the oldest surviving rare pure breed pig in the British Isles and part of their heritage is Irish. They are suitable for outdoor rearing due to their red/gold hair that makes them resistant to sunburn in hot weather. Pigs eat a variety of feedstuffs such as apples, potatoes, vegetable peelings, hay, silage, fodder beet and grains.

Truffles

Pigs have an excellent sense of smell. In certain parts of Italy and France, pigs have been trained to sniff out **truffles**. A truffle is a precious fungus that lies buried under the ground, many people consider them a delicacy and they are very expensive! The only problem with training the pigs to hunt for truffles is that sometimes the pigs will gobble the truffles up themselves!

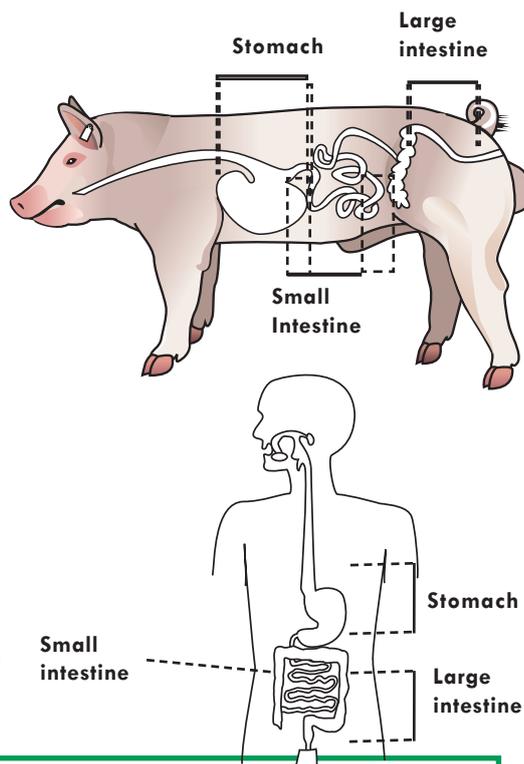
Interesting links between humans and pigs

Unlike other farm animals, pigs are **omnivores**. An omnivore is an animal that is naturally able to eat both plants and animals. Humans are also omnivores and the digestive systems of humans and pigs are similar.

(Contrast with ruminant stomach, page 9)

In addition to the many meat products we get from pigs, they also have links to the world of medicine. Because pig insulin is similar to human **insulin**, it can be used to treat diabetics. People with diabetes have trouble producing enough insulin or using the insulin in their own blood. Pig skin can be used in the treatment of large burns in humans because it is very similar to human skin.

Sometimes, specially treated pig heart valves are implanted into humans to replace human heart valves that have been damaged by disease or injury. Since the first operation using pig heart valves in 1971, there have been tens of thousands of successful operations.



Suggested activities

- Photocopy the activity sheet on page 45
- A class poster could be developed showing the many different products that derive from pigs
- Research and write a recipe that uses pork or bacon as a main ingredient (if culturally appropriate)
- Research and prepare a fact sheet on one of the different breeds of pig we have in Ireland e.g. the Large White or the Landrace
- Research some legends/stories that feature pigs
- Research and draw a map of Ireland and highlight the counties with the highest concentration of pigs
- Visit a farm or book an Agri Aware Mobile Farm visit to your school. Discuss the appearance of pigs compared to other farm animals
- Research the parts of Ireland where most pig farming takes place. Mark these on a map of Ireland, with pig illustrations made in class
- Discuss the difference between omnivores, herbivores and carnivores and categorise farm animals into these groups
- Discuss the interrelationship(s) and interdependence between people, animals and plants and the fact that we rely on farming for food (see 'The Irish farmer', page 2)

Learning outcomes:

At the end of this lesson, students should know that there is more than one breed of pig and be aware of the many different products we get from pigs.

Additional resources:

- www.agriaware.ie



Pigs

Name: _____

Date: _____

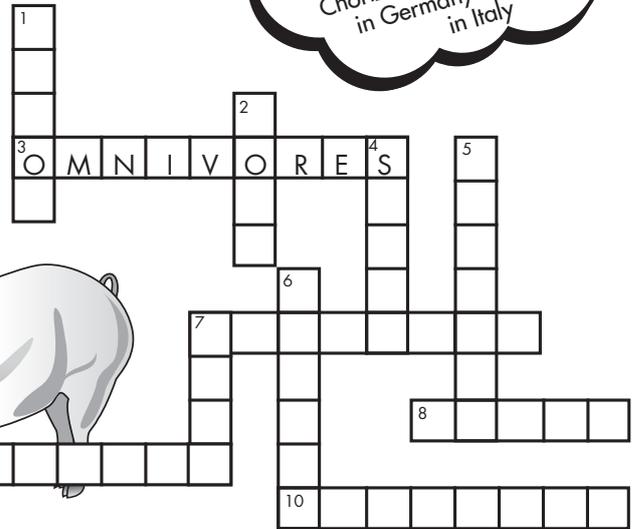
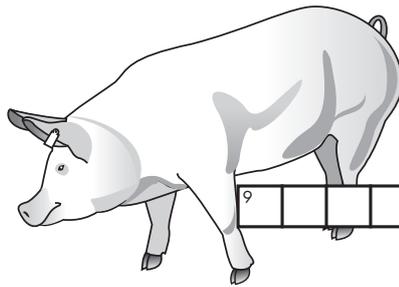
1 Use the words listed below to solve the crossword:
 snout, crubeen, bristles, bacon, litter, pork, piglet, boar, sweat, truffles

Across

- 3. Animals that eat both meat and plant food (9)
- 7. We get these from pigs to make brushes (8)
- 8. A pig's nose (5)
- 9. A group of young pigs (6)
- 10. A precious fungus that pigs are trained to find (8)

Down

- 1. Cured pig meat (5)
- 2. Fresh pig meat (4)
- 4. Something that pigs cannot do (5)
- 5. A pig's foot (7)
- 6. A young pig (6)
- 7. A male pig (4)



Did you know?
 Lots of places have their own speciality sausage: Chorizo in Spain, Frankfurters in Germany and Salami in Italy

2 Use the key to break the code and read the story on sheep

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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Example: ? & e ? & ! @ ?
 S A U S A G E S

(1) } Σ] # e \$ ☺ ? (2) = @ & ☺ > @ Σ (3) ? ; ? e = ? ;

(4) ☺ Σ @ & ☺ ? ; ! (5) > @ & Σ ☺

We get many different (1) _____ from pigs and not just meat!
 We can get (2) _____ and also bristles for making artist's brushes. Pigs can provide us with (3) _____ for treating diabetics. Also pig skin can be used for (4) _____ people with badly burnt skin. Pig (5) _____ valves can even be used to replace human heart valves that are diseased.

* To be used with teacher guidelines, page 10