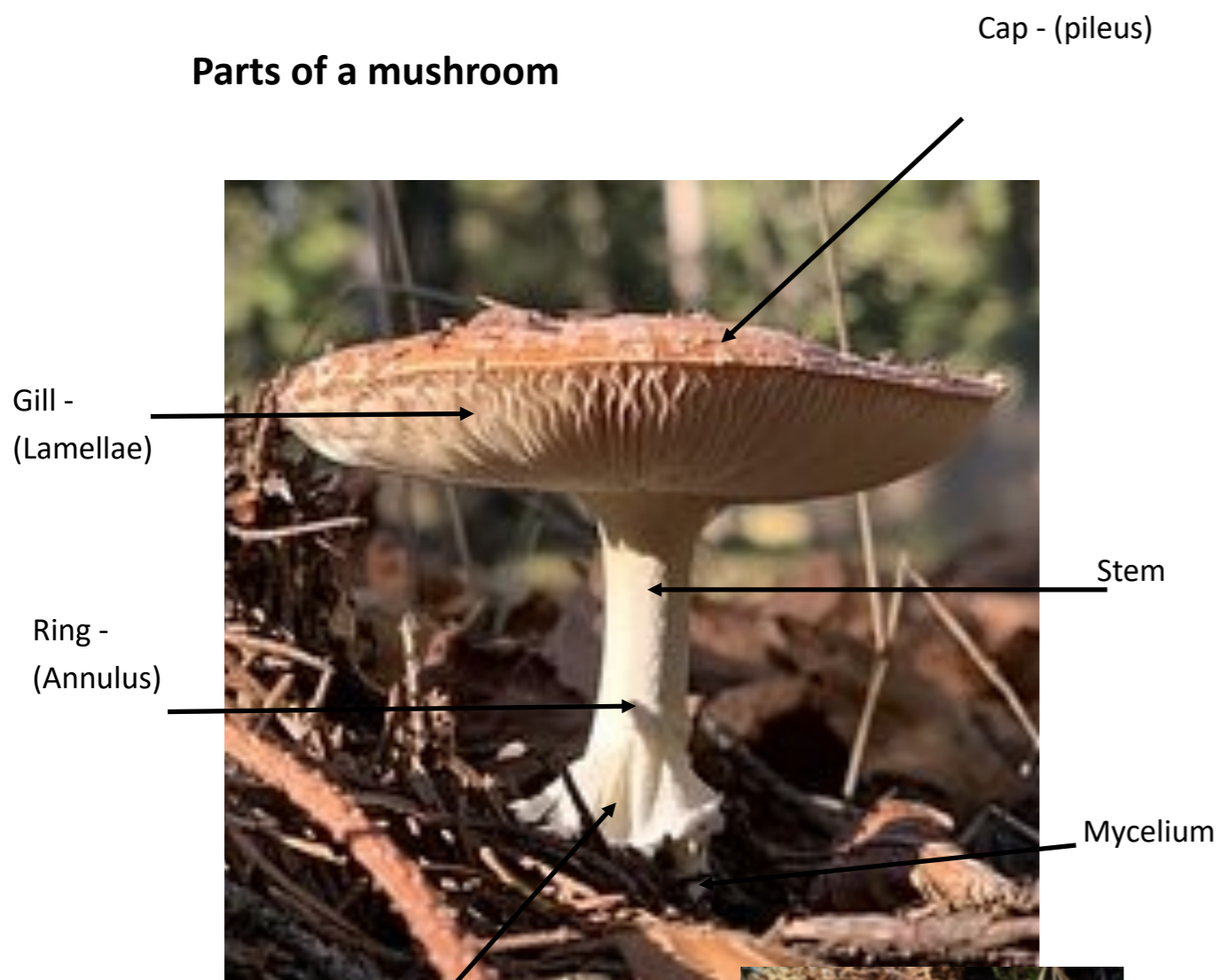




All about Mushrooms

Mushrooms are a kind of fungus that usually look like tiny umbrellas

Parts of a mushroom



What are Mushrooms?

Imagine running around in your neighbourhood park. As you are playing with your friends, you notice something different growing in the grass that wasn't there yesterday. You stop to get a closer look and notice that it looks like a small umbrella. You've just found a mushroom!

Mushrooms are a kind of fungus that usually look like umbrellas and grow in places like yards, forests, fields, and gardens.

Mushrooms are neither plants nor animals; they were reclassified in the 1960's into the separate Kingdom of Fungi.

It is a hidden kingdom. The part of the fungus that we see is only the "fruit" of the organism. The living body of the fungus is a mycelium made out of a web of tiny filaments called hyphae.

The mycelium is usually hidden in the soil, in wood, or another food source.

PARTS OF A MUSHROOM

Cap (Pileus) - The top part of the mushroom.

Cup (Volva) - A cup-shaped structure at the base of the mushroom. The basal cup is the remnant of the button (the rounded, undeveloped mushroom before the fruiting body appears). Not all mushrooms have a cup.

Gills (Lamellae) - A series of radially arranged (from the centre) flat surfaces located on the underside of the cap. Spores are made in the gills.

Mycelium- Root-like filaments that anchor the mushroom in the soil. This is made up of individual strands called Hyphae

Ring (Annulus) - A skirt-like ring of tissue circling the stem of mature mushrooms. The ring is the remnant of the veil (the veil is the tissue that connects the stem and the cap before the gills are exposed and the fruiting body develops). Not all mushrooms have a ring.

Stem (Stape) - The main support of the mushroom; it is topped by the cap. Not all mushrooms have a stem.



Mushrooms are a kind of Fungus.

Because mushrooms are a fungus and not a plant, they don't make their own food. They don't even need sunlight to grow! Imagine what it would be like to live in the dark all the time!



Though it might not sound good to you, mushrooms absorb the nutrients they need from the dead and rotting plants and animals where they live.

And when you see that little umbrella-shaped mushroom poking out of the grass, you might not know it is hiding a big secret. Most of this fungus is actually growing underneath the ground!

Mushrooms are a type of fungi and scientifically, are more closely linked to animals than to plants.

- Mushrooms grow from spores, not seeds, and a single mature mushroom will drop as many as 16 billion spores!
- Fungi recycle dead plants – they turn dead plant matter into rich soil and if it wasn't for this, Earth would be buried under several feet of waste and life wouldn't be able to continue.
- There are more than 3000 types of mushrooms and toadstools in the UK, and millions of species of fungi worldwide. Mushrooms and toadstools are basically the same thing, but generally, the word toadstool is used to describe poisonous fungi.

• Many mushrooms that grow in the wild can be very poisonous so you should NEVER pick mushrooms in the wild, always get them from reliable supermarket or grower.

Check out our fun mushroom facts for children. Learn interesting information.



- Mushrooms are also called toadstools.



- Modern studies suggest mushrooms can be useful for antibacterial, anti-inflammatories and antioxidants. While also helping to reduce blood pressure, moderate blood sugar, reduce cholesterol, enhance the immune system, reduce stress and help in fighting many types of cancer.



- Traditional Chinese medicine has utilised the medicinal properties of mushrooms for centuries.



- A single Portabella mushroom can contain more potassium than a banana.



- Mushrooms are made up of around 90% water.



- The mushroom is used in many cuisines throughout the world and it is known as the "meat" of the vegetable world



- Most mushrooms grown for human consumption today are done so in controlled, sterilized environments.



- Before the invention of synthetic dyes, mushrooms were widely used for dyeing wool and other natural fibres. Mushroom dyes are organic compounds and produce strong, vivid colours.

- The worlds largest producer of edible mushrooms is China which produces about half of all cultivated mushrooms

- There are over 30 species of mushroom that actually glow in the dark. The chemical reaction called bioluminescence produces a glowing light known as foxfire.