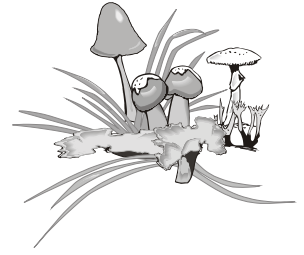


Words

- **absorb** = take in
- **appear** = show up; can be seen
- **cap** = the umbrella-like cover of a plant
- **chlorophyll** = the material that turns plants green
- **common** = well-known
- **develop** = grow
- **diameter** = from one end of a circle to the other
- **edible** = something that you can eat
- **field** = area of land with grass
- **flavour** = to give food a special taste
- **fungus - fungi** = a simple plant that has no leaves and flowers and grows on other plants or rocks
- **gill** = plate
- **organism** = something living
- **phosphorus** = yellow chemical material that starts to burn when it is in the air
- **seed** = small hard objects that a plant produces; new plants grow out of them
- **spore** = the seed of a mushroom
- **stalk** = the long part of a plant that keeps the flowers and fruits upright
- **start out** = begin
- **stem** = same as "stalk" ; the long part of a plant from which leaves and flowers grow
- **stew** = hot meal you make by putting meat and vegetables into a liquid and cooking it for a long time
- **tasty** = delicious; with a good taste
- **unfold** = open out
- **widely** = very much

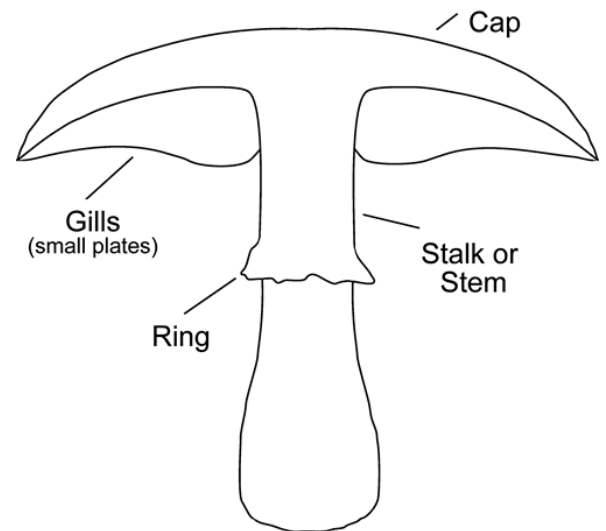
Mushrooms are small living **organisms** that look like umbrellas. They are not plants because they do not have **chlorophyll**, the green material that plants use to make food. Mushrooms get their food from the living or dead plants around them. The 3,000 types of mushrooms around the world belong to the group of **fungi**.



PARTS OF A MUSHROOM

A mushroom has two parts. The part underground is called the mycelium. It gets food for the mushroom. Sometimes it dies quickly, but if it gets enough food it may live for hundreds of years.

The umbrella-shaped body of a mushroom that we can see is called the fruit or sporophore. It only lives for a few days. The fruit **starts out** as a small button which grows into a **stalk** and a **cap**. The **stalk** or **stem** grows quickly because it can **absorb** a lot of water. As the cap becomes larger it **unfolds** like an umbrella. Soon small plates, called gills, **appear** under the mushroom's **cap**. They have small **seeds** or **spores** on them. When these spores fall off the mushroom the wind blows them away. If they fall on a warm, wet area a new mycelium **develops**.



The Parts of a Mushroom

Mushrooms can have a **diameter** of up to 40 cm. Although some may be very colourful, most mushrooms are white, brown or yellow.

EDIBLE AND POISONOUS MUSHROOMS

Some mushrooms are eaten as **tasty** food. We use them to **flavour** meat or soup or mix them into salads. They have a lot of vitamin B in them, as well as minerals like iron and **phosphorus**.

The **common field** mushroom is normally white with brown or pink **gills**. They are often grown in dark wet rooms where the temperature is always the same. Then they are brought to stores and markets where they are sold at high prices.

The best known and most **widely** eaten mushroom is the button mushroom. It has a short thick **stalk** and a white **cap**. Button mushrooms are found in all kinds of food, from pizzas to salads and **stews**.

Words

- **appear** = show
- **attack** = here: hurt, damage
- **bacteria** = small living things that can sometimes cause diseases
- **blood pressure** = the force with which blood flows through your body
- **cause** = lead to
- **completely** = totally
- **crop** = plant, like wheat or rice which farmers grow and can be used as food.
- **damage** = destruction
- **diarrhoea** = an illness in which most of the waste comes out of your body in a watery form
- **edible** = something you can eat
- **identify** = recognize, see, find out which one is right
- **illness** = disease
- **kidney** = one of the two organs in your lower back that separate waste products from your blood and make urine
- **luxurious** = very expensive
- **pest** = small insect or animal that destroys crops or food
- **poisonous** = with something in it that can make you ill or even lead to death
- **prevent** = stop, keep away
- **soil** = the top part of the earth in which plants grow
- **tonic** = a drink that you have as a medicine
- **toxin** = poison
- **treatment** = cure, medicine

Truffles are mushrooms that grow **completely** underground. Dogs and pigs can smell them and find the places where they grow. These mushrooms are very expensive and can be eaten in very **luxurious** restaurants around the world.

Other types of mushrooms are **poisonous**. They produce chemicals called **toxins**. Some toxins lead to **diarrhoea** or other illnesses, a few mushrooms are even deadly. They can **cause** liver **damage** or **attack kidneys**. Unless you get quick **treatment** death may come very fast.

Two very deadly mushrooms are the death cap and the destroying angel. The death cap **appears** in many colours, which is why it is difficult to **identify**. It has over twenty different kinds of **poison** it. The destroying angel is a beautiful white mushroom which grows in summer and autumn.

It is often very hard for people to tell between **edible** and **poisonous** mushrooms. So, never eat a mushroom you find unless you know what it is.



The destroying angel

IMPORTANCE OF MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms help plants grow. Together with **bacteria** they help dead material and minerals get back into the **soil** so that it can be used again. Some are useful in controlling **pests** of **crops**.

The Chinese have used mushrooms in medicine for hundreds of years. Certain types are turned into a **tonic** and used for **treatment** of **illnesses**. Scientists have found out that some mushrooms **prevent** high **blood pressure**.