



Follow Those Germs!



Prep **15** minutes



Activity **1** hour



Grades **3-5**

OBJECTIVE:

To have students lead an exercise demonstrating how germs can be spread in the classroom and to determine “hot spots” in the classrooms where germs might collect.

MATERIALS:

- *Follow Those Germs!* Handout
- Glitter in several colors
- White paper plates or napkins
- Flashlights (optional)
- *Be A GermBuster!* Handout
- Petroleum jelly
- Spoons
- Art supplies

EDUCATION STANDARDS:

Health: 1.5.3 Describe ways in which safe and healthy school and community environments can promote personal health.

Science: 2.5.4 Describe how the school and community can support personal health practices and behaviors. A.2.d Scientists develop explanations using observations (evidence) and what they already know about the world (scientific knowledge).

INSTRUCTIONS

Recommendation: Do not allow students to use disinfectant products. Make sure to store and dispose of disinfectants safely.

1. Ask students to brainstorm some ways they can help keep their classroom germ-free. Suggestions include handwashing and coughing or sneezing into the elbow.
2. Have students read the *Follow Those Germs!* handout. Explain that they will be using glitter to track places where germs are most likely to accumulate in their classroom. The glitter will simulate germs, though it is larger and more visible than germs.
3. Pour glitter onto a paper plate for each student. Use only one color per plate, but include several different colors.
4. Have each student coat his or her hands (or hand) with petroleum jelly and then lay them on one of the paper plates (or napkins) you prepared to cover them with glitter.
5. Have students move around the classroom as they normally would for up to 30 minutes.
6. Ask students to return to their desks. Provide each student with an empty white paper plate or napkin and a spoon.
7. Have students examine their hands. Then have them scrape the glitter from their hands onto the paper plate for easier viewing. Are there different colors of glitter on their hands? Where might those other colors have come from?
8. Have students wash the glitter and petroleum jelly from their hands, using soap and water. Use the opportunity to review proper handwashing techniques.
9. Investigate the classroom for signs of glitter. If possible, use flashlights to make the glitter easier to see. Have students mark the places where they see accumulations of glitter on the handout.
10. Discuss with students how the glitter was spread throughout the room and why students found different colors of glitter on their hands. Why was there more glitter in some places than in others? Discuss how this is similar to the spread of germs.
11. Have students complete the *Case Report* on their handouts to summarize what they learned.
12. Working in small groups or individually, have students use the *Be A GermBuster!* handout to create a comic strip and share tips for preventing the spread of germs (Ex: handwashing, coughing or sneezing into the elbow, or cleaning germ hot spots). Encourage students to create comic strips that tell a story and to include the Clean Club.
13. Invite students to share their comic strips with the class by reenacting them or assemble the comic strips to make a class comic book.



Interactive Whiteboard Extension

1. Take photos of the classroom and post on the whiteboard.
2. Have students mark the places where they found the biggest accumulation of glitter on a whiteboard image of the classroom.
3. Have them trace their movements through the classroom on the image and hypothesize about where they might have picked up the other colors of glitter they found on their hands.



Follow Those Germs!

Johnny stood with Harry and Ella, looking around their classroom. He had just learned that microbes, or germs, were just living organisms that are too small to see without a microscope.

"OK," Johnny said. "Maybe microbes aren't evil invaders just waiting to leap out and get me...but the truth is that some of them can still make me sick. And I really don't like being sick."

"Who does?" asked Harry, who had just come back to school after almost a week of being sick.

"So, how do we avoid the germs that make us sick?" Johnny asked.

"We wash our hands, for one thing," Ella said.

"That's right," Harry said. "Washing your hands before you eat and after you go to the bathroom is a really good way to keep from spreading germs."

"And we can help keep our classroom clean to remove the germs that we and others spread every day," suggested Ella.

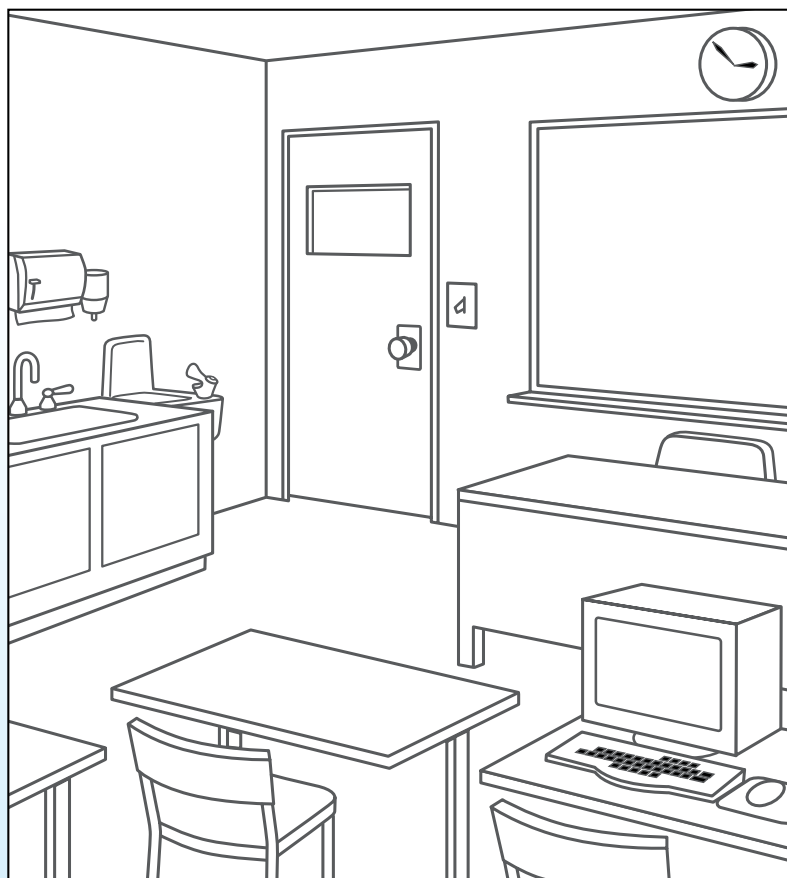
"But just look at the place," said Johnny. "We can't possibly clean all the germs found on these books, toys, desks...when would we have time?"

"Maybe there is a way we could figure out the places where germs are most likely to be," said Harry, "and clean those places more often."

"Great idea!" Ella exclaimed. "And I think I know a way to figure out what those places are. Let's follow those germs!"



Help Ella, Johnny, and Harry follow those germs. Mark the places on this classroom drawing where you find the most evidence of germs.



Case Report: Now that you have followed those germs, it is time to file your report.

1. How did the "germs" in the activity get spread around the room?

2. What are some places in the classroom that are "germ hot spots" and should be cleaned multiple times a day?

3. What do those places have in common?



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INVESTIGATION 2 STUDENT HANDOUT

GRADES 3-5



Be A GermBuster!

Based on the evidence you found in the *Follow Those Germs!* activity, work with your classmates to create a comic strip sharing tips to prevent the spread of germs. Use the boxes below to illustrate each scene of your comic strip. Don't forget to tell a story and to include the Clean Club!



Be A GermBuster!