

**Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide**

Title: *Sugar (Let's Investigate Series)*

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**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Creative Company, 2002

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota author, Minnesota publisher

Summary: This is a nonfiction book about the history, harvest, nutrition, and uses of sugar. It covers sugar cane, sugar beets and maple sugar. The book is part of an agricultural series which uses colorful photographs and sidebar facts.

Suggested ages: 7-10

Tips for Reading:

- Skim through the pages and decide if you want to read the entire book at one sitting or only a section at a time, such as the maple sugar information or the history of sugar in the world.
- Discuss the glossary words.
- Point to the details in the photographs and be sure to read and talk about the sidebars.

Questions before reading:

- Where do you think sugar comes from?
- What are the different kinds or forms of sugar?
- What do we use sugar for?

To Introduce this story say: Today we are going to read about something that almost everyone in the world loves. Sugar. We will learn its history and some surprising new facts.

Questions After Reading:

- What is something new you learned about sugar?
- Where did sugar first come from and why was it only used by rich people?
- Where is sugar cane grown? How about sugar beets?
- Sugar is used in food. What else is made with sugar?
- How do we get maple sugar from trees? Have you ever seen a maple tree tapped for sugar? Tell us about it.
- Who were the first people to harvest maple sugar?
- Can too much sugar be bad for your health? Why?



RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Art:**
- Make drawings of sugar cane and sugar beets to contrast the plants that both make the same product.
 - Make a collage on poster board of all the items from our daily lives that contain sugar.
 - Draw the process involved in making maple syrup from tapping the trees, to boiling the sap, to bottling.
- Culture:**
- Learn more about the early Native Americans who first discovered maple sugar.
 - Break into small groups to discuss why we love and use so much sugar. Is this good or bad? Share ideas.
- Math:**
- Calculate how much maple sap is required to make ten gallons of syrup. (Taken from sidebar information – 40 gallons of sap are needed to make one gallon of syrup).
- Music:**
- Play the song “A Spoonful of Sugar Helps the Medicine Go Down.” What does that phrase mean?
- Science:**
- Visit the Minnesota Arboretum in the spring on their maple syrup weekend.
 - Bring in various forms of sugar for the children to see (white sugar, brown sugar, sugar cubes, maple syrup, etc.).
 - Compare and contrast sugar cane and sugar beets. Where is each grown? How is it harvested? And what is the process of making sugar for each?
- Writing:**
- Using the story of the squirrel as the first maple sugar maker (page 14) as a model, make up your own version of how maple sugar might have been discovered by a different Northwoods animal.
- Suggestions for English Language Learners:**
- Ask them if they know of sugar crops in their home country. Talk about sugar as a universal product.
 - Bring in samples of sugar in its different forms for them to see and taste (refined sugar, natural sugar, molasses, maple syrup, sugar beets, etc.).
- Related Books:**
- ***Sugarbush Spring*** by Marsha Wilson Chall, illustrated by Jim Daly (Lee, Lothrop & Shepard, 2000)
 - ***Ininatig’s Gift of Sugar: Traditional Native Sugarmaking*** by Laura Waterman Wittstock, photographs by Dale Kakkak (Lerner, 1993)
 - ***Sugar Snow*** by Laura Ingalls Wilder, illustrated by Doris Ettlinger (HarperCollins, 1998)
 - ***Sugar*** by Elaine Landau (Children’s Press, 1999)
 - ***Sugaring Time*** by Kathryn Lasky, illustrated by Christopher Knight (Simon & Schuster, 1983)
 - ***From Cane to Sugar*** by Jill Braithwaite (Lerner, 2004)

