Fungus Forest



Would you like to see a microscopic forest that looks like it's from an alien world?

What You Need: Pocket microscope and 2 petri dishes. You will also need to supply half a slice of bread, 2 teaspoons of water, and some dust. Also a piece of tape.

What To Do: Tear your half slice of bread into two pieces that will fit in the petri dishes. Put the bread in the petri dishes. Pour a teaspoon of water on each and cover them with their lids. Now go find some dust - maybe in a windowsill or on top of a bookcase. Sprinkle a little bit of this dust on **JUST ONE** piece of bread, and reclose the petri dish. Seal it shut with the tape.

Put the petri dishes in a safe place where younger children or pets can't touch them. Keep track of which has dust and which has no dust.

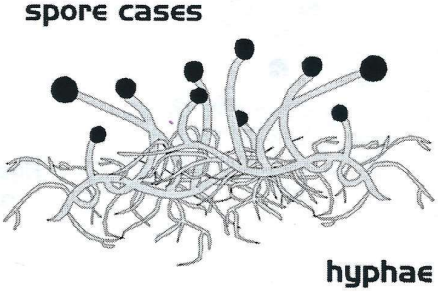
Write down the date you started this experiment:

_____

Every couple of days, come back and look at the petri dishes. Do this for about a week.

MOLDS are members of the fungus kingdom, just like mushrooms. Mold spores are very common in household dust. Does your bread mold show any of the features in this picture?

A Common Bread Mold



The **SPORE CASES**, in this example, appear as black dots or balls.

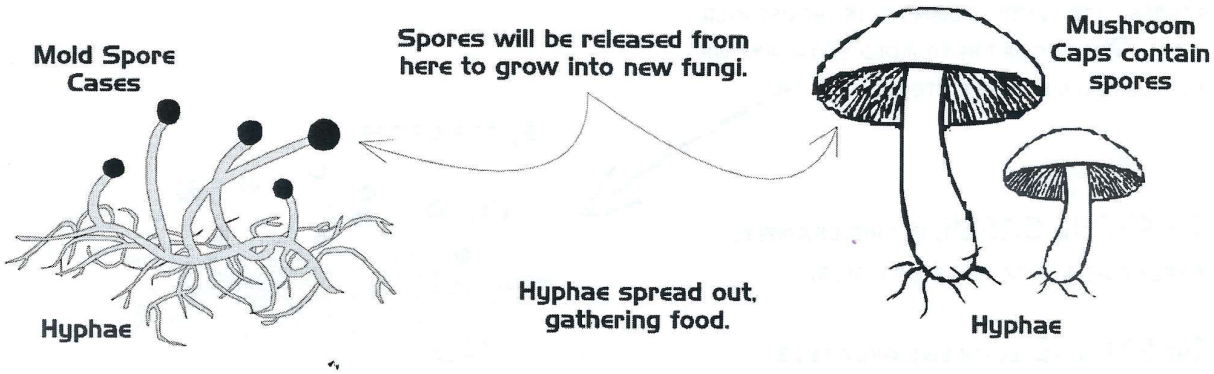
The **HYPHAE** look like grey fuzz. You may see other colors, too.

Inspect the bread both with and without the microscope. Focus in at different levels. Don't open the petri dish, and wash your hands when you are done. Record what you see in the chart below using words or drawings.

Fungus Growth Chart

OBSERVATION / DATE	DUST	NO DUST
1		
2		
3		
4		

A Fungus Among Us



When this experiment is over, you may put the petri dishes in the garbage.