A pumpkin is really a squash?
It is! It's a member of the Cucurbita family which includes squash and cucumbers.

That pumpkins are grown all over the world?
Six of the seven continents can grow pumpkins including Alaska! Antarctica is the only continent that they won't grow in.

Pumpkins contain potassium and Vitamin A.
Pumpkin flowers are edible. In early colonial times, pumpkins were used as an ingredient for the crust of pies, not the filling.
Pumpkins were once recommended for removing freckles and curing snake bites.
The largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 1,140 pounds.
Pumpkins are 90% water.
80% of the pumpkin supply in the United States is available in October.

What do pumpkins contain that are nutritious for people?

The largest pumpkin pie ever made was over five feet in diameter and weighed over 350 pounds. It used 80 pounds of cooked pumpkin, 36 pounds of sugar, 12 dozen eggs and took six hours to bake. How many eggs is that?
Here is the complete pumpkin anatomy:

**Stem** - Located on the very top of the pumpkin. It is brown to brownish green, and slightly curved. During the growing season, the stem is attached to the vine. It is the umbilical cord, bringing nutrients to grow the fruit. For the Fall/Halloween season, the stem gives the pumpkin "Character". Be careful not to lift a pumpkin by its stem, as it can easily break off of the fruit.

**Tendril** - Sometimes attached to the stem are thin, hairlike "tendrils". During the growing season, tendrils on the vine are green. They twist around objects on the ground to help anchor the vine and protect it from the wind. After harvesting, there are sometimes dried, brown tendrils on the stem. This gives the pumpkin character, and is viewed as artistic in pictures.

**Leaves** - The leaves of a pumpkin absorb energy from the sun for plant and fruit growth. Jack O'Lanterns for carving do not have any leaves, just a short stem. Artist's rendering of fall pumpkins sometimes have a few green leaves sitting atop the fruit and attached to the stem. In reality, a the stem doesn't have leaves. The vine does (further away from the stem). Also, once removed from the plant, those green leaves would not remain fresh and green for long.
The Lid- Cut around the stem to open up the pumpkin prior to carving. This becomes the "lid".

Pumpkin Shell- This refers to both the skin and the pulp of the fruit.

Skin- The thin, shiny, orange outer layer of a pumpkin is called the skin. It is also called the "rind". It is a protective layer to keep insects and disease out of the fruit. It is not edible. It won't make you sick if you eat it. It just doesn't taste good or have a pleasurable texture.

Pulp- Also called "meat". This is the yummy part of the pumpkin that you use to cook with, and to make hundreds of tasty recipes and treats. You use pumpkin in everything from main courses to desserts, and ice cream!

Ribs- Look at the outside of a pumpkin. There are indented ridges running from top to bottom. These are called ribs. Sometimes, they are shallow. Sometimes, they are very deep. Which do you prefer?

Blossom End- When the fruit was very young, a flower blossom was at the end of the fruit (now its bottom). This is the blossom end. That female flower was pollinated, and the fruit then developed. The flower died off, leaving a scar in its place. Some say that's the pumpkin's belly button. But, that is not technically correct.

Cavity- This is the inside of a pumpkin. After removing the pumpkin guts, its just an empty cavity. It is also where the candle is placed to light up the pumpkin and make it glow!

Brains- Okay, the proper name is fibrous strands. But, just about everyone calls them "brains". So, we will, too. There are a lot of other names for this slimy, mushy, mass of strings and seeds. They include: guts, sinew, goop, goo, pumpkin slime, and just plain old "yucky stuff".

Seeds- Seeds are the beginning of next years pumpkins. Do you remember the old saying "Which came first? The pumpkin or the seed?" Seeds are also a delicious and nutritious snack. A pumpkin has hundreds of seeds.

Seed Coat- also called "seed jacket". It is the outer layer of the seed. Nature provides this to protect the nut inside that will eventually emerge into a pumpkin plant.

Nut- Located inside of the seed, the nut eventually develops into a new pumpkin. When a seed is planted, moisture and warmth triggers the nut to begin to grow.
PUMPKIN INVESTIGATION

1. There are ribs that run side by side (stem to bottom) on the outside of a pumpkin. Are there more ribs on bigger pumpkins than on a smaller one?
2. Where on a pumpkin are the ribs the deepest? The shallowest?
3. Where on a pumpkin are the ribs the closest together? The farthest apart?
4. Do pumpkins with more ribs have more seeds?
5. Are the ribs closer together on bigger pumpkins than on smaller ones?
6. How is the size of pumpkin related to the amount of empty space?
7. Are the seeds scattered around inside a pumpkin or are they arranged in certain groups and patterns?
8. If the seeds are in groups and patterns, are the groups and patterns the same for different pumpkins?
9. If we call the stem end of the pumpkin "up" do the pointed ends of the seeds point up, down, sideways or in different directions.
10. What is the relationship between pumpkin size and seed size? Do bigger pumpkins have bigger seeds?
11. Think of a way of finding the number of seeds in a pumpkin without actually counting each seed.
12. Do bigger pumpkins have more seeds than smaller pumpkins?
13. In one pumpkin are the seeds all the same size?
   If not, where are the seeds the largest? The smallest?
14. Hit pumpkins of different sizes to see where you get the lowest and highest sounds.
15. Do pumpkins float in water? If pumpkins do float, determine whether bigger pumpkins float higher out of the water than smaller pumpkins.
16. What parts of the pumpkin sink in the water?
   Try different parts of the pumpkin shell and different parts of the seeds.
17. Where are pumpkin shell the thinnest? The thickest?
   Be careful to measure shell thickness the same way.
   Determine if there is a relationship between shell thickness and pumpkin size.
18. A pumpkin was once the bottom part of a beautiful, yellow flower. Find the place on the pumpkin where the blossom part of the flower grew.