

Flower Dissection

(Suggested Ages: 8+)

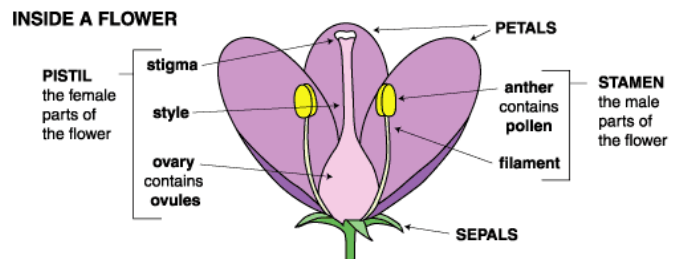


Gather

- Flowers - tulip, lily, rose, etc.
- Tray or plate
- Magnifying glass
- Tweezers

Let's Experiment!

1. If you have different flowers available, compare the color and size. What do you notice about the colors of the flowers? Are they bright? Feel the flower - is it bumpy or smooth?
2. At the base of the flower you'll find the **sepals**. These small leaves covered the flower before it opened. Try to remove by gently pulling or cutting the sepal away. What do you see when you remove it? Look at the sepal with your magnifying glass, what do you see?
3. The **petals** are the colorful leafy parts of the flower. Try to gently remove each one by pulling or by cutting. Look at the petals with your magnifying glass, what do you see?
4. If your flowers have leaves attached to the stem, are they directly across (opposite) or slightly staggered (alternating) from one another?
5. In the center of the flower you may find a **pistil** (female part), **stamen** (male part), or both! The stamen will have pollen grains at the end. Can you see any pollen with your magnifying glass?



How Does it Work?

Flowers may look pretty to us, but they really are meant to look pretty to insects! Plants want to attract pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, because they help to spread their pollen. By doing so, seeds for new plants can be formed. Pollinators don't just accidentally carry around the pollen either, it is a great source of protein for them to eat! For some plants, this also results in a fruit being formed that we can eat - like an apple, cucumber, or tomato.

Take it Further!

If you're able, cut into the pistil at the base, called the ovary. Can you find any seeds in there? For more information on flowers and pollination, watch:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djPVqip_bdU