

# Spore Prints

This project uses sharp objects and requires adult supervision!



## Materials

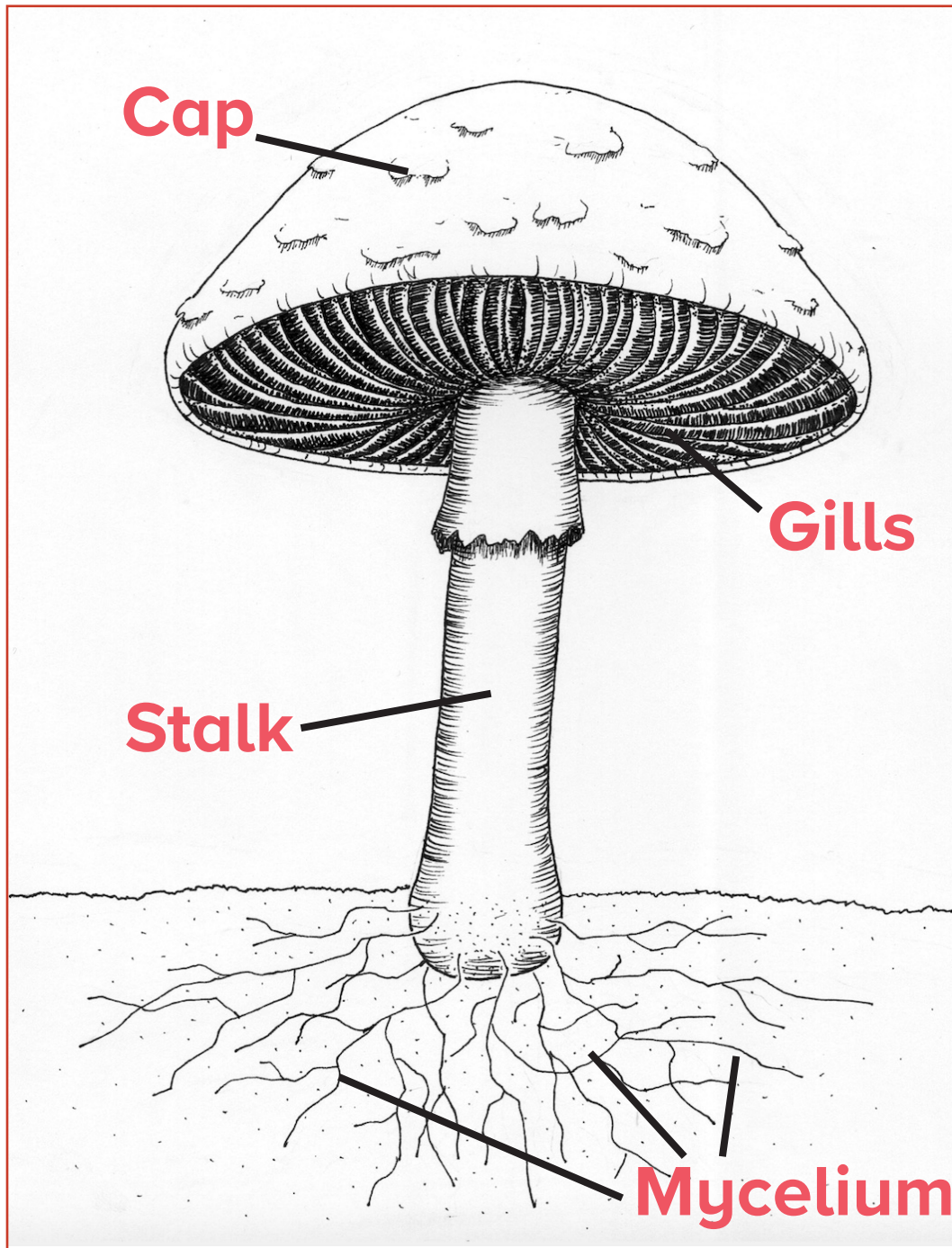
- a large mushroom
- a sharp knife
- a piece of white paper
- water
- box, or container
- hairspray (optional)

# LSU

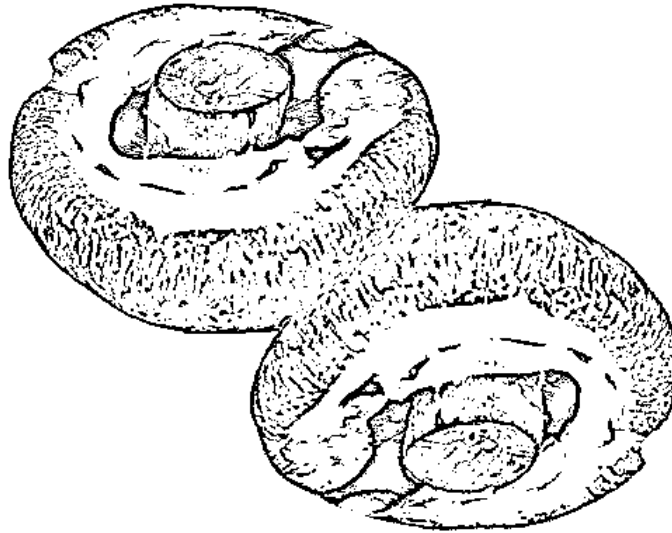
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**Museum of  
Natural Science**

# Parts of a Mushroom

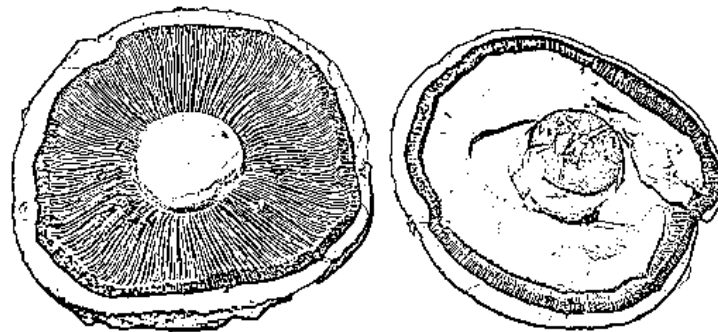


What are spores? Spores are like the seeds of a mushroom; they are produced in the gills of the mushroom and then drop to the ground or float away on the wind to land somewhere else and grow a new mushroom. Different mushrooms have different colored spores. This is one of the ways scientists can help identify a mushroom.



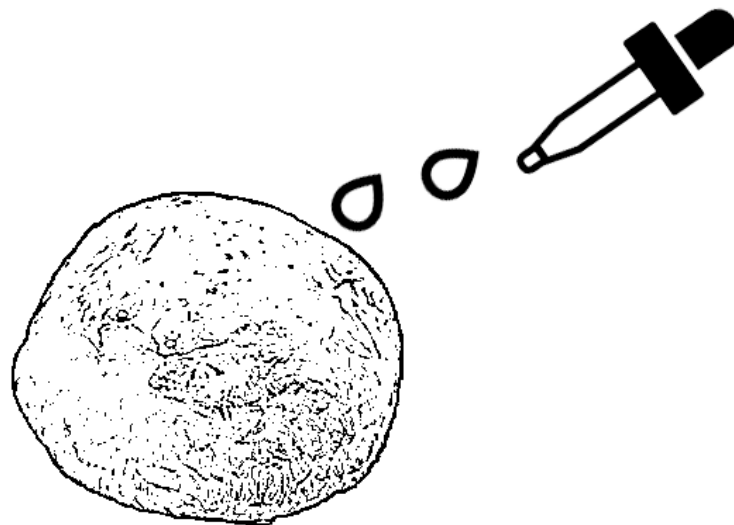
**Step 1:** Collect a mushroom. You can search for mushrooms in your own yard. But if you can't find a wild mushroom try buying one in the grocery store. You will want to pick one that has its gills (*see mushroom diagram*) mostly protected and

Tip: A good mushroom to try this activity with that is easy to find in stores is a portobello mushroom.

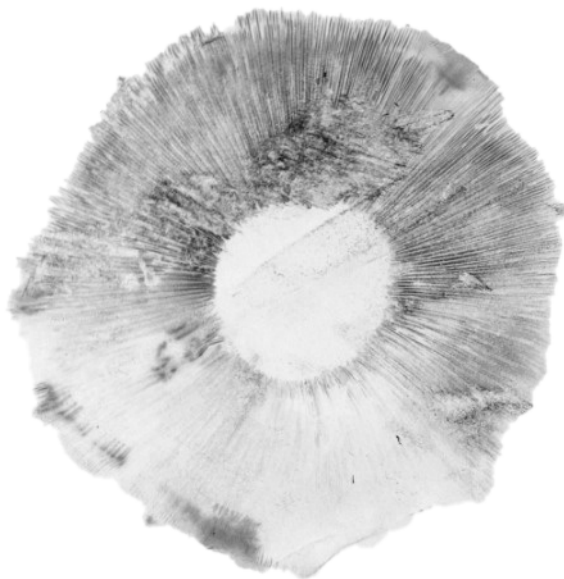


**Step 2:** Cut off the lower portion of the mushroom cap and stem, exposing the gills. What is left of the stem should be flush with the underside.

**Step 3:** Place the top section of the mushroom gill-side down on a piece of white paper. Regular printer paper is perfect, or you can use thicker cardstock.



**Step 4:** Add a few drops of water to the top of the mushroom cap to encourage the spores to drop. Cover with an upside-down box or container (Tupperware works great!) and set it aside somewhere where it won't be disturbed. Leave overnight.



**Step 5:** The next day, gently lift the box and the mushroom, and you should see a beautiful spore print on the paper underneath!

Tip: If you want to preserve your spore print, you can spray it with hairspray and let it dry.