



# The Three Sisters Garden

## Part 1

**Teacher Reads** A tradition is a way of doing something that has been around for a long time. Traditions are passed down from generation to generation—for example, from grandparents to parents to children. Let’s see how a community garden provides an opportunity (a chance) for a girl named Winona to learn about a Native American tradition from her grandmother.

Recently, Winona’s family **moved** from a rural town to a  
10 townhouse in the city. Many things were different in the city. The  
22 family no longer had a yard or a big garden to grow food. The  
36 gardener in the family, Grandma, put her three jars of seeds in  
48 the closet for safekeeping. She hoped one day to plant her **special**  
60 seeds. In the meantime, Grandma grew flowers in pots on a long  
72 shelf by a window.

76 One day, Winona learned that there were garden plots  
85 for rent in a city garden just down the street. She ran home  
98 to tell Grandma the news. “Grandma, Grandma,” Winona  
106 shouted with excitement. “We can have a garden. We can  
116 rent a garden plot in the city garden that is two blocks away.  
129 You will get to plant your seeds!”

136 “They are not my seeds, they are our seeds, Winona, a  
147 gift passed down from our ancestors. Now is a good time to  
159 plant them,” Grandma suggested. “We will plant the three  
168 sisters—corn, beans, and **squash**.”

173 “Why are they called the three sisters?” asked Winona.

182 “You will see,” Grandma said.

## Part 2

**Teacher Reads** Are you curious? Let’s learn why corn, beans, and squash are called the three sisters and how they are planted.

187 In their garden plot, Winona and Grandma piled soil  
196 into mounds. Then, Grandma got the corn seeds from the  
206 jar. She and Winona planted the corn sister in the center  
217 of each dirt mound. They watered and weeded  
225 around the corn plants for several days.



## Part 2 continued

232 When the corn plants were six inches high, Grandma  
241 showed Winona how to plant the bean sister. They planted  
251 five bean seeds in a circle around each corn plant.

261 A week later, Grandma showed Winona how to plant the  
271 squash sister. They put six squash seeds in a circle around the  
283 edge of each dirt mound. For days, Winona and Grandma  
293 watered and weeded the mounds as the plants kept growing.

## Part 3

**Teacher Reads** Winona has learned how to plant corn, bean, and squash seeds and how to take care of the plants. Let's discover another lesson that Winona will learn from gardening with her Grandma.

303 Grandma asked, "Which plant do you think is the most  
313 important in our garden?"

317 "I think it is the corn because it holds up the beans,"  
329 said Winona.

331 "That is so. But did we have to **fertilize** the garden to  
343 make things grow?" asked Grandma.

348 "No. Why not, Grandma?"

352 "The beans fertilize the soil for all the plants. Do you  
363 see any weeds?" asked Grandma. When Winona said no,  
372 Grandma asked her why not.

377 After thinking, Winona said, "The squash plants have  
385 filled the space. There is no room for weeds."

394 Grandma said, "So you see how the three plants support  
404 each other, just as three **human** sisters would."

412 When the **vegetables** had fully grown, Winona and  
420 Grandma gave their thanks for the corn, beans, and squash  
430 before harvesting them. "Now we will save seeds," Grandma  
439 said. She showed Winona how to save the best seeds from  
450 each plant. Together, they cleaned the seeds.

457 Winona held the seeds in her hands. Grandma explained,  
466 "The seeds connect us to the past. Now that you know how to  
479 care for and plant the seeds, they connect us to the **future**, too."  
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