

Lesson Plan: Magic Growing Garden (Mouse Mechanics)

Focus: Fundamental Mouse/Trackpad Skills & Spatial Awareness **L.A.B.S.:** Magic Growing Garden **Grade Level:** Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Learning Objectives

- **Targeted Clicking:** Students will accurately move the cursor and single-click on specific elements (e.g., watering can, sun, garden plots) without accidental double-clicks.
- **Click and Drag (Drag & Drop):** Students will successfully hold down the primary mouse button or trackpad while moving the cursor to drag items (like seeds) to designated target areas.
- **Spatial Coordination:** Students will develop hand-eye coordination by mapping physical hand movements on the desk or trackpad to on-screen cursor navigation.

The Activity: The Garden Build


1. The "Dry Run" Warm-up (5 Mins)

- **Teacher Intro:** Before opening the laptops, have students practice "pincher fingers" in the air. Discuss the difference between a quick "tap" (click) and a "hold and slide" (drag). Tell the class: *"Today we are planting a digital garden. A tap will water your plants, but to move the seeds, you have to hold onto them tight and drag them to the dirt!"*

2. The Planting Phase (15 Mins)

- **Phase 1 (The Tools - Single Clicking):** Students focus on navigating the cursor to the tools (shovel, watering can) and practicing clean, single clicks to interact with the garden.
- **Phase 2 (The Seeds - Click & Drag):** Introduce the drag-and-drop mechanic. Students must click the seed packet, hold the button down, drag it to an empty patch of dirt, and release it accurately.
- **Phase 3 (Garden Maintenance):** Combine skills. Students navigate the entire screen to collect resources, clear weeds (clicking), and place decorations (dragging) while the garden grows.

3. Reflection (5 Mins)

- Ask the students: *"Which was trickier for your fingers to do: clicking the watering can, or dragging the seeds? Why?"* ###  Success Criteria (The "Master Gardener" Rubric)
- **The Seedling:** Successfully moved the mouse and single-clicked on targets, but struggled with holding the button down to drag items.

- **The Sprout:** Successfully performed both clicking and click-and-drag actions to plant at least 3 items in the garden.
- **The Master Gardener:** Fluidly combined clicking and dragging to fully populate the garden and manage all resources without lifting their finger early during a drag.

Mr. M's Teacher Pro-Tip:

For K-1 students, the trackpad click-and-drag is arguably the hardest foundational tech skill. If they get frustrated and keep dropping their seeds halfway, teach them the "Two-Hand Method"—one finger on the left hand holds the trackpad button down tight, while the right pointer finger does the sliding. It builds immense confidence before transitioning to a one-handed technique!

Standards Alignment

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) - Computer Science

- **8.1.2.CS.1:** Select and operate computing devices that perform a variety of tasks accurately and quickly based on user needs and preferences.
 - *Application:* Demonstrating accurate operation of a trackpad or mouse (input device) to interact with graphical user interfaces.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) - ELA & Literacy

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.6 / W.1.6:** With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
 - *Application:* Mastering the foundational mouse mechanics and screen navigation required to eventually interact with digital writing and publishing tools in later grades.