

## Comparing Plants: Intro Lesson



Storytelling Version

# What's the Same? What's Different?



Scientists compare and contrast plants to identify and sort them.

In this lesson, children will research how a cactus plant is different from other plants.

When you see this icon:



Use cut-outs from  
the Storytelling Set.

# Before You Begin

This lesson has four phases and usually lasts about 35 mins.



## Let's Be Curious

 **5 minutes**

- Introduce a new word: **botanist**.
- Wonder: How is a cactus different from other plants?



## Let's Plan

 **5 minutes**

- Review the Science Notebook page to understand what information to collect from the video.
- Get ready to watch the video with a purpose.



## Let's Explore

 **20 minutes**

- Watch video clips or read the 'Let's Explore' section of the storybook.
- Record what you learn about how plants are different in your Science Notebook.



## Let's Share

 **5 minutes**

- Talk: How is a cactus different from other plants?



## Learning Goals

This lesson will help children to:

- Build early research and media literacy skills.
  - View media with a purpose for learning.
  - Record and talk about their learning from media.
  - Talk about what they learned from media using science words.
- Understand that there are many different kinds of plants.

### Science Words

Here are some words we will be using as scientists in this lesson:

**Cactus:** A plant that grows in hot and dry climates. They do not require a lot of water.

Cacti can have spikes or prickly spines and do not have typical plant leaves or stems.

**Botanist:** A scientist who studies plants.

**Plant:** A living thing that usually grows in the ground, has leaves or flowers, and needs water and sun to live.

For more words we use as scientists, read "Talking Like a Scientist" in the support materials.

### Materials You'll Need

- Science Notebook pages (T-Chart and Plants printable)
- Writing tools (crayons, markers, pencils)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Storytelling cut-outs (from "Comparing Plants: Storytelling Set")



# Learning With Media

Before You Begin

In this lesson, children are asked to view media with a purpose to learn, collect important information, and share their learning with others. When you see this prompt, you can choose to teach with digital or printed media.



## Let's Hear a Story!



**With Digital Media**  
Share video clips during the lesson, or use them to prep for storytelling.



**With Printed Media**  
Use printed character cut-outs to tell the story on a felt board.

This lesson's story comes from the *Elinor Wonders Why* episode, "The Pokey Plant." In this episode, Elinor is excited to get a plant from school to take care of. When she is handed a cactus, she is not sure it even is a plant. Elinor learns that a cactus is a type of plant and shares everything she learns with her classmates.

**Clip #1:** Elinor is disappointed that she has a cactus as her school plant. Olive and Ari help her to investigate the differences and similarities of her cactus and their plants.

**Clip #2:** Elinor, Olive, and Ari sing about plant differences and Ms. Mole asks, "Who wants to tell about what they learned?"

Find all the video clips and the printable storytelling sets on [pbslearningmedia.org](https://pbslearningmedia.org)







# Let's Be Curious!

Scientists who study plants are called **botanists**.

Today, we will be botanists. We will hear parts of "**The Pokey Plant**" story and find out about how plants are different.



# I Wonder...

How is a **cactus** different from other plants?

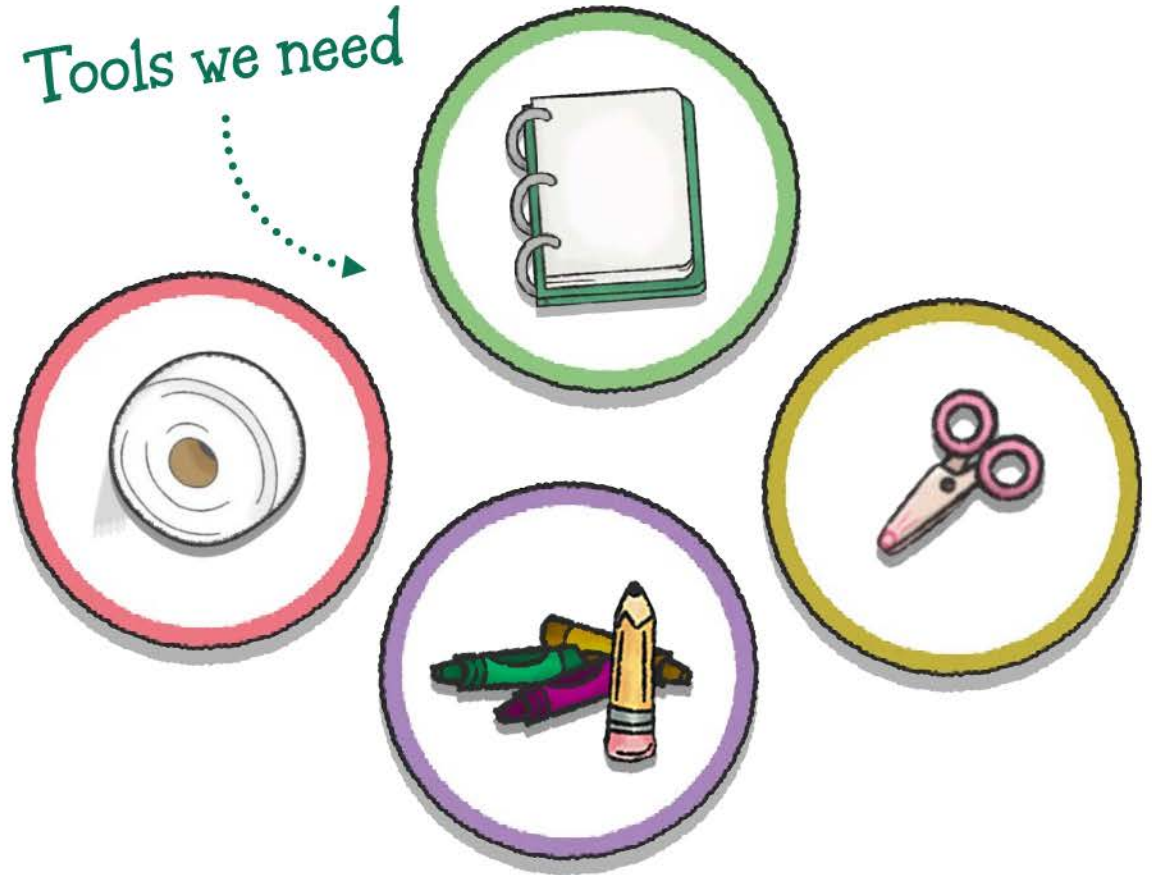


# Let's Plan!



Let's research and collect data in our Science Notebook.

Tools we need





Today we will **compare** different plants.

As we explore, we'll stop and record in our Science Notebook.

Glue, tape, or draw what is different in the columns of the T-chart.



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**T-Chart**

**Let's Explore** (name) \_\_\_\_\_

How is a cactus different from other plants? Record your data! Glue, tape or draw what is different in each column.

**Elinor's cactus**



**Ari's  
plant**



 Visit [pbskids.org/elinor](http://pbskids.org/elinor)

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# Let's Explore

(name)

# T-Chart

How is a cactus different from other plants? Record your data! Glue, tape or draw what is different in each column.

**Elinor's cactus**



**Ari's plant**





**Cut out the pictures below to add to your T-chart.**



round shape



has leaves



has stems



no leaves, spiky



needs more water



needs less water





# Let's Explore!





Let's hear a story to research our question.

We are  
ready to  
learn.



We have calm  
bodies,



watching  
eyes,



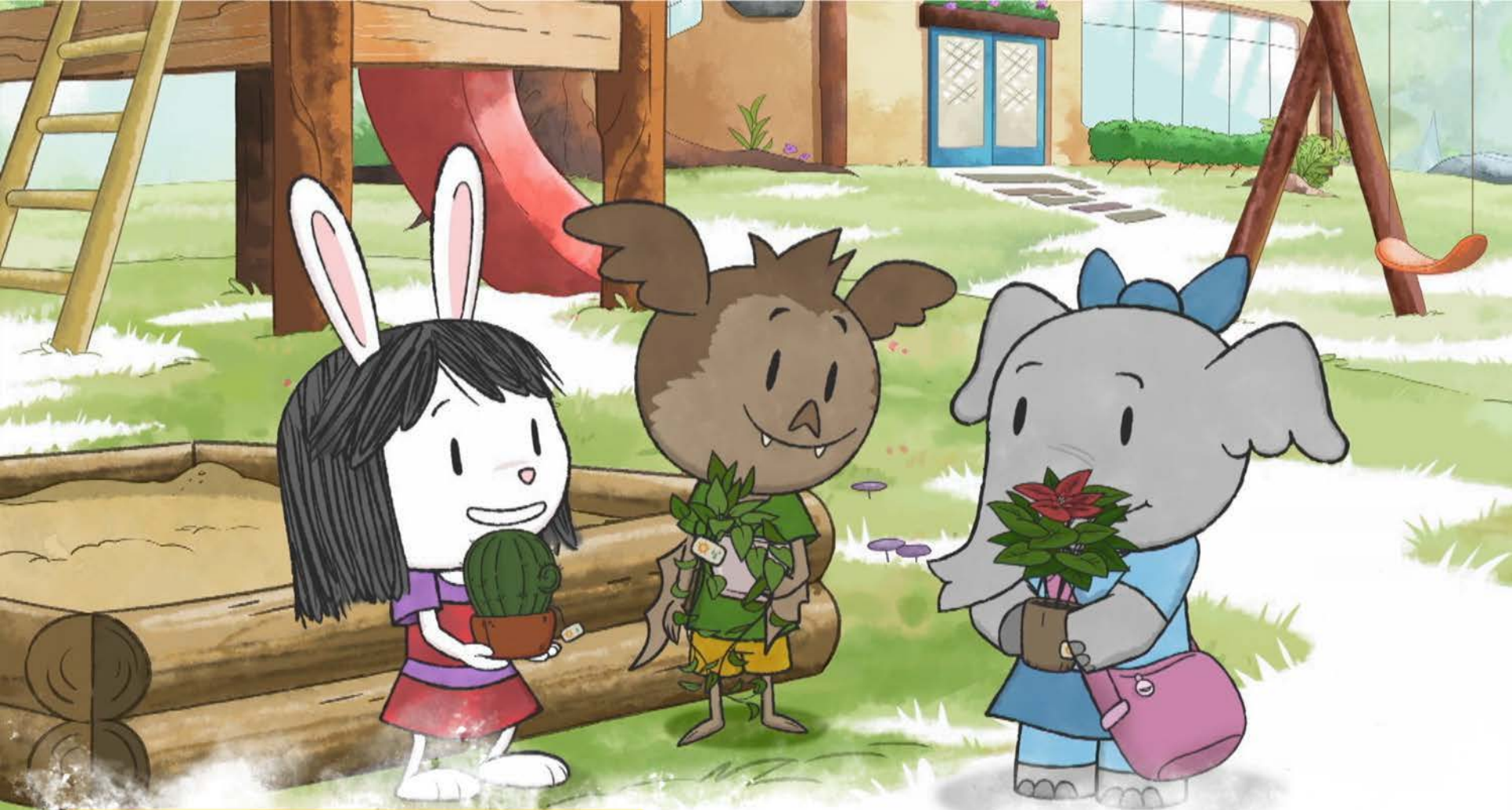
and listening  
ears.

It's plant day in the classroom and every friend gets a different plant to care for.



Let's find  
out:

How is Elinor's cactus different from  
Ari and Olive's plants?



*Let's hear a story!*

Elinor, Ari, and Olive decide to make observations about Elinor's cactus to see how it is different from the Ari and Olive's plants.

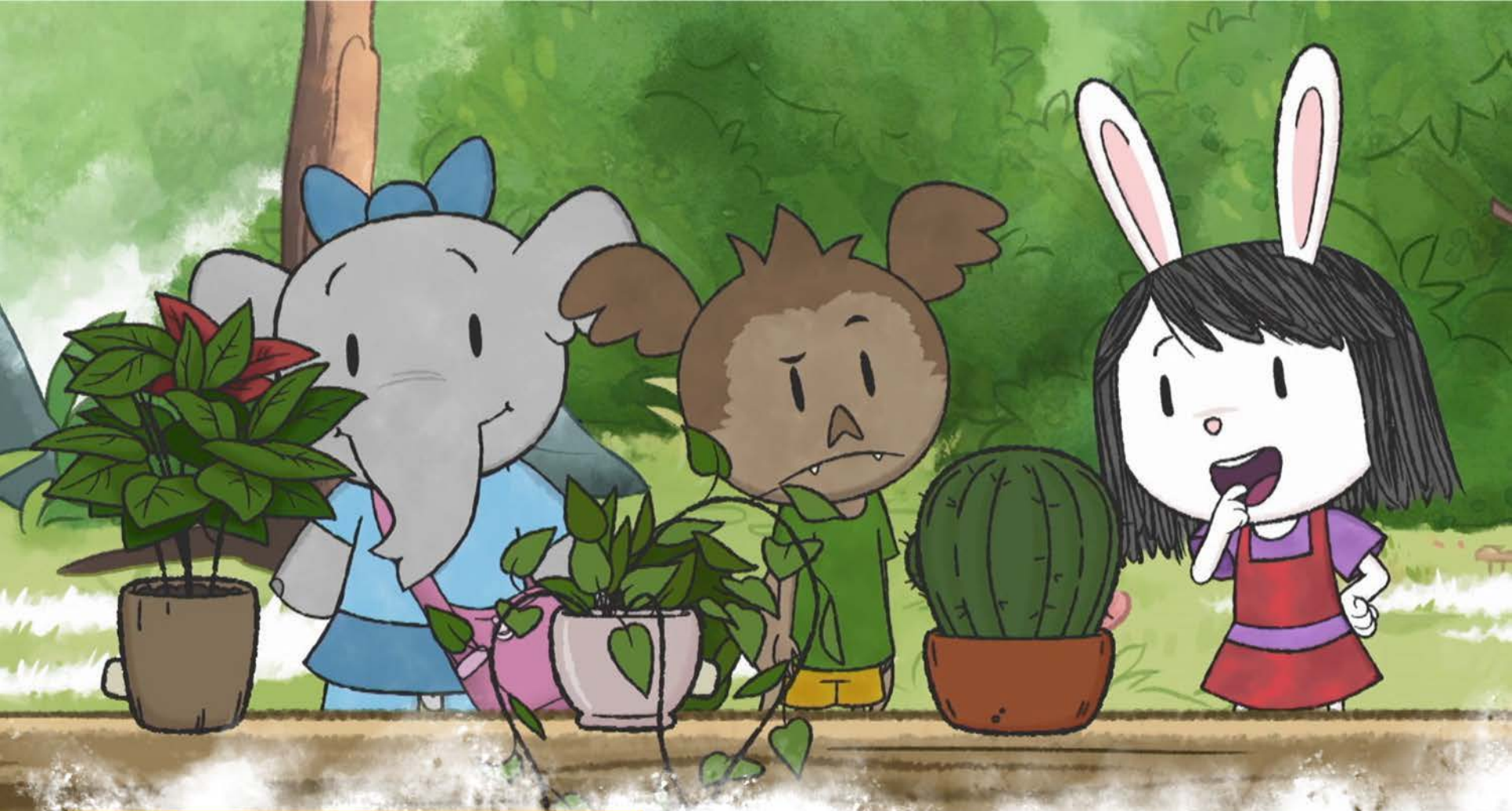




Let's hear a story!

They learn that the cactus only needs to be watered once a week, while the other plants need to be watered every few days.





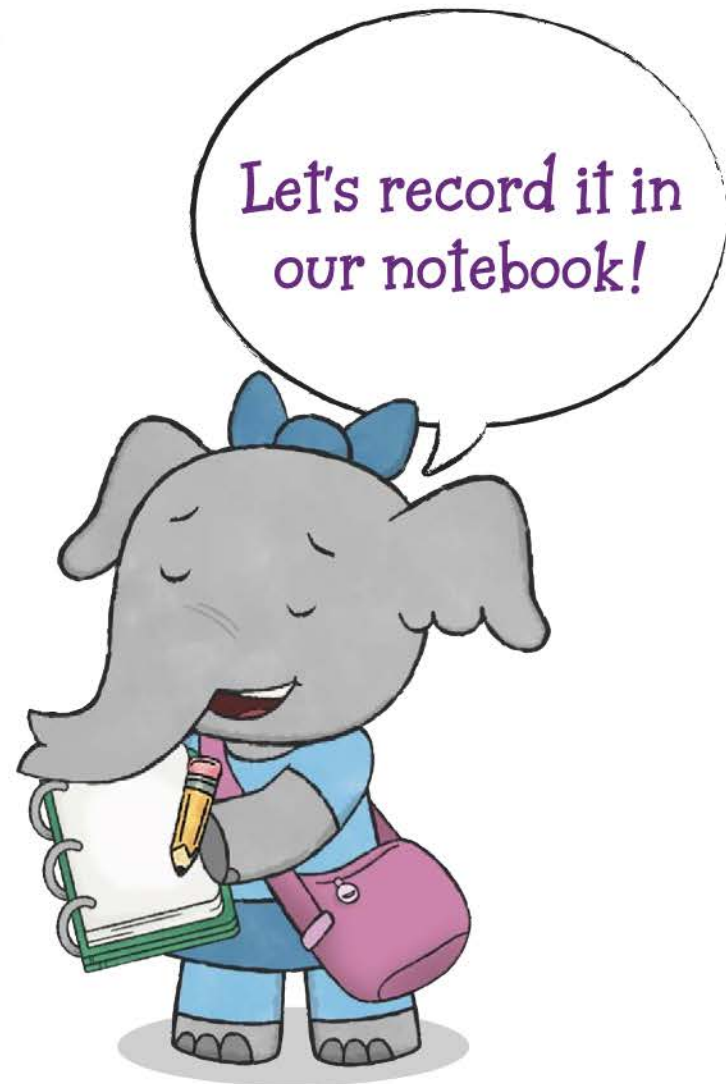
Let's hear a story!

They also observe that the cactus is round, has spikes, and doesn't have any leaves or thin stems like the other plants.



# Record Your Data

- ❓ How is Elinor's cactus different from Ari and Olive's plants?





# Let's Share

Scientists talk about what they learn when they research.





# Turn & Talk

Tell us explorers,  
What did you learn?  
It's time to share.  
Now it's your turn!



- ❓ How is a **cactus** different from other plants?

# Record Your Data!

Let's Share



What did you find out?

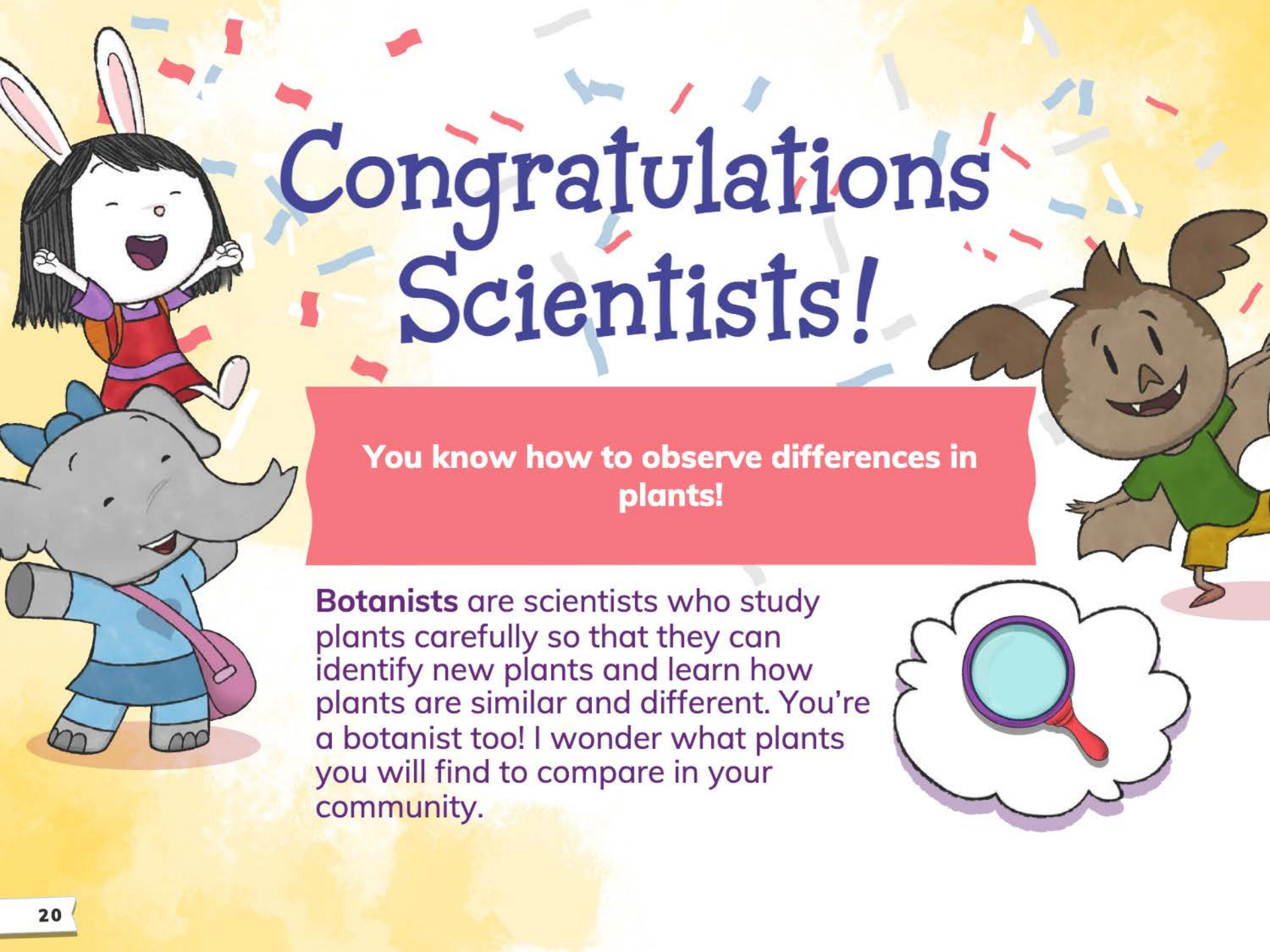
A cactus is different from other plants because [what is different].

A cactus...but other plants...



Let's share!





# Congratulations Scientists!

You know how to observe differences in plants!

**Botanists** are scientists who study plants carefully so that they can identify new plants and learn how plants are similar and different. You're a botanist too! I wonder what plants you will find to compare in your community.

Ready for more?  
Check out the complete  
*Elinor Wonders Why* Collection  
of educator resources.



[pbslearningmedia.com/collection/elinor](https://pbslearningmedia.com/collection/elinor)



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