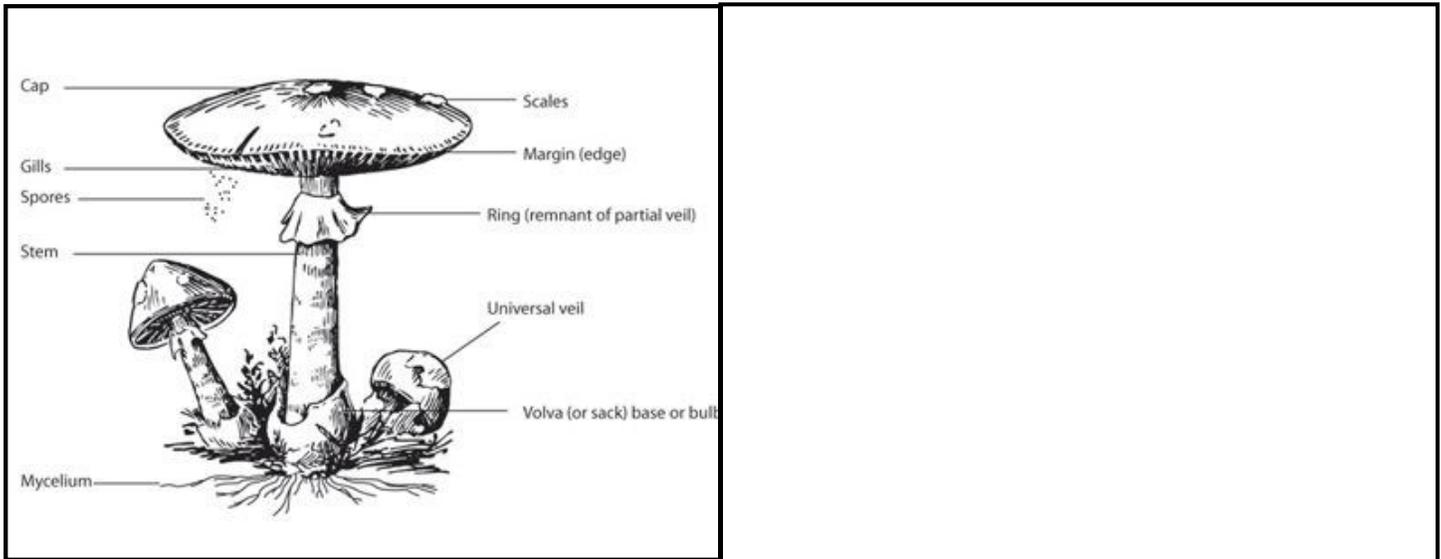


# Mushroom Dissection



Fungi are critical parts of most ecosystems and an important part of the diet of many students (and teachers). Mushrooms in the genus *Agaricus* are raised commercially and sold in most grocery stores. The mushroom is actually the fruiting body or reproductive structure of a fungus.

**Materials:** Mushroom, Plate, Knife, Forceps, Paper towel, Magnifying Glass



## Procedure:

1. Get your mushroom and place it on the plate in front of you. Examine it closely. In the box above, draw a diagram of your mushroom, labeling the cap, stem and gills. If the gills are not visible, remove the tissue (it's called a veil) protecting them gently with your forceps.
2. Grasp the cap firmly with one hand and the stem with the other hand. Gently wiggle and/or twist the stalk until it breaks away from the cap.
3. Pinch the stalk between your fingers until it breaks into two or more long pieces. Gently pull the pieces apart. The thin, hair-like filaments you will see where you split the stem are the hyphae. What do they look like? Draw and describe them.
4. Turn your attention to the cap. Look at the underside of the cap to study the gills. Each gill is lined with thousands of small structures called basidia. Using your forceps, you can gently remove one gill from the cap. What do the gills remind you of?

