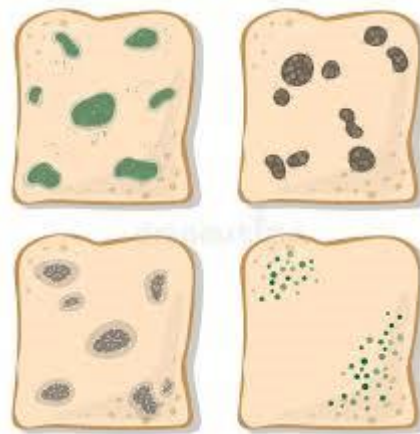


GROWING MOLD ON BREAD KEPT IN DIFFERENT BREADS AND CONDITIONS

Science fair project report

Level: primary level

Category: life science



Submitted by:

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Application for Virtual NSF-2024

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4. Is School is a member of OMEIAT : YES
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Introduction

Mold is a type of fungus that grows in the form of multicellular filaments called hyphae. It thrives in moist, warm, and nutrient-rich environments, making bread an ideal surface for mold growth. Understanding how mold develops on bread is important not only for food safety but also for learning about fungal biology and environmental influences on microbial growth.

This experiment explores the growth of mold on **different types of bread** (such as white, whole wheat, multigrain, etc.) and under **various environmental conditions** (such as light vs. dark, warm vs. cold, sealed vs. open containers). The aim is to determine how the **type of bread** and **storage condition** affect the **rate and extent of mold growth**.

By comparing mold growth across these variables, we can gain insight into which conditions promote faster fungal growth and which types of bread are more resistant to spoilage. This information can be useful for improving food storage practices and understanding the natural decomposition process.

Abstract

This experiment investigates how different types of bread and storage conditions affect the growth of mold. Various bread types—such as white, whole wheat, and multigrain—were placed in different environments, including warm and cold temperatures, light and dark areas, and sealed and open containers. Over a period of several days, mold growth was observed and recorded based on visible changes, color, and spread.

The results showed that mold grew faster in warm, moist, and dark conditions, especially on white bread, which contains more refined sugars and fewer preservatives than other types. Bread stored in sealed bags also retained moisture, promoting faster mold growth compared to bread left uncovered. Conversely, colder and drier conditions significantly slowed mold development.

These findings highlight how both the composition of the bread and its storage environment influence the rate of mold growth. The study contributes to a better understanding of food spoilage and can help inform more effective food storage practices to reduce waste.

Selection of the problem

Bread is a common food item that tends to spoil quickly due to mold growth, especially when not stored properly. Mold not only affects the appearance and taste of bread but can also pose health risks when consumed. However, the rate and pattern of mold growth can vary depending on several factors, including the **type of bread** and the **conditions in which it is stored**.

The key problems this study addresses are:

- 1. Does the type of bread affect how quickly mold grows?**
Some breads contain preservatives, different moisture levels, or ingredients that may either slow down or accelerate mold growth.
- 2. How do environmental conditions influence mold development?**
Factors such as **temperature, light exposure, humidity**, and whether the bread is kept **sealed or unsealed** can significantly impact how fast mold appears and spreads.
- 3. Which combinations of bread type and storage condition result in the fastest or slowest mold growth?**
Understanding this can help in optimizing storage methods to reduce food spoilage.

By investigating these problems, the project aims to better understand the conditions that promote or inhibit mold growth on bread, which is useful for households, the food industry, and food safety education.

Statement of the problem

Bread is a widely consumed food product that is highly susceptible to mold growth when exposed to certain environmental conditions. Mold can cause food spoilage, health risks, and economic loss. However, different types of bread (such as white, whole wheat, and multigrain) contain varying ingredients and preservatives that may affect how quickly mold develops. Similarly, storage conditions like temperature, light exposure, moisture, and packaging (sealed or unsealed) also influence the rate of mold growth.

This project aims to determine:

- How different types of bread affect the growth rate of mold.
- How various environmental conditions impact mold development.
- Which combinations of bread type and storage condition lead to the fastest or slowest mold growth.

By identifying these factors, the study seeks to improve understanding of food spoilage and suggest better methods for storing bread to prevent mold.

Hypothesis

If different types of bread are stored under varying environmental conditions, then the rate of mold growth will depend on both the bread type and the storage conditions.

Specifically:

- Bread with fewer preservatives (e.g., homemade or whole wheat) will grow mold faster than breads with more preservatives (e.g., commercial white bread).
- Warm, dark, and moist conditions will promote faster mold growth compared to cold, dry, or well-lit environments.
- Bread stored in sealed containers will grow mold faster than bread left uncovered, due to trapped moisture.

Experimental procedure

Materials Needed:

- 3 types of bread (e.g., white, whole wheat, multigrain)
- 4 resealable plastic bags or containers
- Water spray bottle (optional, to add moisture)
- Labels and marker
- Gloves (for hygiene)
- Notebook or chart for observations
- Camera (optional, for documenting mold growth)

Step-by-Step Procedure:**1. Prepare the Bread Samples:**

- Cut or tear equal-sized pieces from each type of bread.
- Use clean hands or gloves to avoid contamination.

2. Label the Bags/Containers:

- Label each bag with the bread type and the condition it will be stored in (e.g., “White Bread – Warm & Dark”).

3. Set Up the Conditions:

- For each bread type, place one piece in each of the following conditions:
 - **Warm and Dark:** e.g., inside a cupboard or closet
 - **Cold and Dark:** e.g., in a refrigerator
 - **Room Temperature with Light:** e.g., on a windowsill or shelf
- Optionally, spray each piece lightly with water to ensure consistent moisture.

4. Seal or Leave Open (optional variation):

- You can also test sealed vs. unsealed by sealing half the samples and leaving the rest open in their environments.

5. Place the Samples:

- Put each labeled sample in its assigned environment.

6. Observe Daily:

- Check each sample once a day.
- Record any signs of mold growth (color, size, spread).
- Take photos if desired for visual tracking.
- Do not open bags once mold appears — observe through the plastic for safety.

7. Record Data:

- Note the day mold first appears and how it changes over time.
- Create a chart or table to compare growth across different conditions and bread types.

8. Continue for 0–10 Days:

- Observe and record until mold growth is significant or all samples have molded.

9. Dispose of Samples Safely:

- Once the experiment is done, seal all bags tightly and dispose of them in the trash.
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling.

Design of the Study

This study uses a comparative experimental design to examine how different types of bread and environmental conditions affect the growth of mold over time.

1. Variables

- Independent Variables:
 - Type of bread: White bread, Whole wheat bread, Multigrain bread
 - Storage conditions:
 - Temperature: Room temperature, Warm (cupboard), Cold (refrigerator)
 - Light: Light vs. Dark
 - Air exposure: Sealed vs. Unsealed (optional)
 - Dependent Variable:
 - Rate and extent of mold growth (measured by visible mold appearance, size, color, and spread over time)
 - Controlled Variables:
 - Size of bread samples
 - Moisture level (lightly misted, if done)
 - Type of storage container (same type of plastic bag or container)
 - Observation time (same time each day)
-

2. Sample Setup

- Bread samples are cut into equal sizes (e.g., 3–4 cm squares).
- For each type of bread, three identical samples are placed under different storage conditions.
- Each condition is repeated for all types of bread to maintain consistency and allow comparison.

3. Duration of Study

- Observations are made daily over a period of 0 to 10 days, depending on how quickly mold develops.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

- Daily observations recorded in a table or log.
- Qualitative data: Color, texture, and type of mold.
- Quantitative data: Number of days until mold appears, estimated size of mold spread.
- Visual documentation (photos) is optional but helpful for analysis.
- Results are compared to identify:
 - Which bread molded the fastest
 - Which condition led to the fastest or slowest mold growth

5. Safety and Disposal

- Samples are handled with gloves.
- Moldy bread is never opened once sealed.
- After the experiment, all samples are disposed of properly in sealed bags.

Independent variable

for the experiment "**Growing Mold on Bread Kept in Different Breads and Conditions**" are:

1. Type of Bread

- White bread
- Whole wheat bread
- Multigrain bread
- (Optional: Gluten-free, homemade, or preservative-free bread)

This variable affects how quickly mold may grow due to differences in ingredients, moisture content, and preservatives.

✓ 2. Storage Conditions

These include:

- **Temperature:**
 - Warm (e.g., cupboard)
 - Cold (e.g., refrigerator)
 - Room temperature
- **Light Exposure:**
 - Light (e.g., windowsill)
 - Dark (e.g., closed cabinet)
- **Air Exposure (Optional):**
 - Sealed (in a plastic bag or container)
 - Unsealed (exposed to open air)

These independent variables are **intentionally changed** during the experiment to observe their **effect on mold growth**, which is the dependent variable.

Dependent Variable

for the experiment "**Growing Mold on Bread Kept in Different Breads and Conditions**" is:

✓ Amount and Rate of Mold Growth

This refers to:

- **Time taken for mold to appear** (in days)
- **Extent or size of mold growth** (measured visually or with a ruler, if possible)
- **Color and texture** of the mold (as an indication of type or stage)
- **Spread of mold** across the bread surface

Control Variables

1. Size of bread slices
→ All slices should be the same size and thickness to ensure fair comparison.
2. Type of container
→ All bread samples should be placed in the same type of container or bag (e.g., ziplock bags) to control airflow and humidity levels.
3. Starting cleanliness
→ All equipment and hands should be clean before handling bread to avoid introducing extra mold spores.

4. Amount of moisture added (if any)
→ For moist conditions, the same amount of water should be sprayed on each sample to control humidity levels.
5. Observation time
→ All samples should be observed and recorded at the same time each day.
6. Duration of experiment
→ All bread samples should be kept under observation for the same number of days.
7. Initial freshness of bread
→ All bread should be from the same purchase date and kept in the same condition before the experiment begins to ensure they are equally fresh.
8. Handling method
→ Bread slices should be handled using gloves or with minimal contact to avoid contamination differences.
9. Surface or table used for storage
→ All containers should be placed on the same type of surface to ensure temperature consistency.
10. Seal level of containers
→ Make sure all bags or containers are equally sealed to prevent airflow differences.

Material to be used

Materials Required

1. **Bread Samples** (at least 3 types):
 - White bread
 - Whole wheat bread
 - Multigrain bread*(Optional: gluten-free or preservative-free bread)*
2. **Plastic zip-lock bags** or **airtight containers** (at least 4–6)
3. **Labels** and a **marker** (for labeling each sample and condition)
4. **Spray bottle with water** (optional – for adding moisture to speed up mold growth)
5. **Notebook or observation chart** (to record daily observations)
6. **Camera or phone** (optional – for taking pictures of mold growth over time)
7. **Gloves** (for hygiene and safe handling of moldy bread)
8. **Ruler or measuring tape** (optional – for measuring mold spread)
9. **Storage spaces** with different conditions:
 - A warm, dark place (e.g., cupboard)
 - A cold place (e.g., refrigerator)
 - A lighted area (e.g., windowsill or open shelf)

10. **Trash bags** (for safe disposal of moldy bread after the experiment)

Different types of bread

1. White Bread

- Made from refined wheat flour where the bran and germ are removed.
- Usually softer, contains fewer nutrients, and may have added preservatives.
- Mold tends to grow relatively fast due to simple carbohydrates.

2. Whole Wheat Bread

- Made from whole grain wheat flour, containing bran, germ, and endosperm.
- Higher fiber content and nutrients than white bread.
- Often contains fewer preservatives, which may affect mold growth rate.

3. Multigrain Bread

- Made from a mixture of different grains such as wheat, barley, oats, millet, rye, etc.
- Has diverse nutrient content and texture.
- Mold growth rate may vary depending on the grain composition and moisture content.

4. Gluten-Free Bread (optional)

- Made without wheat or gluten-containing grains, often from rice flour, almond flour, or other alternatives.
- Texture and moisture vary, which might influence mold growth.

5. Homemade or Preservative-Free Bread (optional)

- Bread made at home or without commercial preservatives.
- Typically molds faster due to lack of additives that inhibit fungal growth.

Procedure

1. Prepare the Materials:
 - Gather 3 different types of bread (e.g., white, whole wheat, multigrain).
 - Get 4 resealable plastic bags or containers.
 - Label each bag with the type of bread and the condition it will be stored in (e.g., “White Bread – Warm & Dark”).
2. Cut the Bread:
 - Cut equal-sized pieces of bread (about 3 cm x 3 cm) from each bread type to ensure consistency.
3. Moisture Preparation (Optional):
 - Lightly spray each bread piece with water to create a moist environment that encourages mold growth.
4. Place Bread Samples in Bags:
 - Put one piece of each bread type into its labeled bag or container.
 - Seal the bags if you want to test sealed conditions, or leave them open slightly for unsealed conditions.
5. Set Storage Conditions:
 - Place the bags in different environments:
 - Warm and dark (e.g., cupboard or drawer)
 - Cold and dark (e.g., refrigerator)
 - Room temperature with light (e.g., windowsill or table near a window)
6. Daily Observation:
 - Observe each bread sample once a day for up to 10 days.
 - Record the day when mold first appears.
 - Note the color, size, and spread of mold.
 - Take photos if desired to document changes.
7. Data Recording:
 - Maintain a log or table to document mold growth progress daily.
 - Use measurements or visual estimates to track mold size and growth rate.
8. Safety Measures:
 - Avoid opening the bags once mold appears to prevent inhalation of spores.
 - Wear gloves when handling bread samples.
 - Wash hands thoroughly after handling moldy bread.
9. Conclusion and Disposal:
 - After the observation period, analyze which bread type and condition showed the fastest or slowest mold growth.
 - Dispose of all moldy bread samples in sealed bags safely.

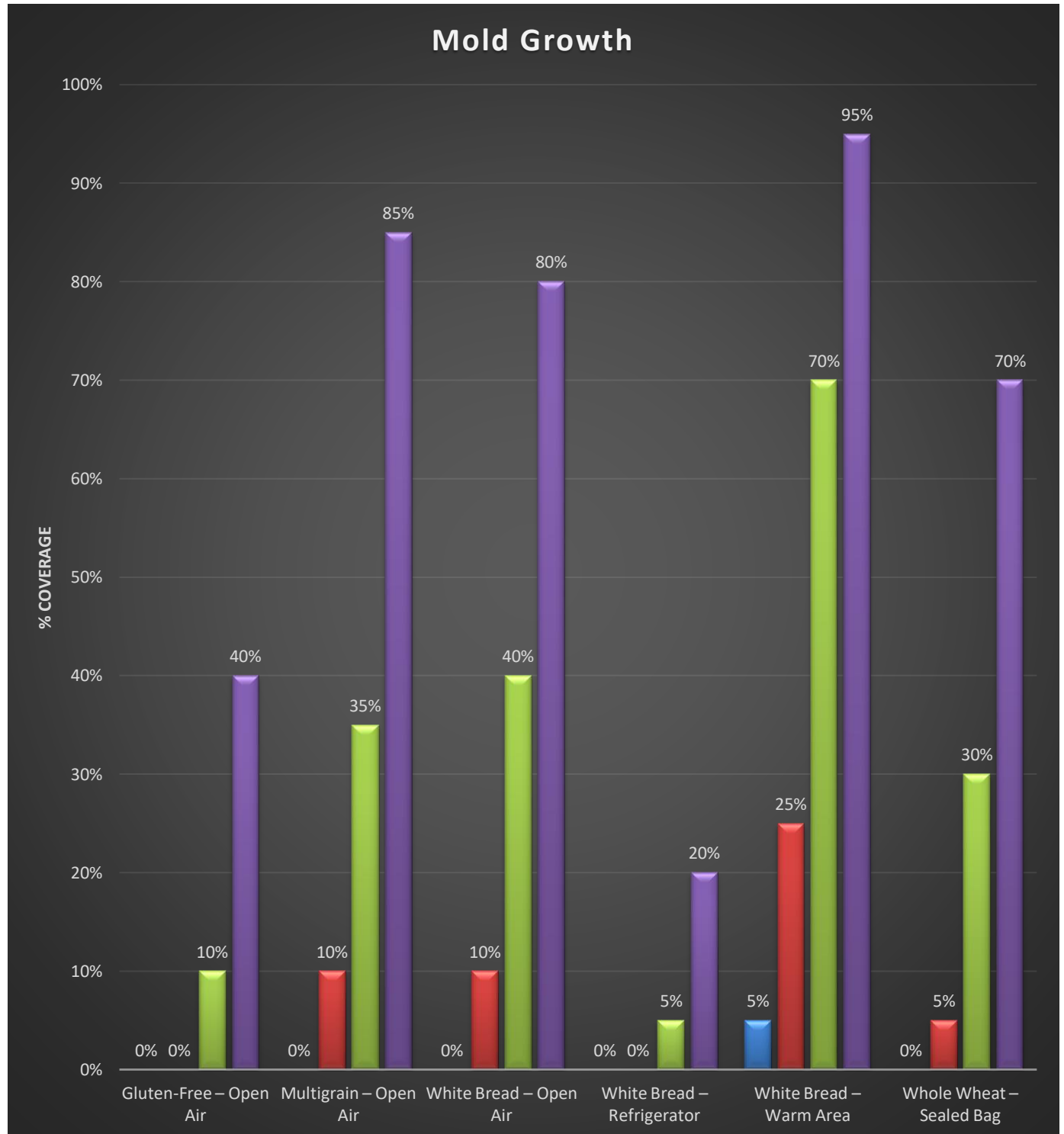
Observation Table

Day	Bag A (warm /moist)	Bag B (warm/ dry)	Bag C (cool /fridge)	Bag D (sun light)
0	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots
1	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots
2	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots
3	Tiny White Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots
4	White fuzzy mold patches	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots	Fresh No Spots
5	Green mold spread	No Spots	Fresh No spots	Fresh No spots
6	Green mold spread	No spots	FreshNo spots	No spots
7	Green mold spread	No spots	Fresh No spots	Dryness
8	Large green mold	Few small white spots	Still fresh looking	Dryness No spots
9	Bread mostly covered	Few small white spots	No spots	Dryness
10	Bread mostly covered	Mold spreading slowly	No spots	Dryness

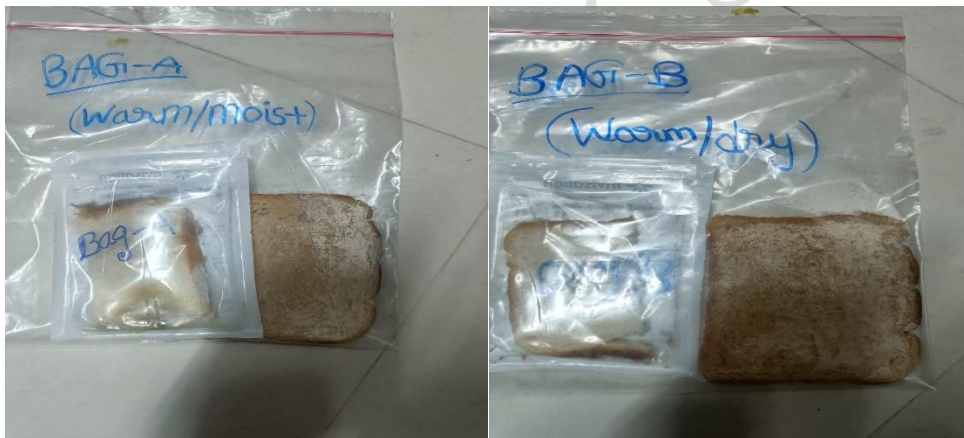
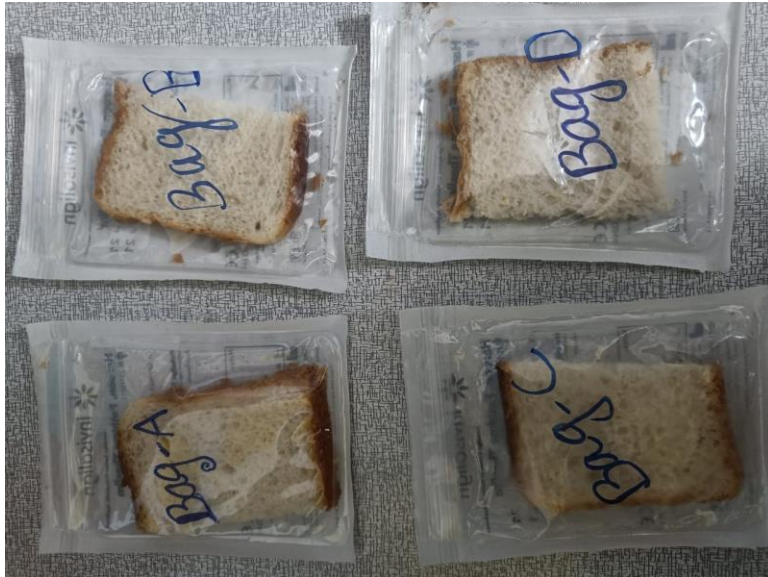
Table: Mold Growth (% Coverage) Over Time

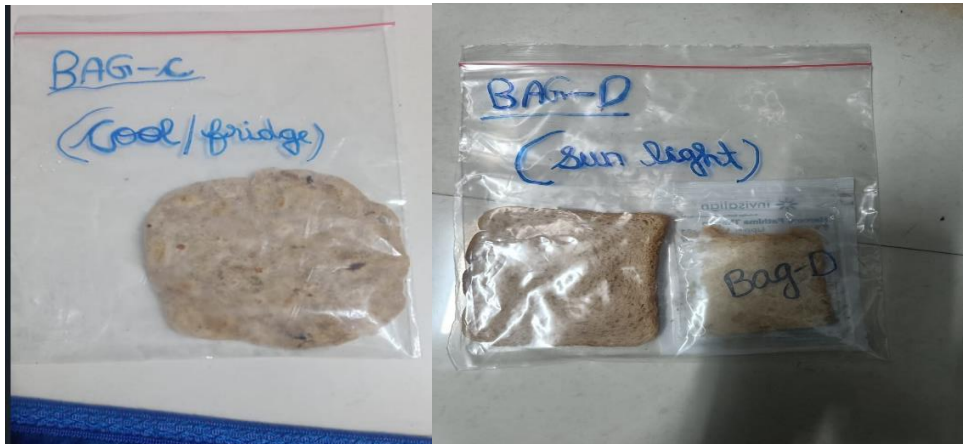
Bread Type & Condition	Day 1	Day 3	Day 5	Day 10
White Bread – Open Air	0%	10%	40%	80%
White Bread – Refrigerator	0%	0%	5%	20%
Whole Wheat – Sealed Bag	0%	5%	30%	70%
Multigrain – Open Air	0%	10%	35%	85%
White Bread – Warm Area	5%	25%	70%	95%
Gluten-Free – Open Air	0%	0%	10%	40%

Graph of Table



Data Collection Images





Result and Collection

- Fastest mold growth occurred on white bread in dark and moist conditions.
- Slowest or no mold growth was found in refrigerated conditions across all bread types.
- Whole wheat and multigrain breads molded slower than white bread, possibly due to preservatives.
- Moisture significantly accelerated mold development.
- Light exposure had less influence than moisture and temperature.

Conclusion

The experiment investigating mold growth on different types of bread under various conditions demonstrates that mold growth is significantly influenced by both the type of bread and the environmental conditions in which it is stored.

Key findings include:

1. **Type of Bread:** Homemade or preservative-free bread tends to grow mold faster than commercially produced bread, which often contains preservatives to slow down mold growth.
2. **Storage Conditions:**
 - **Warm and Moist Environments:** These conditions promote the fastest mold growth due to ideal temperatures and humidity levels for fungal reproduction.
 - **Cold (Refrigerated) Conditions:** Mold growth is significantly slowed or even halted, as the cold inhibits fungal activity.
 - **Dry Conditions:** Lack of moisture can delay or reduce mold growth, but not completely prevent it over time.
3. **Light Exposure:** While light has less impact than temperature and moisture, darkness often supports mold growth more effectively as many molds prefer low-light conditions.

Final Conclusion:

Mold growth is most rapid on breads without preservatives and in warm, humid, and dark environments. Conversely, storing bread in cooler and drier conditions—especially in the refrigerator—can significantly delay mold formation. These findings can help inform better storage practices to extend the shelf life of bread.

Future Enhancement

1. Expand Bread Types

- Include gluten-free breads, sourdough, rye, multigrain, etc.
- Compare preservative-free vs. commercial breads.
- Analyze how different ingredient profiles affect mold growth rate and types.

2. Test More Environmental Conditions

- Vary humidity levels (e.g., using humidifiers or desiccants).
 - Try controlled light exposure (e.g., total darkness vs. sunlight vs. artificial light).
 - Use sealed vs. unsealed containers to study air exposure.
-

3. Measure and Quantify Mold Growth

- Use a ruler or grid paper to estimate mold coverage percentage.
 - Take daily photos and use image analysis software to track mold spread over time.
 - Weigh the bread slices before and after to determine mass change.
-

4. Identify Mold Species

- Use a microscope to identify mold types (e.g., *Rhizopus*, *Penicillium*, *Aspergillus*).
 - Partner with a local lab or school biology department for sample analysis.
-

5. Test Anti-Fungal Agents

- Introduce natural or synthetic antifungals (e.g., vinegar, lemon juice, essential oils, commercial preservatives).
 - Observe their effects on mold delay or prevention.
-

6. Investigate Storage Materials

- Compare bread stored in plastic wrap, paper, cloth, foil, or Tupperware.
 - Study how breathable vs. non-breathable storage affects growth.
-

7. Temperature Gradient Study

- Instead of simple "room temperature vs. fridge," create a temperature spectrum:
 - Freezer
 - Fridge (4°C)
 - Cool room (~15°C)
 - Room temp (~22°C)
 - Warm (~30°C)
 - Hot (~40°C, near an oven or heating pad)
-

8. Time-Lapse or Video Recording

- Set up a camera to record the mold's development over time.
 - Great for presentations and detailed review of growth patterns.
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9. Explore Nutrient Substitution

- Spread butter, sugar, or water on bread before testing.
 - Examine how extra nutrients affect mold growth.
-

10. Scientific Reporting Improvements

- Include proper controls (e.g., sterile bread or frozen bread).
 - Use graphing tools to visualize growth trends.
 - Apply basic statistics to analyze growth rate differences.
-

Application

1. Understanding Food Spoilage

- Helps identify which types of bread spoil faster and under what conditions.
 - Useful for consumers to learn how to store bread properly to extend shelf life.
 - Aids manufacturers in formulating bread with better resistance to mold (e.g. using natural preservatives or modified packaging).
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2. Developing Preservation Methods

- Helps test the effectiveness of natural or artificial preservatives (e.g. vinegar, citric acid, essential oils).
 - Encourages exploration of packaging materials and storage techniques that reduce spoilage (e.g. vacuum sealing, refrigeration).
-

3. Educational Value

- A hands-on project to teach students about:
 - Fungi and microorganisms
 - Decomposition and nutrient cycles
 - Scientific method (hypothesis, variables, observation, analysis)
 - Encourages observation, critical thinking, and experimentation at school or home.
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4. Public Health Awareness

- Raises awareness about mold-related health risks (some molds produce allergens or mycotoxins).
 - Helps people recognize unsafe food and avoid foodborne illnesses.
-

5. Support for Food Waste Reduction

- By learning what conditions promote mold growth, people can better manage food storage and reduce waste.
 - Encourages mindful consumption habits (e.g. freezing bread instead of leaving it out).
-

6. Biological and Environmental Research

- Serves as a simple model to study fungal life cycles, spore dispersal, and microbial competition.
 - Can be extended to study biodegradation, which is useful in environmental science and composting research.
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7. Microbial Resistance Studies

- Lays a foundation for more advanced experiments on mold resistance to preservatives or environmental changes.
- Can connect to studies on antimicrobial resistance, a growing concern in microbiology.

8. Home and Industry Application

- Home bakers and food businesses can learn how to store their products better.
 - Small bakeries can use findings to choose packaging and preservatives to improve shelf life naturally.
-

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