

Sample Lesson Plan # 1: Food and Food Security

Grade 9 Social Studies

Objective: students will map out the origins of their food, discuss the effects of their food choices on the world, and examine the benefits of locally produced food

Materials needed:

- “Food and Food Security” Curriculum Unit
- large map of the world
- pieces of sticky paper cut into strips
- copy of the USDA Food Pyramid

Time: approximately one hour

Plan: Two nights before the lesson begins, have students write down 3 food items in their house and which country they came from. Tell them to focus on primary ingredients, such as flour, sugar, vegetables, fruits, rice, etc. instead of prepared foods, which contain foods from many sources and locations.

Introduction (1 minute)

Tell students that they will be looking at the sources for their food and the effects that this has on farmers, the environment, and the economy.

Mapping activity (15 minutes)

With a large map at the front of the classroom, have student come up to the front and quickly place sticky papers on the countries from their list. You may want to have students read a copy of the first page of the curriculum unit while others are working at the front of the class. Once you have all of the papers on the map, ask students to describe what they observe.

Questions for discussion:

Which types of foods came from the furthest away (oranges, bananas, coffee, rice, etc.)

How does the food arrive in our grocery stores (truck, plane, boat etc.)

Were any of them surprised by how many countries were represented?

Do any of them try to buy food that is grown in or near your town? Which foods?

What are some of the benefits of buying food grown locally? (support your town, farmers, less transportation, know what you are buying, etc.)

The Big Picture (5 minutes)

Go over some of the facts outlined on page 1 of the curriculum unit

- 800 million people across the world are malnourished
- more than 5 million deaths in children under 5 each year
- farmers are earning less each year
- farmers receive 10 cents from every dollar spent on food
- our food moves an average of 1,400 miles before we eat it

Despite the large amounts of food that we have available, there are many people in the world who do not have enough food. Food production continues to increase in the world, but there are still millions of people suffering from hunger. Explain that this is not the hunger that you might feel after a day at school or work, but hunger that is experienced over many months and years.

Discussion (10 minutes)

Ask students to discuss the following point: Much of the food that we eat is produced in the poorer countries of the world, and many of the people who produce it often do not have enough to eat themselves. Instead of growing food, many farmers will grow a single crop (monoculture) that is exported to wealthier countries such as Canada or the United States. What are their feelings on this? After they discuss this encourage them to come up with some alternatives to the current system and answer the following questions.

Questions for Discussion

How can we be sure that we have enough good food?

How can we be sure that those in the developing world will have enough as well?

What are some of the other problems associated with the food trade? (local jobs in food production lost, pollution from transportation, farmers paid poorly, pesticides and herbicides used, large amounts of water needed, people are growing food for export rather than to feed their families, etc.)

Reaching for Alternatives (20 minutes)

Have students work in groups of three. Using the USDA Food Pyramid, they are to come up with a plan for how to eat food produced only within a specific area (within 100 miles of their homes, etc.)

They should think about the following questions while working on this:

Which foods are available in the area? Which foods could become available? Which food items are not available? Are you missing anything important? Is it possible to live on the food available only in your area?

Visit the local Farmer's Market Website to see "What's Fresh":

<http://www.sanmarcosfarmersmarket.com/>

Discussion (10 minutes)

As a class, discuss the general findings of the work groups.

Is it possible to eat well using only locally grown and produced products?

Why would you want to do this?

Why would you not want to do this?

Writing Activity (Homework)

Have students write a half page on the issue of local vs. international food sources.

Where do they think we should be getting our food? They should use what they have learned to take a position on the issue. This can be a homework assignment for the evening or done at the end of class.

Vocabulary

monoculture - The cultivation of a single crop on a farm or in a region or country

Follow up

Look at the Fair Trade Unit for another vision of food trade or devote another class to further investigation and activities on food themes by integrating the additional teaching and learning materials listed below.

Additional Resources (Optional):

- Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. Penguin, 2007.

What should we have for dinner? Should we eat a fast-food hamburger? Something organic? Or perhaps something we hunt, gather, or grow ourselves? To find out, Pollan follows each of the food chains that sustain us - industrial food, organic or alternative food, and food we forage ourselves - from the source to a final meal, and in the process develops a definitive account of the American way of eating.

- Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*. Harper Perennial, 2008.

This book chronicles the year that Barbara Kingsolver, along with her husband and two daughters, made a commitment to become locavores—those who eat only locally grown foods. This first entailed a move away from their home in non-food-producing Tuscon to a family farm in Virginia, where they got right down to the business of growing and raising their own food and supporting local farmers. For teens who grew up on supermarket offerings, the notion not only of growing one's own produce but also of harvesting one's own poultry was as foreign as the concept that different foods relate to different seasons.

- **The Edible Schoolyard Website** <http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/homepage.html>

The Edible Schoolyard, in collaboration with Martin Luther King Junior Middle School, provides urban public school students with a one-acre organic garden and a kitchen classroom. Using food systems as a unifying concept, students learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare nutritious seasonal produce. Experiences in the kitchen and garden foster a better understanding of how the natural world sustains us, and promote the environmental and social well being of our school community.

- **French Immersion Resources** – ONF-NFB Vidéo: “Main basse sur les genes ou les aliments mutants”