



Lesson: The People In Our Food Systems

Duration: *One 40-minute session*

Section 1: Framework

Essential Questions

- What is a food system and who participates in a food system?
- Who are the people who make up my food system?
- How do my actions impact people in my food system and my community?

Lesson Objectives

- Students will know what produce, producer, food system, economy, and gratitude mean.
- Students will understand that food systems include people participating in a variety of roles.
- Students will know that some foods are produced locally while other foods are produced at a distance due to factors such as climate.
- Students will be able to apply knowledge of food systems to estimate and explain the number of people who may have played a role in getting a food item to them, to eat.
- Students will be able to explain the impact that 'buying local' has on the environment, their physical health, and people in the local community.
- Students will identify some of the people who are part of their food systems and brainstorm ways to recognize these people and their contributions.

Context

Eating is a fundamental human need. It is part of the shared human experience. Even so, how often do we stop to reflect on where our food comes from? Or, similarly, how frequently do we consider the people who play vital roles in our food systems? This lesson supports students as they develop a basic understanding of the processes and people involved as food moves from field to fork and encourages consideration of the impact that food habits have on people and communities.

Standards

PRIMARY

Massachusetts Health Standard 3.5: Through the study of safe and adequate food supply, students will identify the connection between food served in the home with regional food production.

RELATED

Massachusetts Health Standard 13.1: Through the study of interdependence, students will describe types of natural resources and their connection with health.

Massachusetts Health Standard 13.2: Through the study of interdependence, students will describe how business, industry, and individuals can work cooperatively to solve ecological health problems, such as conserving natural resources and decreasing pollution.

Massachusetts Science Standard 3.LS4.3: Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular environment some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive.



Massachusetts Reading Standard RI.3.10: Independently and proficiently read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, mathematical, and technical texts, exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 3.

Section 2: Activities

PART A

Materials

-  Google Slides: The People In Our Food Systems
-  Handout: My Food System

-  Writing utensil
-  Optional: crayons, markers, colored pencils

1. Introduction (3 minutes)

Begin by letting students know that today the class will be learning about food systems and the people who help us access the foods we eat. Specifically, students will be learning about the roles various people play in food systems and spend some time thinking about the people who help get food to the local community each day.

2. The People In Our Food Systems Slides & Discussion (27 minutes)

Slides. Read through the provided slides, “The People In Our Food Systems”, with students. Review any unfamiliar words or phrases with students along the way. Several questions are asked throughout the presentation to help students engage

with the terms and cultivate understanding through personal connection. Engage in a brief discussion in response to these questions, as appropriate and beneficial.

Discussion. At the conclusion of the slides, take a few moments to help students consolidate key ideas by discussing the following:

- What does it mean to produce something? What is a food producer?
- In your own words, what is a food system? Who are some of the people who participate in food systems?
- Where does our food come from?
- What impact does buying locally-grown or locally-produced food have on us and our community?
- Who are some of the people who participate in our food systems? How might we express gratitude to them for the role they play in getting food to us?

3. Worksheet

Provide students with a copy of the handout “My Food System”; this handout encourages students to practice vocabulary and to think in greater depth about their food system, as defined by food habits. Depending on time, this handout may be assigned as independent work or form the basis of further sharing and discussion. It may also be assigned as out of class work.

Section 3: Lesson Extensions

- Ask students to keep a record of the foods that they eat in a day. Once that list is complete, encourage students to read labels to find out where that food is from. Apply that information, individually or as a class, to a map and analyze the data. Are there any trends that students notice?
- Create a brochure that highlights people in the community who have a role in food production. Consider highlighting people in diverse roles: a farm-owner; someone at a nearby farmer’s market; someone who makes a local product, such as honey or bread; a delivery person; someone in the school food services department; a friend or relative; etc.
- Schedule a taste test to compare and contrast the taste of fresh, locally-sourced food compared with the same item sourced from farther away. How do these foods differ in look, feel, taste, smell, even sound?
- Integrate math! Using food logs as a data source, compare the quantity of local foods to those produced farther away in ratio or percentage form. Or, utilize the map extension to approximate the miles that foods are traveling to arrive at the local community.