

The Story of My Food - Lesson Plan

From Seed to Table

Goal

- To encourage students to learn the life cycle of the foods they eat for a healthy lifestyle.

Objectives

- At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
 - Explain the step by step process for growing foods from seed to harvest
 - Create a timeline from the planting to the harvest to the table
 - Define and identify a food supply chain

Related Activities

What's your food's story?

The Industrialized Food Structure

(An extension of Case Study #4 topic, "Story of My Food")

Grow

Farmers use large equipment to ready the soil for planting.

When the soil is prepared, they plant the seeds.

While the plant is growing, it needs to be maintained. The plant may need water, fertilizer, to be weeded, or some kind of pest control.

Harvest

Farmers harvest the crop when it is ripe.

Usually, large farm machines are used for the harvesting of the crop.

Large farm machines can gather the crops in big quantities at once.

Transport

The freshly harvested crops are moved by truck, train, air, ship or on a barge.

Some crops may move many distances from where they were grown.

Prepare

Factory equipment is used to process the foods.

The equipment can chop, dry, grind, boil, can or even freeze food.

This preparation makes the food more convenient to use.

Package

Machines put food into containers.

The food is packaged into cans, boxes, bags or other materials.

The package protects the food and makes it easy to sell.

Distribute

Large quantities of foods are received and sold by large supermarkets to consumers.

Smaller quantities of foods are received by grocery stores, convenience stores or small mom-and-pop stores.

Consume

Customers purchase, prepare and eat the food.

Compost

Some food scraps and packaging can be *composted*. This means it breaks down into rich soil that can be used in a garden, feeding the new plants as they grow.

When compost is added to The Story, it becomes cyclical, meaning there is no beginning or end.

It is a more *sustainable* process.

Activities

What's Your Food's Story?

1. Students choose the last food they ate.
2. Students research the food from the original source.
 - If it is not a whole food (ie., if it is a food that has a food label), students read the ingredients list and determine where to start the food story by choosing one or two ingredients to research.
3. Using the Industrialized Food Structure list from above, students make a timeline of the process of the food they chose, "from farm to the table". This could be a written timeline, drawing, or a graphic design.

Examples of foods to research to find the food's story:

1. Nut butter and jam sandwich on bread
 - Nut butter (almond, peanut, cashew, etc.)
 - Jam (grape, strawberry, raspberry, etc.)
 - Whole wheat bread (choose one or two ingredients from the food label, such as wheat flour or sugar)
2. Cheese pizza

- Crust (white flour, wheat flour, corn flour, etc.)
- Pizza sauce (Tomatoes, salt, herbs, etc.)
- Cheese

Example:

Last food eaten: mango

Timeline:

Grow

For commercial growing, mango trees are grafted from other trees. They bloom and produce fruit 3-5 years after planting. They need lots of water the first couple of years. They need to be fertilized and pruned. They need to be sprayed to keep insects from eating the fruit.

Harvest

Mangoes must be picked by hand. They should be picked green or they could rot before they get to the grocery store. Part of the stem must remain on the fruit.

Transport

They are packaged upside down in field crates and taken by truck to the packaging center.

Prepare

At the packaging center, machines clean the mangoes by spraying and brushing them. They are dipped in hot water to kill the fruit flies.

Package

The mangoes are packaged in single layers and put in cool rooms until transported in cooled space.

Distribute

Mangoes could be stored in a cooled distribution center or transported directly to supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores or small mom-and-pop stores.

Consume

I ate the mango. It was delicious.

Compost

There are parts I didn't eat such as the mango skin and seed. I put them in the compost bin.

