



LOCAL VERSUS IMPORTED FOODS

Garden

EST. TIME 45 minutes SEASON winter 

GRADE 8 | LESSON #12

? ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S)

- What are the impacts of importing food versus eating locally?

PREPARATION (15 MINUTES)

To prepare for this lesson, research and print an article listing the benefits of eating local foods. Gather materials. Label the local, regional, and imported vegetables with the name of the region or country where they were grown.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Food systems comprise all aspects of food production and food distribution from planting to harvest to post-harvest production (packaging, transporting, etc.). This lesson explores the differences between local, regional, and imported foods. It should be noted that there is no agreed upon definition or mileage radius for the terms “local” or “regional.” The impacts of a more local food system include environmental sustainability, improved health and nutrition, and support for local economies.

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will research the impact of buying locally, regionally, and importing foods from across the world. They will then investigate a local, regional, and imported example of a specific vegetable, making inferences and learning as much as they can about the vegetable only from its place of origin. Finally, students will taste test the vegetables to determine the difference in taste, texture, and freshness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Content Learning Objectives

GFS.8.3 Describe and characterize the differences between foods grown locally and those imported from other parts of the United States and the world.

Life Skills Learning Objectives

PLS.5 Students develop the ability to make informed and responsible decisions.

ACADEMIC STANDARD CONNECTIONS

Social Studies: Economics.

HEALTH STANDARD CONNECTIONS

National Health Education Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

MATERIALS

- Any local, seasonal vegetable growing in the garden
- A local, regional, and imported example of a specific vegetable
- Post-it notes
- Sharing and tasting supplies for the vegetables
- Handouts: *article about benefits of eating local food*

Abc VOCABULARY

- Local
- Regional
- Imported
- Seasonal
- Post-harvest

ASSESSMENT

- Observational checklist



Use the lesson template to create your own and share with us!

CULTIVATE CURIOSITY (5 MINUTES) *engage*

1. Display for students an example of a **local**, **regional**, and **imported** vegetable that is **seasonal** at the time for your area. Have labels that say “local,” “regional,” and “imported.” Work with students to define each word. Then have students try to match the correct label with each vegetable and justify their ideas.

ROOT AROUND (10 MINUTES) *explore*

1. Reveal which vegetable is local, which is regional, and which is imported. Add labels to each that say where they were grown.
2. Provide students time to look at the different vegetable samples and read the article you selected for the lesson that lists the benefits of eating local food.


GROW UNDERSTANDING (5 MINUTES) *explain*

1. Have students share their findings with the group. Discuss the potential differences between local, regional, and imported vegetables. The differences can range from the quality of the food (freshness, nutrients, taste) to the environmental impacts to the economic impacts.
2. Guide students to understand that imported food travels further to get to our plates. Imported food is not as fresh and has used more fossil fuels on its journey.

OBSERVE THE FRUITS (15 MINUTES) *elaborate*

1. Lead students in closely investigating each of the local, regional, and imported vegetables. Have them research about how many miles each traveled, and have them infer about how long it would have taken them to travel that far. Remind students to take into account **post-harvest** steps, such as packing, weighing, delivery, and the like. Student work may look like:
 - Locally grown vegetable / harvested 1 day ago / 50 miles (worth of emissions)
 - Regionally grown vegetable / harvested 3 days ago / 500 miles (worth of emissions)
 - Imported vegetable / harvested 7 days ago / 5000 miles (worth of emissions)

While we likely will not have concrete numbers, their educated guesses will suffice.

2. Then lead students in a careful scientific drawing of the appearance of each vegetable, noting similarities and differences.
3. Guide students to wash, prepare, and taste each vegetable, comparing and describing the taste, texture, and freshness of each. Use Culinary Flavor and Texture concepts and adjectives learned in the kitchen.
4.  As students work, use the observational checklist while they are working to assess students development of Personal and Community Life Skills.

REFLECT (5 MINUTES) *evaluate*

1. Recognize student behaviors aligned with being the best for themselves, their communities, and their environment. ask students to reflect on how they were able to gain knowledge that will help them make informed decisions.
2. Challenge students to consider why each of the options of local, regional, and imported may be preferable at different times (if a food cannot grow within a region or at a specific time).
3. Challenge students to consider what strategies they could use in their food business to ensure they are serving the highest quality ingredients.



ADAPTING FOR INDOORS

In the case of inclement weather, this lesson in its entirety can occur indoors.

CONNECTIONS TO KITCHEN LESSONS

As students prepare foods in the kitchen, have them identify which ingredients are local and which are imported.

POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS

Community: Interview farmers market customers about why they choose to buy locally.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Farmer's Almanac, Planting Dates
<https://www.almanac.com/gardening/planting-dates>
- Greenopedia, Why is Local Healthier?
<http://greenopedia.com/local-food-is-healthier/>