

Tracing Food from Its Original Source

Lesson Plan

Name of Activity: Where Does My Food Come From?

By: Jana Nelson

Purpose: The purpose of having students examine different food labels and then conduct research to trace the food paths from the original plant or animal source is multifaceted. It is aimed at enhancing their understanding of the food system and its impact on various aspects of life and the environment.

Background Agricultural Connections: Having students examine different food labels and then conduct research to trace the food paths from the original plant or animal source connects deeply with agricultural education and raises awareness about the agriculture-food nexus. These activities serve to bridge the gap between consumers and the agricultural processes that sustain them, offering a multitude of background agricultural connections.

Grade levels: 7th grade

Lesson Length: Approx. (3) 50 minute class periods to trace their food to the original source, with an additional (2-3) 50 minute class periods to complete their poster on showing the “story” of where their food came from.

Learning Objectives: Designing an educational activity where students examine food labels and research the origins and distribution paths of food items aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the food system and its broader impacts. Learning objectives for this could be any of the following:

- Understanding food origins and production
- Nutritional knowledge
- Exploring the food supply chain
- Environmental impacts
- Encourage practical life skills

Materials and Equipment Needed:

- Computer with reliable WIFI for researching the route of their food
- DVD - “Seed to Table”
- Labels from a variety of foods
- Map for a visual of where their food started and where it ended up
- Poster board for creating the “story” of their food
- Colored pencils and/or markers for creating their poster

Teacher Preparation: Teacher will need to prepare the DVD for the students to watch. There are two specific “stories” of food they will watch to show them a couple of different options when it comes to processing and transporting food.

Teacher will also need to create various vocabulary words for students to incorporate into their posters. Examples of these words may include:

- Agriculture
- Organic farming
- Supply chain
- Food miles
- Traceability
- Carbon footprint

Activities and Procedures:

Activity #1: Students will be given “Going the Distance” worksheets to complete over the weekend. They will visit a grocery store and follow the instructions on the handout to find out where every food item was produced, along with the miles that the food traveled to get to the grocery store they are standing in.

Activity #2: Students at each table will share with their group the amount of miles each meal “travelled”. They will discuss the different items and the difference between some of their answers. Discussion question: Will the amount of miles a meal “travelled” affect your decision on purchasing those items?

Activity #3: Students will watch the video as a class “why you should know where your food comes from”. After the video, this is a great opportunity for teacher-led discussions on some vocabulary words that were noted above in Teacher Preparation, along with a couple more questions, such as:

- What transportation methods are used to move food through the supply chain?
- Does fewer food miles (vocab word!) always equate to an overall lower carbon footprint?

Activity #4: Students will watch another video on the two stories of produce and their journey. One is the story of corn, being processed in a typical industrial food chain. The other story is of an heirloom tomato and its journey of being grown on a mixed crop farm where the farmer uses organic pest control and composting.

Activity #5: Students will examine food labels and conduct research to trace food paths from the original plant or animal source. Then, they will create a poster showing the “story” of their food, the journey it took to get to them and the amount of food miles.

References/Resources:

Handout “Going the Distance” (Given as homework over the weekend to complete) – attached to the end of this lesson plan

Video #1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZxxWDiVLuM&t=3s>

Video #2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zeDhMtgRbk>

Grading of Lesson Plan Activity:

Appropriate Purpose, Background Agricultural Connections and Learning Objectives (10 points)

Description of Materials and Equipment Needed and Teacher Preparation

(5 points)

Description of Activities and Procedures

(20 points)

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Eggs

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Banana

Origin: City, State, Country

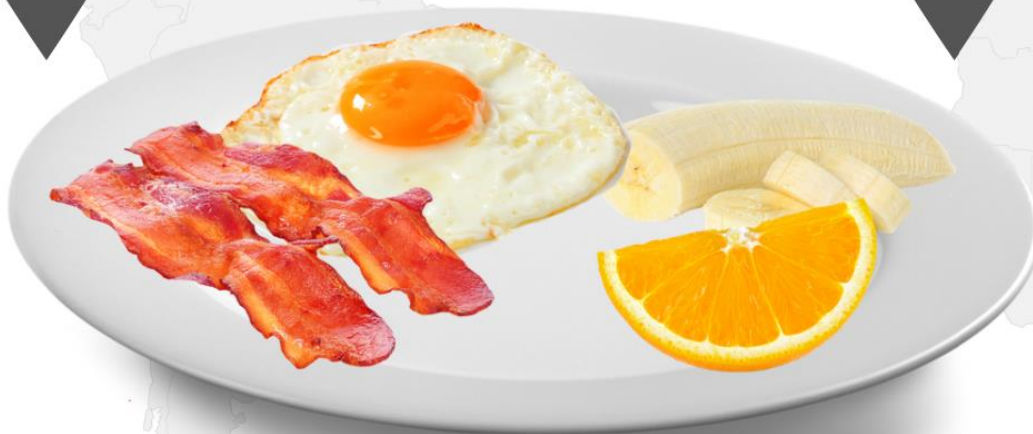
Miles to You

Bacon

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Orange



Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Raspberries

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Strawberries

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Yogurt

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Blueberries

Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Tomatoes

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Olives

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Lettuce

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Cucumbers

Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Lettuce

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Tomatoes

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Cheese

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Turkey



Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Potato

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Asparagus

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Steak

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Mushrooms



Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

**Sweet
Potato**

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Cranberries

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Turkey

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

**Green
Beans**



Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Rice

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

**Green
Beans**

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Salmon

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

**Pepper
(spice)**



Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.



Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Hamburger

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Tomatoes

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Onion

Origin: _____
City, State, Country

Miles to You _____

Lettuce

Total food miles for this meal: _____

Name: _____

Food: Going the Distance

Directions: Visit a local grocery store and find the foods seen below. Read the packaging labels to discover where the food was grown or packaged. Record the city and state or the country. Then, use Google Maps to calculate the miles it traveled to your home.

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Onions

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Zucchini

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Chicken

Origin: City, State, Country

Miles to You

Bell Pepper



Total food miles for this meal: _____

