

Global Voices is a weekly column written by Craig and Marc Kielburger examining current events, topics and issues affecting local and global communities. Each month, engaging classroom resources are created to accompany one column to help educators bring world issues into the classroom in a digestible manner. For more information on how to sign up please visit WE.org/global-voices-signup.

Fact Sheet

- Food Freedom Day is the day of the year when the average working Canadian citizen has earned enough income to pay for all the food they will eat during the year. The date is usually during the first or second week of February. In 2019, it fell on February 9. The date of Food Freedom Day is calculated every year by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, an organization that represents Canadian farmers. The CFA calculates the date by using Statistics Canada information on average disposable income (the money you have left to spend after taxes), and how much the average Canadian spends on food. ([Canadian Federation of Agriculture](#))
- On average, Canadians spend 9–11 percent of their disposable income on food. Americans are the lowest at 6.4 percent of income spent on food. In China and Russia, people spend 20–30 percent of income on food. The highest in the world is Nigeria, where the average is 54 percent of income spent on food. ([World Economic Forum](#))
- Food security is a major problem in Canada's Northern communities. Almost 70 percent of people in Nunavut are food insecure—the highest rate of food insecurity of any Indigenous group living in a developed country. ([Food Secure Canada](#))
- Food costs as much as three times more in the North than in southern Canadian communities. A bag of carrots that costs \$2.25 in the rest of Canada could cost as much as \$6.90 in Nunavut. A \$4.53 bag of apples in the south could cost \$7.26 in Nunavut. And a sack of flour that costs just \$5 here can be more than \$13 in the North. ([CBC](#))
- According to the 2016 census, more than 280,000 people are employed in farming in Canada. However, Canada is losing farms. From 2011 to 2016, the number of farms in Canada fell by 5.9 percent. In 1961, there were almost half a million farms in Canada. Now there are less than 200,000. ([Statistics Canada](#))
- Canadians throw away almost 2.2 million tonnes of edible food every year. The cost of that food wasted adds up to roughly \$17 billion annually. Every day, Canadians waste an estimated 470,000 heads of lettuce, 2.4 million potatoes, 750,000 loaves of bread, 450,000 eggs and one million cups of milk. ([National Zero Waste Council](#))
- The process of production and transportation of food for our tables adds to Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. So wasted creates unnecessary emissions, as well as wasting the fresh water that was used to grow the food. Reducing food waste by one tonne is equal to taking one car off the road for an entire year. ([National Zero Waste Council](#))

WE Learning Framework Skills



Critical Thinking



Action Planning



Reflection



Information Literacy



Research and Writing

These icons identify the most relevant skills students will develop using this resource. Learn more about the WE Learning Framework at WE.org/we-schools/program/learning-framework/.

Subject

- Social Studies
- Health and Physical Education
- Language

Materials

- Sticky notes
- Tablets/computer with Internet access/projector
- Chart paper

Key Terms

- **Food literacy**—Understanding the social, environmental and economic impact of our food choices. Food illiteracy is the opposite—not knowing or understanding the impact of food choices.
- **Food desert**—Communities or neighbourhoods—usually inner city areas or remote rural communities—where residents do not have access to a nearby affordable source of healthy fresh food.

Classroom Activity - Grades 6 to 8

Essential Question:

- Why is it important to reduce food waste in our communities?

Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Reflect on their own food choices
- Understand the impact their food choices have on food waste
- Evaluate the consequences of food waste in the local, national and global community

Discussion:

1. Who does food waste affect?
2. How does food waste affect farming communities?
3. What is food literacy? How does an individual or a community become more food literate?
4. How much, on average, does a North American family spend on food each year?
5. How can you connect with farming communities in your local area? What questions do you want to ask them?

Warm Up (40 minutes)

Educator's Note: In the following activities, students will discuss where food comes from and how food is wasted in their local context. There may be students in your classroom who are experiencing a food shortage in their own lives. Ensure that students feel comfortable and safe during the discussions about food consumption and are not made to feel vulnerable about their own circumstances.

Prior to conducting the warm up activity, prepare a range of food items that can be found in your home. For example, fresh food or vegetables, canned food, meat or dairy products, or grains. Ensure that the food items have a label that states where it was produced.

Show students the food items or products from your home. Explain to students that these food items were purchased from the local grocery store. Ask students to create small groups and distribute one food item to each group. In their groups, invite them to discuss the following questions about the food items:

- What is this food item?
- Where was this food item produced/grown?
- What happens to these food items if they are not eaten?

After students have discussed in groups, ask them to share their responses with the class. Encourage students to consider that these food products were grown on a farm before they were purchased from the store, and that if the food items are not consumed they will be thrown away.

Educator's Note: In the following activity, students will be looking through the school garbage bins to identify food items and products that have been thrown away. Consider also looking through the cafeteria bins to see how much food the school disposes of through the day. Liaise with the school management to set up bags of garbage in the school courtyard or playground for students to look through.

Explain to students that food is wasted every day. Ask students if they have thrown away a food item that they did not want to eat or that had gone bad. Inform students that they will be looking through the school garbage to see if they can identify food items that have been thrown away without being fully eaten. Ask students to create groups of four, and provide students with gloves, a face mask and a tablet or camera before commencing the activity.

Lead students outside the classroom into the school courtyard or playground. Ask each group to select a bag of garbage and carefully look through it to identify food items that have been thrown away without being eaten. In their groups, ask students to select one person who will be taking photographs of the food with the tablet. After students have completed their task, bring them back into the classroom. Ask them, how many food items did they identify that had been thrown away? Why do they think students threw away the food? What could have students done with the food, instead of wasting it?

Alternatively, invite students to observe students at lunchtime and identify foods that students are not eating and throwing away. Ask them to write down all the foods they saw being disposed and invite them to consider, why are students throwing away food instead of eating it?

Investigate and Learn (2 x 60 minutes)

As a class, or in small groups, read the *Global Voices* article "Are You Food Literate." In their groups, encourage students to discuss the questions and consider their own understanding of food literacy. Do they consider themselves food literate?

Explain to students that the term "food literacy" means understanding the impact of food choices on their health, the environment and the economy. Ask students to refer to the charts they created in the warm up activity. Have them select three food items from their chart and respond to the following questions using their own knowledge or conducting research.

Questions:

- Where did this food item come from? Where was it grown?
- Is this food item in its original form or has it been processed?
- How much does it cost to produce this food item? (For example: land, water and resources)
- What is required to produce this food item? (For example: water, soil and land)

After students have responded to the questions about their food items, invite them to share their responses with the class. Ask students, where does all food come from? Who is responsible for the production of food? Why is it important to understand the origin of the food they consume?

Show students the video "A Visit to the Farm: Where does Food Come From?" www.youtube.com/watch?v=RusX3CnMV94 (4:50). Ask students, why do you think Scott wanted to show his children where the food they eat comes from? How will understanding this process help them make better choices?

Explain to students that the food they eat every day comes from many different parts of the world, and farmers work every day to ensure that the best quality of food reaches consumers. In the following activity they will have the opportunity to learn about how a farmer in their local community grows crops, and develop an understanding about how the food choices they make impact their health, the environment and the community.

As a class, using an online mapping tool, search the local area for farms. Create a list of the farms on the front board. Divide students into small groups and allocate one farm per group. If the local area only has one farm, consider looking for additional farms in neighbouring regions.

In their groups, ask students to research the farm and create a profile outlining the following information. Encourage students to find as much information, as this will guide their question development in the following activity.

- When was the farm started?
- What variety of crops do they grow?
- Do they have animals on their farm? Do they farm animal products?
- When do they have the most crop yield?

Invite groups to present their profiles to the class. Ask students to consider what additional information do they want to know about the farm. What information could they not find in their research? Provide each student with a sticky note and in the same small groups, ask them to discuss and create a list of questions they want to ask the farmer in order to understand more about the farm they researched. Encourage students to write down one question per sticky note. After groups have created their questions, post these on the front board. As students are posting their questions, create groups of similar questions.

Example Questions:

- What are some of the foods that are grown on this farm? Why did you choose these foods?
- Have the types of crops produced change over time or over the seasons?
- How long has this farm been in production?
- Do you also have animals on the farm?
- What are important factors when growing food? What do you need to think about?
- What do you need to grow the best crops?
- Where does the food go after it has been grown and harvested?
- How does food waste affect you?
- Why is it important for consumers to understand where their food comes from?
- What are some of the ways consumers can learn more about food?

Connect students with farmers in their community and provide them with the time to connect with them and ask them their interview questions. If farmers are unavailable to come to the school due to time or distance, use Skype or an online calling system to connect them with your students. If a farmer is unavailable, consider interviewing a gardener, local horticulturist or a person knowledgeable about food-growing practices. While students are interviewing the farmer, record the conversation to ensure that all information is collected and the conversation is available for students to listen to after the event.

Ask students to select one question from the finalized class list that they would like to ask the farmer. Provide students with graphic organizer **Blackline Master 1: Interview Questions** to use to collect answers while interviewing the farmer. During the interview, allocate each student a number to create an order of questions to ask the interviewer. Encourage the person asking the question to write down the response, while the other students concentrate on listening.

After completing the interview process, individually ask students to use the information they learnt about food growth and respond to the following question: Why is it important to understand where food comes from?

Dive Deeper

(2 x 60 minutes)

Show students the video "Food Waste Is the World's Dumbest Problem," www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RlxySFrkIM (9:22), and in pairs ask students to discuss and respond to the following questions:

- How does food waste hurt the planet?
- How does food waste contribute to climate change?
- What resources are required to produce food?
- What strategies were suggested to reduce food waste?
- What strategies can you use in your every day life to reduce food waste?
- What can you do with food instead of throwing it out?

In small groups, challenge students to think about how they can raise awareness about food waste in their school or local communities. Provide students with chart paper, markers and access to the Internet to brainstorm and research their ideas. Encourage them to consider the following questions during their research and use **Blackline Master 2: Proposal Planner** to outline their actions to raise awareness.

Questions:

- Who is the audience?
- What is the best medium to deliver their message?
- What message do they want to communicate?
- Why is this message important?
- Who does this issue affect?
- What strategies can be suggested to combat the issue?

Presentation Options:

- Infographic
- Poster
- Blog post
- Video
- Radio announcement

After students have created their proposal for raising awareness, invite them to present this to the teacher and describe why this method of raising awareness about food waste will be impactful. Encourage students to justify why they believe their method will be the most effective in raising awareness about food waste and to discuss why this issue is important for their school, and local and global community.

Invite groups to create a presentation to raise awareness about food waste and present this to their school and local community.



Extension:

Research a local organization that is focused on reducing food waste locally, nationally or globally to understand the organization's purpose, the activities and the strategies that they use to reduce food waste. Encourage students to explore the impact this organization has had on food waste and how they can implement similar actions to reduce their own food waste.

Blackline Master 2: Proposal Planner

Who is the audience?

What is the best medium to deliver their message?

What message do they want to communicate?

Why is this message important?

Who does this issue affect?

What strategies can be suggested to combat the issue?
