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)
Classroom Activity - Grades 9 to 12

Essential Question:
• Why is it important to reduce food waste in our communities?

Learning Goals:
Students will:
• Reflect on their own privilege with access to food
• Understand the impact of their food choices on food waste
• Evaluate the consequences of food waste in their local, national and global communities

Discussion:
1. What is food literacy? Who is considered food literate?
2. Are you a contributor to food waste? How so?
3. What impact does a lack of understanding about food literacy have on the community?
4. What is the affect of food waste? How does it affect individual health, the environment and the economy?
5. What are strategies to reduce food waste?
6. How do our food choices affect individuals in low socioeconomic and poverty-stricken communities around the world?
7. Why is privilege considered a barrier to food literacy? What are the possible solutions to this issue?
8. How can you, individually, take steps to become more food literate?

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.

As a class, using an online mapping tool, map the supermarkets, grocery stores, farmer’s markets, convenience stores and fast food outlets or any place where you can purchase food in a 10 kilometre radius to your school. Ask students, how many places can you purchase food in the area? Why are there so many places?

Ask students, how many times a week do you as a family or individually visit any of the supermarkets, grocery stores, farmer’s markets, convenience stores, fast food outlets or any place where you can purchase food in the area? Why are there so many places?

For example: Walmart – 2, Costco – 1, Gas Station – 3, Farmer’s Market – 1 and Fast Food – 2.

If students do not want to disclose the number of times, they may choose to keep this to themselves.

On the front board, collate student response and, as a class, create a bar graph using sticky notes with student responses. Label the X-axis: Number of times students’ purchased food, and Y-axis: Places of Food Purchase. After the graphing exercise, ask students to consider, why are their multiple places to purchase food in one area? Are so many placed required? What happens to the food in the stores if no one buys it? Why do we have so much access to food, when communities around the world go hungry?

Show students the video, “Understanding Global Food Security and Nutrition,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJG7HmQyYcY (4:12). In pairs, ask students to respond to the following questions:
• Why are people still hungry in the world if there is overproduction of food?
• What are the causes of food scarcity?
• Why do the food choices we make matter?
• What are the impacts of food scarcity?

The United Nations Human Rights Declaration, Article 25, states that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.” What are the consequences of food waste on Article 25?

Investigate and Learn (2 x 60 minutes)

As a class, or in small groups, read the Global Voices article “Are You Food Literate.” As students are reading the article, place eight pieces of chart paper around the classroom with one discussion question on each piece. Provide students with eight sticky notes and, individually or in pairs, encourage them to discuss the questions, respond and place the sticky notes on the chart paper with the corresponding question. As a class, discuss student responses.

Show students the video “Feeding the World by Reducing Food Waste,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGOUCNvuoos (13:02). After watching the video, as a class, discuss the following questions:
• How much of the world’s food gets wasted?
• Why is food waste a resource drain?
• What is the cost of food waste?
• Where in the world is food wasted? What is the difference between food waste in developing and developed countries?
• What are some of the solutions to combat food waste?
• What individual strategies can you use to reduce food waste?
Explore and research organizations in your local community that are raising awareness about food literacy and creating opportunities to reduce food waste. Invite students to create small groups and ask each group to profile their selected organization and create a poster or infographic about the organization and the actions it takes to reduce food waste. In the presentation, have them develop a list of actions and strategies that individuals can do at home that reflect the actions and work of the organization. (For example: In Berlin, Culinary Misfits use “ugly” produce in their catering jobs. This reduces food waste by using the products most consumers and stores overlook. A strategy that individuals can use is to buy misshapen and blemished produce to use in their homes.)

Encourage students to begin their exploration using the following questions.

Profile Questions:
- What is the organization’s purpose?
- What is the organization’s mission, vision and values?
- When and by whom was this organization started?
- What strategies and actions do they use to reduce food waste?
- Are these strategies and actions effective?
- How long has the organization been around?
- Have they changed or adapted their actions through time?
- What are the impacts created by their actions?
- Who have these actions impacted the most?
- What are some of the challenges they have faced? What did they do to overcome these challenges?

Dive Deeper (2 x 60 minutes)

Show students the video “Food Waste Is the World’s Dumbest Problem,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=6R1xy5FrK1M (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 everyday life to reduce food waste?
- What can you do with food instead of throwing it out?

In small groups, challenge students to develop a solution to reduce the amount of food waste in their school, local or national community. Provide students with chart paper, markers and Internet access to research their ideas and to see if these ideas are viable. Encourage them to consider the following questions during their research.

Questions:
- What is the proposed solution? What are the possible impacts of this solution? How will it impact health, the environment and the economy?
- How will this solution reduce food waste? Is this a group solution or an individual solution?
- What resources will be required to implement their solution?
- How will they evaluate the effectiveness of their solution?

Example Presentation Options:
- Create an interactive application that encourages you to reduce waste. The user would be required to take photographs of all their food waste and the application would use this information to tell them how many people could have been fed with their food waste.
- Develop a blog that outlines everyday strategies people can use to reduce their food waste. This blog can also have facts that provide food waste information to users.
- Implement a weekly or monthly farmers market that only sells “ugly” and blemished produce at reduced rates.
- Create a video about types of food waste in developed and developing countries and showcase how the solution will reduce food waste.
- Create posters and infographics to raise awareness about food waste in supermarkets and grocery stores.

Invite groups to develop their solution and present it to the school or local community. Encourage students to discuss how their solution will reduce food waste and how this will begin the process of reducing food scarcity in the world.

Extension:
Consider conducting a face-to-face or online interview with the founders or members of the organization to ask them questions about their work and how they believe they are reducing food waste. This will provide students with firsthand information about the organization’s work. Add this information to their infographic.

Ask groups to present their profiles to the class and the school in a Food Waste Fair. Invite each group to present their infographic and poster about the organization they have research and the strategies everyone can use in their everyday lives to reduce food waste. Encourage students to consider the impact of these strategies in reducing food waste, if undertaken by each person.