

Responsibility

This week students research food responsibility and how food production, consumption, and waste can be done more responsibly. The goal is to make students more aware of the responsibilities associated with growing and producing food to help them be more conscious consumers. The project for this unit pertains to investigating and reducing food waste at school, so this lesson is a perfect segue into that work.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



The Nature of Responsibility

In this lesson, students watch a short video that shows the responsibilities of farm families and how they work hard to produce the food we eat. Students have an opportunity to discuss food waste and examine how the concept of hard work, agriculture, and food consumption impacts their idea of responsibility. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Our Local Producers: Rapid Fire Research

Have students do research in small groups (2-3) of local food sources; “local” can be within a 30 mile radius or state-wide and “food sources” can be anything grown or manufactured locally/statewide. Have students pick a food item/source and report back to the class on what they learned. Students should also be aware of what their local area or state is known for producing. After about 10 minutes of research, have students share one new “fun fact” they learned about local food production.

For Partners
15 minutes



Food Rules

What food rules do you have in your home and at school? Are there any? If not, should there be? What are some guidelines you could share either with your family and possibly with school administration that could help promote responsible food consumption?

For Individuals
15 minutes



Food Responsibility

How good are you at finishing your food? Do you regularly throw food away? Do you eat leftovers in your home or does your family throw away a lot of food? What could you change so that you eat more consciously and responsibly, and throw less away?

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Favorite Food Field Trip

Have students research their favorite food. Where is it made or grown? What is the “carbon footprint” of that food? For example, if you live in New York, but the bananas you love come from Mexico, how many miles does that banana travel to get to your store/home? Is it a responsible choice to buy food that has a large carbon footprint (i.e., takes a lot of gas, energy, air pollution, and food handling to get to your store for purchase)? The Green Eatz “[Food Carbon Footprint](#)” webpage might be useful.

The Nature of Responsibility

In this lesson, students learn a bit about who grows our food, how we get our food, and how we both appreciate and waste our food. The goal is to make students more aware of the responsibilities associated with growing and producing food to help them be more conscious consumers.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- No materials are required for this lesson

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Discuss food waste in America, in school, and in their families
- Relate responsibility and respect to agriculture
- Identify ways to reduce food waste

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

For this last lesson in responsibility, consider how you utilize your time and talents at school. Are you responsible with how you spend your time at school? Do you use open periods to plan lessons or grade assignments so you can gain some extra personal time in the evenings or on the weekends? Do you spend time networking with colleagues and planning for student success, or is there more gossip and rumor-spreading than productive, healthy relationship- and strategy-building? How about your abilities? Do you use them to their fullest potential or are you feeling maxed out and ready to coast into the end of the year? Do you pursue meaningful professional learning opportunities or just skim through arbitrary readings and lessons (when assigned).

When you have an opportunity to be wholly responsible with your time and talent, to do what is expected or required of you, take it. It will energize you for the next task. You will feel good if you have used your time wisely, if you have used your abilities to their fullest. You will be motivated to be better, to continue learning, to share insight, and to build a better school. Modeling this type of responsibility is good for your students, too. Everyone gets tired by the end of the year; it takes self-discipline and perseverance to press on to the end. You can be a leader in this area and so can your students. Press on!



Share

5-7 minutes

This week we will talk about our responsibilities toward the environment and our consumerism, meaning how much we buy and use and how much we waste.



Inspire

15 minutes

Think about it: How often do you think about the earth and the food it produces? If we didn't have grocery stores, where would you get your food? (Invite student responses.) Do you know any local farmers or have access to farmers' markets? (Invite student responses.)



Empower

15 minutes

For this lesson, we are going to watch the Random Acts of Kindness video about responsibility in the context of the farming culture.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYbXqBMfWag> (Run time: 6:44)

After Video Discussion Questions (for large or small group discussion, oral or written):

- What reactions do you have to the idea that we waste $\frac{1}{3}$ of our food in the U.S.? (This means, as an example, if you go out to a restaurant and order three hamburgers, you will only eat two and will choose to throw one away.)
- Do you notice food waste here at school or at your house?
- What are some things you can do to reduce food waste?
- How does being aware of food waste show respect to farmers and their families?
- How do you define responsibility now that you have seen this video?



Reflect

5-7 minutes

As we go throughout the rest of this week, we are going to talk about food; how we consume food, how we think about food, and what we know about the people who make our food. It's likely that most of us haven't thought about this much at all, and that is okay! We are going to change that, though! When you think about how important food is to us, you start to realize how important the people who grow and produce and ship and store and sell the food are to us, too. Unless we are growing all of our own food (which very few of us do today), we are very dependent on the skill, passion, land, business, and generosity of others. Food is actually a really beautiful, human connection we have with each other. So, tonight, if you see a lot of food left over after supper, think about how you might use that food tomorrow or the day after. Can you re-use that food so it doesn't become waste? I may ask you tomorrow, so take some mental notes about how the rest of your food experiences go today! Let's get creative in how we use food and let's remember to appreciate the food we have!