



Eating in Season

Grade Level: 3-5

Goals

Guide students in using scientific inquiry to design a seasonal taste test and investigate what produce is grown nearby seasonally, if locally grown foods tastes better, and what other factors might play a role in flavor. Groups will graph and summarize results and the class has the opportunity to discuss benefits of seasonal meal planning and eating locally grown products.

Curriculum Alignment

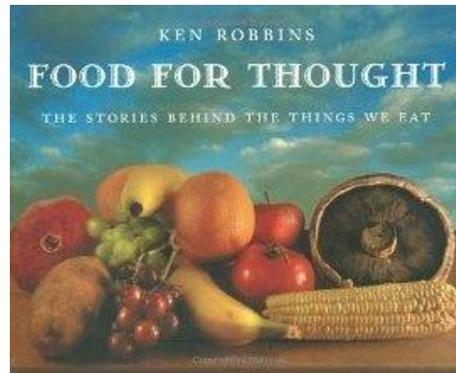
Find a list of which Common Core State Standards and NC Essential Standards this lesson plan aligns with on the lesson plan page at www.growing-minds.org.

Materials

Books to read

Food For Thought by Ken Robbins

The Omnivore's Dilemma (Young Reader's Edition) by Michael Pollan



Activity supplies for each group

Internet access

Two varieties of a local fruit or veggie

The same type of fruit or veggie grown far away

Large sheet of paper

Markers

Knife

Cutting board

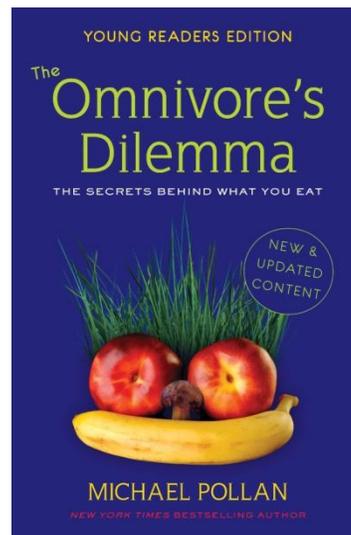
Three plates

Toothpicks

Activities

Read a book

Make the books Food for Thought and the Omnivore's Dilemma available to students. Select sections from each of the books that would be most beneficial for students to read.





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Lesson

Day 1

Discuss the benefits of seasonal meal planning and eating locally grown products. Discuss the term local and define it for yourselves as a class.

In the list of materials the term variety is used. Explain this term to students (or have them research it) in relation to produce. While there are often several choices in varieties of apples in the grocery store, it is when you go to a farmers market you may see 10 different varieties of heirloom tomato. Heirloom is another word you may want to define for students – an heirloom variety is a cultivar that was commonly grown during earlier periods in human history, but which is not used in modern large-scale agriculture.

Break students up into groups. Each group will be designing their own taste test and presenting the results.

Research Your Season!

Before students can design a seasonal taste test, they need to find out what local products are available seasonally in your area. Using the Internet, students can research what produce can be grown locally and what is currently available in your area. Hint: Some products may not be currently growing but store well (i.e. Apples, root vegetables).

Do the Data!

Have students fill in the list of local fruits and vegetables, including variety (i.e. northern lights bell pepper, rather than just green pepper).

Based on what local products are seasonally available, groups should select two varieties of a fruit or vegetable that they would like to offer as part of a taste test, circling them on their lists. If possible, encourage students to have one of the two be an “heirloom”. Groups should select foods that can be easily cut and eaten raw.

Student groups will be comparing these two varieties of this locally produced product to one grown farm away and answer the following questions:

1. What do you think the differences will be between the two local varieties?
2. How do you think the local varieties will compare with the one grown far away? Why?
3. Which one do you think you will like the best? Why?
4. Which one do you think your classmates will like the best? Why?



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Day 2

Create your taste test!

Depending on your class, you need to determine if you or your students should be responsible for purchasing and bringing in the fruits and veggies for this activity.

Each group should compare and contrast their three different samples using a Venn diagram. Encourage them to use all their senses to note details including visual appeal, smell, ripeness, color, etc. As a group, students should select two survey questions they would like to answer through this activity. Questions should be clear and easy to answer for tasters. Examples may include which sample has the best flavor, has the best texture, is the prettiest, etc. Students should make predictions about their survey, including what they think the final results will be, which samples their classmates will select and why.

Setting up the Test

Make sure students wash hands and produce thoroughly.

Materials for each group: Three pieces of fruit or vegetable (2 local and 1 from a distance), 3 paper plates, napkins, toothpicks, plastic or metal table knives (This is an opportunity to review proper cutting techniques and knife safety), a marker and paper

After students have created their graphs, they should answer the following questions.

1. Were your final results different than you expected? If yes, why do you think that was?
2. Based on experience do you think local produce tastes better? Why or why not?
3. What other factors may influence produce flavor?
4. Share your findings with the class, explaining why you chose your survey questions, what you expected to find, and a discussion of your final results.