

Final Response Option 1: Feeding A Family On A Budget: The SNAP/Food Stamp Challenge

Purpose

The SNAP/Food Stamp Challenge gives participants a view of what life can be like for millions of low-income Americans. Most participants take the Challenge for one week, living on about \$4 per day worth of food – the average food stamp benefit. Challenge participants are forced to make food shopping choices on a limited budget, and often realize how difficult it is to avoid hunger, afford nutritious foods, and stay healthy with too few resources.

While living on a food stamp budget for just a week cannot come close to the struggles encountered by low-income families week after week and month after month, it does provide those who take the Challenge with a new perspective and greater understanding. The following exercise was adapted from the Food Research and Action Center (frac.org).

Using current SNAP guidelines, the average benefit in Oregon is \$6.21 per person, per day (slightly lower than the national average of \$6.82). For this challenge we will be using the National Average. So, for this challenge, you should plan to spend no more than \$43.12 per person for the entire week. (This works out to \$2.05 per meal).

Challenge Directions

1. Each person should spend a set amount for food and beverages during the Challenge week. That amount is \$43.12 for all **food and beverage** per person.
2. All food purchased and eaten during the Challenge week, including fast food and dining out, must be included in the total spending.
3. During the Challenge, only eat food that you purchase for the project. Do not eat food that you already own (this does not include spices and condiments).
4. Avoid accepting free food from friends, family, or at work, including at receptions, parties, or other events where food is served.
5. Keep track of all receipts on food spending and take note of your experiences throughout the week.
6. Track each meal and snack eaten during the week for each person participating. These meals should match the foods on the receipts.
7. NOTE: If you already qualify for benefits or other programs (such as Gleaners or the Cougar Cave), you may also use those resources. Make sure to note which resources you used and which items came from each source.

You will turn in your menu and shopping list (including prices or receipts) for your family. Make sure these items match—do you have a receipt for all foods listed in your menu? In addition, you will type a 3-4 page response to the activity, using the questions below as a guideline:

1. How did having to budget like this change what you eat weekly?
2. Did this have an impact on nutritional value? Variety? Ability to follow dietary restrictions?
3. How did this feel emotionally? If you were unable to successfully meet the challenge for an entire week, how did that feel? Did other members of your family have different feelings about participating in the challenge?
4. Does this change some of the ideas you previously held about the SNAP program and/or its recipients?
5. Did this help you understand food security as an “invisible” privilege?

Criteria For Success

Your grade will NOT be based on whether or not you are able to successfully complete the challenge.

A successful outcome of this activity is that each student who participates has increased awareness of food insecurity and understanding of food as an invisible privilege.

Your grade will be based on the completeness and depth of your reflection paper. The following rubric will be used to calculate grades:

Element	Well Developed	Developing	Needs Development	Absent
Inclusion of a menu and receipts/documentation for all food	30	25	20	0
Each of the 5 questions are addressed	30	25	20	0
Responses show depth, thoughtfulness, and application to the	30	25	20	0

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student's own life				
Writing is clear with correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure	10	7	5	0