



## School Gardens to School Lunches

Content Area/Topic: Social Studies	Grade/Grade band: K-2
Tech Needs: Projector with Internet Access	Estimated Time: 3, 40-minute class periods

### Contributor:

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### Essential Question:

Which foods do we eat that grow in a garden?

Students often do not know where the food they eat comes from. Today students will think about what they ate for lunch and which parts of their lunch can be grown in a garden.

### Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Considerations

Students can consider the communities where they live — rural, suburban, or urban — and the gardens, green space, or agriculture present. Why is gardening important in all of these communities? Consider how gardens, green spaces, and agriculture connect to the food we eat at home and at school. How do these gardens look similar and different across time, and across different parts of the country? How have school lunches changed and stayed the same over time? Guide younger learners to understand that similarities and differences are neither bad or good, and help them make connections between the past and the present.

### Materials

- ☐ Projector with Internet access
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Chart paper
- ☐ Markers for chart paper
- ☐ Drawing utensils (pencils, markers, etc.)
- ☐ [MyPlate | U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)
  - ☐ Optional [Create Your Own Plate Menu Graphic Organizer](#)
- ☐ [School Lunch Primary Source Set](#)
- ☐ [See, Think, Wonder form](#)
- ☐ The book *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- ☐ Video: [Three Sisters Companion Planting of North American Indigenous Peoples](#)
- ☐ [School Gardens primary source set](#)

### Lesson Sequence

Note: This activity spans 3, 40-minute class periods. If time is limited, consider choosing 1-2 daily activities that best suit your classroom context.

This activity was last updated on 8/1/2023. If you have questions about this activity, please contact the MNHS Teacher Education and Curriculum Development team: [ted@mnhs.org](mailto:ted@mnhs.org).

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## Day 1

1. Ask students to think about what they ate for lunch today/yesterday. Have students draw what they ate for lunch.
2. Create a chart using the MyPlate model for the five food groups: Protein, Dairy, Fruits, Vegetables, Grains. Record the student responses to "What did you eat for lunch?" in each category. (Note: there may be items that do not fit these categories. You may want to have an "Other" category as well.)
3. Open up the [School Lunch Primary Source Set](#) and show students examples of lunches across time. Ask students to observe the photographs. What do they see? What do they think? What do they wonder? If appropriate for your students, they can use one of the ["See, Think, Wonder" forms](#) and draw or write their ideas.
  - a. Ask students to share any differences and similarities between then and now.
  - b. Have students share connections and additional thoughts.
4. Have students fill in another MyPlate chart with their responses to "What did you notice was eaten in the photos?" for each category. (Note: you may want to revisit some of the images and zoom in to figure out what's "on the menu"). Ask them to compare their plate to the plate they generated using the photographs.
5. After recording student responses, lead a discussion on which foods grow in a garden. Highlight or star the foods that can be grown in a garden on both MyPlate charts.

## Day 2

1. Ask the students to review the MyPlate Charts made during the activity exploring school lunches. Which foods grow in a garden?
2. Read the book "Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table." Ask students these questions:
  - a. Why is growing food important?
  - b. How does eating the food you grow yourself make a difference?
  - c. How can we grow our own food?
3. Ask students to think about their classroom, school grounds, or an existing school garden. What can we plant to grow with the purpose of eating?
4. Pass around paper and drawing utensils, and ask students to draw a picture of their school garden. If the school doesn't have a garden, have students draw a picture of what they imagine a school garden might look like or what they might like to grow in a school garden. The garden can start with pots in the classroom, in a specific growing area in the school or an actual garden area outside.

## Day 3

1. Ask the students to think about the foods we grow. How did those foods become common in our area? What is the history of the foods we grow and eat?
2. Watch the video "[Three Sisters Companion Planting of North American Indigenous Peoples](#)." Discuss the following questions:
  - What is "three sisters" planting?
  - Where did this practice begin?

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- Why is it important to understand these practices and to continue to implement them?
- 3. Pass around paper and drawing utensils, and ask students to draw a picture of their favorite dish/food. Think about what in that dish can be grown and has a connection to them culturally. Ask students if they have cultural connections to certain foods, herbs, etc. that can be planted in the school garden they are planning.
- 4. Discuss why these are cultural and important to them. Example: cilantro is common in Latin American cooking, and basil is important in Italian dishes, etc. Which of these should be included in the school garden? How can all students feel represented in the garden this way? Why is this important?
- 5. Use the [School Gardens primary source set](#) and select a photo or photos of school gardens from the early- to mid-1900s. Let students know we are going to use photos to examine school gardens from long ago.
  - a. Project the photo(s). Have students use the [See/Think/Wonder steps](#) to examine the photo. Create a class See/Think/Wonder chart to record students' responses.
  - b. Ask students to observe what was grown in gardens from the past. Do we see the same plants in gardens today? Are any of these same plants/produce used in our school lunches? Do you have any cultural connections to the types of plants you see in the school garden photos from the past?

## Extensions/Adaptations

- Explore MyPlate and discuss healthy eating.
- Complete a Venn Diagram comparing lunches from the past to lunches now.
- If your school has a garden, take a "field trip" to see it with the class. What kinds of things are grown here? How is our garden different from the ones in the images?
- Choose 1-2 things your class will grow in pots to eat. Herbs, beans, and chives are simple and easy to grow. Set a plan to grow at least one thing you can eat.
- Ask families to contribute to this project and discussion. Have a family event where they can be part of planning and creating the garden.
- Think of a way to mark each of the plants and why they were chosen. Create plant markers, flags, etc. to introduce and dedicate the garden and the intentions of the garden.

## Resources

- Resources on Three Sisters practice and history:
  - [The Legend of the Three Sisters - Oneida Indian Nation](#)
  - Video: [An Oneida Elder Speaks About the Three Sisters Garden](#)
  - The Conversation, [Article: Returning the "three sisters" - corn, beans, and squash - to Native American farms nourishes People, Land, and Cultures by Christina Gish Hill.](#)
  - [American Indian Health and Diet Project - AIHDP](#)
- Resources on Native American agriculture and food sovereignty:
  - [Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance](#)
  - [Dream of Wild Health](#)

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- Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013). *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*
- Michael J. Caduto, Joseph Bruchac (1996). *Native American Gardening: Stories, Projects, and Recipes for Families*
- Joanne Dennee (1995). *In the Three Sisters Garden : Native American Traditions Myths and Culture Around the Theme of the Garden*