

HUNGER IN A WORLD OF PLENTY

Teaching notes

Aim: to understand issues relating to food and hunger and to reflect on the injustice inherent in a world in which 1 billion people go hungry.

Objectives:

- to reflect on the nutritional, social and economic aspects of food
- to understand different scales of food production and to begin to think about some of the benefits and limitations of these
- to grasp some of the causes of hunger
- to understand impacts of malnutrition
- to reflect on wastefulness.

These activities will help secondary school pupils understand issues relating to food: who has it, who makes it and who controls it.

Food production is a complex issue and there are many factors that affect it. These include some major global issues: environment and climate change, politics, economics, trade, land rights and globalisation. But at its heart, food is a simple matter: it's what we eat; it keeps us alive; it tastes good; it brings people together. Let us start with these basic principles as we seek to engage pupils in some of the more complex issues involving food.

Materials/preparation:

- access to internet
- photocopies of additional worksheets and case studies provided at the back of these teaching notes.

Ice-breaker

Aim: to reflect on the social aspects of food.

Split the class into three groups and ask each group to plan their perfect dinner party.

They have to:

- decide on a guest they will invite (one guest per pupil)
- agree a menu: starter, main course, dessert

- nominate people to cook, decorate the table, greet the guests, choose the music.

Discussion:

- What is most important about food?
- Where would they shop for their meal?
- How much do they think it would cost?
- Do they think their 'dinner party' would be a success?
- What would they count as 'success'?

Activity 1

Aim: to reflect on the nutritional and economic aspects of food.

Share the *Food Groups* worksheet (worksheet 1) with each group. Did their meal include all the major food groups?

If you have access to the internet ask them to select the three main ingredients from each course and then 'shop' for these online. *Important: teachers should be on hand to help with this and pupils should go to the website of a major food retailer, where they will be able to search for items without having to log in or register their contact details.*

They should note down:

- the cheapest and most expensive price of different ingredients
- how much choice/range was available
- if there is any other information, for example, calories, country of origin, carbon footprint.



Activity 2

Aim: to understand different scales of food production and to begin to think about some of the benefits and limitations of these.

It is surprising how many of the ingredients that we are readily able to buy in supermarkets are not grown in this country, because they need a warmer climate to grow, they are not in season, or they are perhaps cheaper to produce overseas. This means that we rely on trade (countries selling things to each other) for the wide variety of choice available in our supermarkets.

International trade means that we have a plentiful supply of delicious and varied produce available in our shops right the year round, but there are some problems associated with this too. One problem is that much of the food we eat has travelled a long distance; transporting food can be very polluting and can therefore contribute to climate change. Another problem is that sometimes people who produce food that is traded overseas are not paid a fair price for it and they sometimes face unfair competition from bigger producers. Campaigns for fairer trade call for stronger international rules to ensure that food producers are well treated and properly paid, and that they face fair competition.

But what would happen if you had to survive on the food you could grow yourself? Share the *Planting Planner* worksheet (worksheet 2) with pupils and ask them to discuss the questions in pairs.

Explain to the class that you are going to look now at producing food in different ways and to different scales.

Read through the *Food Producer Case Studies* and ask students to research and complete the third case study in pairs:

Case study 1: farmers in Cambodia

Case study 2: coffee cooperative member in Nicaragua

Case study 3: large-scale food producer (students are asked to build their own third case study by researching the website of a large food company and noting down information requested on the case study sheet).

Discussion:

- What are the main distinctions between these methods of food production?

- What concerns might these producers have in common?
- What might the benefits of these different scales of production be?
- What might be some limitations?

Activity 3

Aim: to understand impacts of malnutrition and to explore some of the causes of hunger.

Tell pupils that 1 billion people around the world go hungry; that is one-seventh of the planet's population.

Ask pupils to suggest why they think these people might be going hungry and write the answers on the board.

Read through the *Malnutrition in Guatemala* worksheet (worksheet 3) and answer the questions.

Activity 4

Aim: to reflect on wastefulness.

The Love Food Hate Waste¹ campaign estimates that 7 million tonnes of uneaten food is thrown out from our homes every year. That costs the average family around £60 a month in wasted food. Ask pupils to come up with interesting ways to illustrate this wastefulness by designing a poster that demonstrates the scandal of modern food waste. They could choose to show either the amount of food chucked away or the money wasted.

Within living memory, people in this country used to be much less wasteful with food. Can pupils find out about how food was managed during the Second World War? Some pupils may be able to interview grandparents or great-grandparents about this, and to ask them how attitudes to food have changed. You could show them examples of posters from the Second World War that instruct the population to waste less food.

Ask the pupils, as a homework project, to note down all the food that is chucked away in their homes in the course of a week. Why is the majority of food chucked away? What happens to this food? Is any of it composted? What could be done to waste less food?

¹ lovefoodhatewaste.com





FOOD GROUPS

Humans need food! Food is fuel for the body; without it, we would lose energy and eventually die. But food is not all the same; most foods belong to one of five main food groups and to stay healthy, we need to try to eat food from each of these groups every day. Each group contains different things that our bodies need for energy, growth and repair.

In groups, list which ingredients from your dinner party fit which food groups.

Starchy foods (rice, bread, pasta)

These are a good source of energy and the main way for our bodies to get the nutrients they need. Starchy foods should make up around one-third of everything we eat.

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Fruits and vegetables

We all know how important these are! They contain vitamins and minerals and it's believed that they help protect our bodies from illnesses.

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Proteins (meat, fish, eggs and beans)

We need to eat these to get the protein our bodies need to grow and repair themselves. They also contain essential vitamins and minerals.

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Milk and dairy

These also contain lots of protein, as well as calcium, which is very important for our bones.

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Fats and simple sugars

Although many people in Britain and Ireland eat too much fat and sugar, they are actually also an important food group, helping to provide our bodies with energy. Healthier sources of fat are found in nuts and oils; the less healthy, saturated fats are found in pies, cakes and butter.

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PLANTING PLANNER

Please note that these timings are a rough guide and would vary according to weather conditions

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Beetroot												
Broad bean												
Broccoli												
Brussels sprout												
Carrots												
Courgette												
Lettuce												
Leek												
Onions												
Peas												
Potato												
Parsnip												
Runner bean												
Spinach												
Sweetcorn												
Tomato												

Key Sow seeds water plants harvest crops

If you could only plant five crops, what would you plant and why?

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If you were growing your own food, at which times of year might you feel most hungry?

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What other concerns might you have?

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MALNUTRITION IN GUATEMALA

Isabel (right) lives in Guatemala in Central America.

Guatemala is a beautiful country. It is not very poor, but around half the children there are 'malnourished', meaning they do not get enough nutritious food.

Isabel and her friend Evelin are being treated at a local clinic



Christian Aid/Hannah Richards

There are lots of reasons why people in Guatemala are struggling to grow food. One reason is that the climate is changing, making floods and droughts more likely and disrupting farming.

Another reason is that some areas that were used to farm vegetables for local people in the past are now used to farm crops – such as biofuels – that are sold overseas.

A further reason is that Guatemala has high levels of inequality: most of the money and power is held by just a small number of people who live there, meaning that most of the people remain quite poor.

Isabel is four years old, but she is the same size as an average two-and-a-half-year-old and her body is swollen from lack of protein. She will be treated at a local clinic until her body is properly nourished again, but the malnutrition means that Isabel is unlikely ever to grow to a normal size.

Being malnourished does not just mean being thin or unusually small for your age,

it means getting sick more easily, being unable to concentrate in class and having no energy.

Isabel is being helped in a number of ways. She is being treated for the immediate effects of malnutrition at a nearby clinic. A local organisation is also helping families to plant vegetables and fruit trees. And international charities like Christian Aid are asking world leaders to do everything they can to limit climate change and inequality.

- What are some of the impacts of malnutrition?
- What are the issues that make children in Guatemala vulnerable to hunger?
- Is it fair that land is used to grow crops for biofuels, while many children in Guatemala go hungry?
- Why might inequality have an impact on malnutrition?
- What is being done to support malnourished children in Guatemala (and which do you feel is the most important)?
- Is there anything that you personally could do to make a difference?



Case study 1: Farmers in Cambodia

Sou Et and Em Ouern are grandparents living in Cambodia. They live on what they can grow themselves. Life used to be very difficult for them; they had almost no land, no animals and no way to earn money.

Et and Ouern are extremely hard-working and determined people, but can you imagine how hard life would be if you started out with nothing and had to survive on the food you could grow?

Luckily, they were helped out by a local organisation that trains local farmers and provides the things they need, such as tools and seeds.

Et and Ouern have worked hard to build up their business and have been trained in both traditional farming methods and exciting new ideas, like making gas to fuel their lights and cooker out of cow dung! This is exciting, because it not only saves them money, but is a much greener way to power their home. They produce enough biogas from their two cows to light three lamps and cook three meals a day!

‘Before we had to go out and fetch wood, carry it home, dry it and store it behind the house. Starting the fire was dirty and took time... I save 30 minutes cooking and now I use that extra time for farming.’

There are other benefits too. Et says, ‘I’ve noticed that my rice plants are much greener this year and the land has become more fertile where I have used the waste from the biogas as fertiliser.’

Their 17 grandchildren are noticing the benefits. Their granddaughter, Kanha, aged 10, says, ‘I don’t have to go out and collect firewood with one of my parents every



Christian Aidi/Amenda Ferrant

day after school any more. So the biogas is good for the environment and I get more time to read and study. I’ve noticed I feel more healthy too because we don’t have smoke in the house from the wood or charcoal. Now the light we get from biogas is much stronger so I can read my books till late. Family life is much better now.’

Et and Ouern’s story is one of perseverance and hard work to free themselves from the struggles of poverty. Over the years, when they have sold the food they have grown, they have carefully saved the money and used it to buy land, dig a pond, build a stronger home – and set up their new biogas system!

Et says, ‘Poverty means not having land to farm, cows to use, rice to eat and money to buy food in the lean times. I don’t believe I am rich now, nor that I am poor. I am moderate.’

Looking toward the future, Et and Ouern have no plans to expand beyond what they have. They are happy with what they have achieved and the life they now live.



Case study 2: The coffee cooperative member

Manuel Pavon is a coffee farmer, aged 20, from Nicaragua. He earns a wage by working at Soppexcca, a coffee cooperative. A cooperative means that everyone who works for the business gets to share in the profits it makes.

Manuel hopes to use his education to run a business in Jinotega or his home town of La Perla and improve the lives of his family members. It was his father's dream for Manuel to go to university. Manuel's father was an illiterate coffee farmer and Soppexcca cooperative member, and died when Manuel was just 15.

Since he was a small child, Manuel has been involved with Soppexcca's youth movement, starting out as a Coffee Kid, working in his community's wet processing plant during summer holidays, and now works in Soppexcca's cafe as a barista and coffee-taster. Thanks to training provided by Soppexcca, Manuel is one of the youngest qualified expert coffee-tasters in the country, and with his wages from the cafe is funding his way through university, fulfilling his father's dream.

In Nicaragua, 90 per cent of rural businesses are linked to small, family-run farms.

Soppexcca is firmly committed to the individuals, families and communities it works with. Soppexcca places a strong emphasis on education and on youth. Although most if not all of Soppexcca's coffee farmers have little to no education, this focus means some of their children and grandchildren such as Manuel are now escaping poverty and are funding their own way through university.



Christian Aid/Tom Pilston

Soppexcca is a business and a cooperative, and as such is owned by the coffee farmers who supply it. This means that every business decision is taken with the welfare of the cooperative members in mind.

Soppexcca looks not only to maximise profits, but also considers the social and environmental impact of all its work.

Manuel says, 'To me, community means where there are a group of people together and where not everyone has the opportunity or resources to have a minimum standard of living – in those cases, as neighbours and friends within a community – you have to help each other [in order] to live together in better harmony.'



Case study 3: A large-scale food producer

Use the internet to research the website of a large-scale food producer. This could be a company based in the UK, or overseas.

Name

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin orange border, intended for drawing the company logo.

You can draw the company logo in the box provided.

**Note down the following information:
Where is the company based?**

What food does it produce?

How much does it produce?

Who does it sell food to?

Does it have any ethical/sustainability commitments?

What does it say about its staff and product?

Do you have any questions you would like to ask this company?

Any other notes: