



GEOGRAPHY OF FOOD

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand where natural foods are grown and raised
- Recognize that natural foods may be transferred to factories to be processed
- Understand that different regions grow and trade different products

LET'S GET STARTED! (10 MINUTES):

- Explain that different environments grow different types of food
- Discuss how foods native to local areas are transported around the world
- Discuss foods that are grown locally and those that are obtained from other regions

STORY (15 MINUTES):

- Read the story about Boss learning about where his food comes from and the geography of food

WRAPPING UP (5 MINUTES):

- Remind students that foods are grown in different geographic regions

LET'S GET STARTED!

- This week we are going to talk about the geography of food. Explain that natural foods are grown or raised on farms and that different foods thrive in different geographic regions.

DIALOGUE BOX

- Today we are going to talk about the geography of food! That means we are going to discuss where the food you eat originally comes from.
- Most food, whether natural or processed, comes from nature originally. Fruit, vegetables, and animals all live in nature. Fruits and vegetables can be harvested and eaten the way they are, like apples or oranges, or changed into different forms to be eaten, like applesauce or orange juice.
- Has anyone ever grown food before? What have you grown?
- Not all foods can grow in the same environment. Different weather and environment conditions determine what can be grown in a certain area. Fish live in water, so places that do not have water will not produce fish. Other animals, like cows, chickens and pigs, need lots of room to roam, so you don't find them living in places without a lot of land, like in cities.
- Just like animals, fruits and vegetables also have certain conditions where they grow best. Fruits like bananas, pineapple, mangoes, and melons need a very warm and tropical environment to grow well. You wouldn't find these types of fruits growing up north because the weather and soil are not right for them!
- Vegetables like radishes, spinach, carrots, and broccoli can grow in colder environments where tropical foods can't!

Discuss how the different climates and environments all over the world affect food production. Explain how we get food we can't grow as well from different countries.

DIALOGUE BOX

- An area's climate and natural resources greatly affect what type of plants and animals can live there. A tropical rainforest will have very different plants and animals than a desert! Just like the plants and animals that live in the mountains are different than those that live at the beach.
- Different places all over the world grow different crops and eat different foods because of their climates and environments. Some of the food you eat may be grown locally, meaning very close to you, but some foods you eat may be grown all the way on the other side of the world!
- If we can't grow something very well, we can get it from somewhere else. We can also give things we grow well to other parts of the world that can't grow them. For example, we grow a lot of peaches in South Carolina, and we can ship those peaches to other parts of the world that can't grow peaches! We buy and sell food all across the world now, so we can have almost any food we want, even if we can't produce it ourselves!

DIALOGUE BOX

- Natural foods sometimes travel a long way to places that can't grow them, but they can also travel to get to factories so that they can be made into other things.
- Lots of corn is grown in the Midwest, and it is transported to factories where it can be made into other food items. Corn is used to make food, like chips and tortillas, but it is also used to make other products, like toothpaste and bubblegum!
- Just like some regions don't have certain plants and animals, some places don't have factories to produce other goods. They have to send their materials far away to be made into other things.

STORY

- Read the story about Boss learning where his food comes from, and the geography of the food he eats

WRAPPING UP

- Remind students that they probably eat a lot of food that is not local. Tell them to check and see where some of their food is produced this week and they might be surprised at how far it travels!

Boss Learns the Geography of Food

Sometimes after school Boss and his friends like to go for walks. One afternoon after a long day of school, Boss and his friend Will decided they were going to go for one of these walks. That day, Boss and his friend decided to talk about how school was going, their math homework, the next soccer game, and even what they wanted to have for dinner after their soccer game. Boss said, "I really love Mexican food. I might ask my mom and dad if we can go to the local Mexican restaurant after my game." His friend replied, "I think that is a great idea. I love Mexican food as well. It is my brother's favorite. I personally like Italian food more though because I am a big pasta fan. Spaghetti is my favorite food by far." As Boss was listening he started thinking about a few things and finally asked, "How do we have so many different food categories? I mean we have Mexican food, Italian food, Chinese food, and even Japanese food like sushi. How do these foods make it over here to America? Do other countries have American food?" His friend said, "Well yes Boss. Other countries do have American food there just like we serve their food here. It can sort of be explained as the geography of our food.

We have certain types of food we eat here in America, like French fries and hotdogs, while other countries, like Italy, have certain foods they eat there, like pasta and bread. It all depends on where you live, or your geography, that will decide the type of food you eat in your area. Even here in America we have different geographies that decide what types of food will be eaten in certain areas of our country. For example, when you go to New York, you have to get their hotdogs, while in the south, you have to try fried chicken. Depending where you are will depend on what foods are available and popular in that area." Boss was starting to understand what his friend was talking about and asked, "Well since you mentioned American food, what do people do who live in Alaska where it snows all the time? They must not have very many vegetables and fruits like other have in America." His friend began explaining, "Again, it all depends on the geography that will decide your food. In Alaska, for example, they have a lot of meat there, and not very many vegetables or fruits. So, the people that live in Alaska mainly eat meat since that is what is most readily available to them." Boss said, "I kind of get what you are saying. So pretty much different parts of the country, and even the world, have different foods that are available and/or popular to their area. So, does that mean that I am having the exact same Mexican food here in America that I would have if I was actually in that country?" His friend said, "It may not be the exact same, but it would be pretty close. If you were actually in that country, the food would probably taste more authentic and fresh since that is what that area is famous for versus having it here. But it is like that with every country and area." Boss had never thought of this before and was very glad his friend explained what the geography of food meant. His friend began explaining one last thing before they would be done with their walk. He said, "You can also think of it by seeing where indivisible foods come from in the world. For example, oranges are found most in Florida, while coconuts can be found in tropical places, like Hawaii or the Bahamas. Indivisible foods can also have certain geographical background, but make their way over to where we live so we can enjoy them as well." Boss said, "I am glad you have explained to me about the geography of food, and how it all works. I have never known this before, but now I am going to think about where my food comes from whenever I eat it."