



Food Education Standard 3: Food and the environment are interconnected.

Our School Garden

Grade Levels & Subjects: Grades 6-8 English Language Arts



Learning + Food Objectives:

Students will learn how food and the environment are interconnected while reading *Our School Garden* by Rick Swann by writing a page of a book explaining what a garden needs in order to produce plants for food.

Common Core Standards:

Common Core English Language Arts

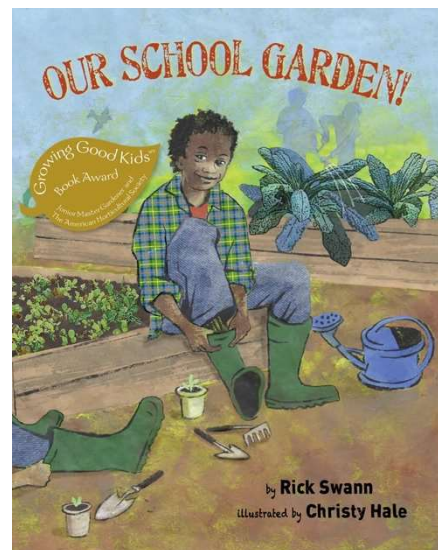
Reading: Author's Purpose

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Our School Garden* by Rick Swann, illustrated by Christy Hale, and published by Readers to Eaters
 - Read aloud video available here: <https://vimeo.com/507739835>
- Student Worksheet (Attached below)

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

1. Ask students to draw a picture or write a paragraph about what makes a garden healthy for growing food.
2. Have 3 – 4 students share out what they drew/wrote.
3. Make a class list of characteristics of a healthy garden using an online platform or google doc to capture the notes.

INSTRUCTION (40 minutes)

1. Read *Our School Garden* by Rick Swann. Text is available as a video read aloud: <https://vimeo.com/507739835>. Ask students to notice the author's style of writing as well as the author's craft.
2. Ask students to complete the guiding questions about two of the pages from *Our School Garden*.
3. Then, discuss the questions as a class (break out rooms, Padlet, Ideaboardz, etc.)
 - a. What styles of writing did you notice? *Poetry and informational paragraphs*.
 - i. Why do you think Rick Swann wrote in that way?
 - b. What was the purpose of the book?
 - c. How does this book explain how food and the environment are interconnected?
 - d. What aspects of a healthy garden were not discussed? (Refer to class list)
4. Ask each student to choose one aspect of a healthy garden not discussed in the book to research. In their research, they should be sure to address how that aspect of a garden would produce healthy plants we eat.
5. Then, students they will be writing a new page for the book. Their goal is to use Rick Swann's style but a new topic.

CLOSING (teacher discretion)

Have students share their work with a peer to get feedback and make changes to their work.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- "Growing Gardens" Pilot Light educational video by students at Johnson College Prep in Chicago, IL: <https://vimeo.com/453765601>
- *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons
- *Grow: A Family Guide to Growing Fruits and Vegetables* by Ben Raskin

RECIPE FROM VIDEO

Video: Carrot Hummus by Chef Lydia Burns: <https://vimeo.com/416129906>

Below is the recipe from the video in this lesson. Pilot Light Anywhere lessons are designed to be able to be delivered from a remote setting; however, this recipe can be demoed by the teacher virtually/in person, sent home to families, or used for reference.

Carrot Hummus Dip

Ingredients:

- 1 pound (bag) of carrots
- 2 garlic cloves (or more if you prefer)
- 1 inch nub of fresh ginger
- 3 1/2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (or sub an oil of your choice, sunflower, or grape seed oil)
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar (or sub a vinegar of choice)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- chopped chives or fresh parsley for garnish (optional)



Directions:

1. Peel carrots and chop into even size segments (approximately 1-2 inch pieces). Drop the carrots pieces in a pot and cover with just enough water to cover the pieces plus one inch. Boil the carrots until tender - about 10 minutes (a fork should easily go through the carrots but they should still otherwise hold some form, think al dente). If you are mashing by hand, boil until an additional 5 minutes.
2. Meanwhile smash the garlic cloves and put in the blender/food processor. Peel and slice the fresh ginger and place in the blender. Blend/process for 10 seconds until both are minced up. If making by hand mince the garlic and fresh ginger first.
3. Then add the oil, vinegar, salt, paprika, and cumin and process for 30 seconds, or whisk together by hand in a large bowl until all items are incorporated.
4. Drain the carrots and add to the food processor/blender or bowl. Blend until you have a smooth, dippy consistency (2 minutes). If using a blender, scrape down the sides of the blender so all the carrot bits get evenly blended. If mashing by hand, use a wooden spoon, muddler, or potato masher, mash until smooth. The texture may be a bit different with a few larger bits of carrots, but it will still taste delicious!
5. Chill for at least 30 minutes in the fridge before serving. Garnish the dip with chopped chives or parsley, or if you prefer a bit of crunch on top, use everything spice or a dukkah of your choice.
6. Serve alongside your preferred vehicle (pita bread or chips, bread, pretzels, etc.) Make it a meal by slathering it thick on bread and topping it with your favorite protein or some sautéed veggies.

The student worksheet below can be printed or copied onto any online learning platform.




Our School Garden

Using this worksheet and the book, *Our School Garden* by Rick Swann, explore how food and the environment are interconnected.

1. Draw or write about what makes a garden healthy for growing food.

2. Study this excerpt from the book and answer the questions below.

Pill Bugs		
	<i>Left-hand side of the text</i>	<i>Right-hand side of the text</i>
	<p>Julie yells, "Potato bug!" Shannon shouts out, "Cheese log!" Jesse bellows, "Doodlebug!" And Simon grunts, "Chucky pig."</p> <p>We search the garden Where you lurk Under logs and rocks Leaves and sticks.</p> <p>And when I find you, I cry out, too. "Roly-poly, Garden-pill!"</p>	<p>The woodlouse has many crazy names. <i>Sow bug, slater, gramersow, butcher boy, and carpenter</i> are a few more. A wood louse is fun to watch, because it can curl itself into an armored ball like a miniature armadillo. This helpful creature creates rich soil by eating dead plants and pooping out important nutrients – little pills for your garden!</p>
What do you notice about the structure of this part of the text?		
Why did the author write this part of the text in this way?		
What does this part of the text tell us about how food and the environment are interconnected?		



3. Study this excerpt from the book and answer the questions below.

Three Sisters		
	<i>Left-hand side of the text</i>	<i>Right-hand side of the text</i>
	<p>"I wish I had a sister," I tell Simon As I slowly mound the earth. We crater the hilltops to hold water, Then we begin to bury our seeds,</p> <p>Sister corn, I place you in the center. She'll stand tall for support.</p> <p>Sister squash, Julie plants at the edge. She'll protect the soil and roots.</p> <p>Beans, Simon puts between her sisters. She'll hug them both as she climbs towards the sun.</p> <p>Planting them together is "companion planting," Like Julie and Simon and me!</p>	<p>The three sisters - corn, squash, and beans - were the most important crops for many Native American diets. In companion planting, they are planted together so that corn can give support to the bean vines, and the beans can put nitrogen in the soil to help the corn grow. Squash protects the roots of the other plants and cuts down on weeds. That is one happy - and delicious - family!</p>
What do you notice about the structure of this part of the text?		
Why did the author write this part of the text in this way?		
What does this part of the text tell us about how food and the environment are interconnected?		

4. Research one aspect of a healthy garden not discussed in *Our School Garden*. Be sure to show how that characteristic would support growth of healthy plants we could grow, harvest and eat.

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5. Now, using your research, write your own page of a book using Rick Swann's style from *Our School Garden*. Be sure the connection between the environment and food is clear.

[Title]		
	<i>Left-hand side of the text</i>	<i>Right-hand side of the text</i>
<i>[Insert image]</i>		