



Food Education Standard 7: We can advocate for food choices and changes that impact ourselves, our communities, and our world.

Understanding Food Advocacy

Grade Levels & Subjects: Grades 9–12 English Language Arts

Learning + Food Objectives:

Students will learn how we can advocate for food choices and changes that impact ourselves by researching a food issue and creating a social media post that creates awareness of the issue for policy makers.

Common Core Standards:

Common Core English Language Arts

Writing for a specific audience

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Whiteboard or Online Platform
- Student Worksheet (Attached below)

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION (10-15 minutes)

1. Tell students that today we will be brainstorming different food issues in our communities and working together to decide on one that we'd like to raise awareness of policy makers.
2. Ask students what they think some examples of "food issues" are. If needed, you can share a few examples to get them thinking: food access, lead in water, food waste, nutrition labeling, etc.
 - Note: Many food issues are often rooted in systems of oppression and racism. Bringing awareness to food issues and their root causes is a powerful tool in advocating and building food equity.
3. Have at least 5 (or more – at teacher's discretion) students share out food issues that they've seen in their community. Teacher can group similar issues together on the board or online platform to show commonalities or linked food issues.

4. Ask students to observe the board and note any similarities or themes.
5. Have 2 - 3 students share out.
6. Ask each student to choose a specific food issue to research. Be sure to remind students that even if they don't focus on all issues in this lesson, there's always an opportunity to advocate outside of the classroom for things they care about!

INSTRUCTION (60 minutes)

1. Explain to students that today they will be researching the food issue they selected in order to create a social media post to raise awareness about it to the broader community and policy makers! Remind students policy makers can encompass a lot of roles and can be local (city or town i.e. a mayor, council person, or alderman/woman), state-based (state representative, governor, senator, clerk), or national (president, policy organizer at a national org, cabinet member).
2. For examples of social media posts, teacher can show screenshots of a few recent and relevant social media posts from advocacy organizations either locally or nationally (such as Feeding America, National Resource Defense Council, or locally, like Chicago Food Policy Action Council in Chicago).
 - Note: Teacher should use discretion when showing posts to make sure they are age appropriate.
3. Ask students to discuss what they notice about each post. Encourage this discussion to be open. Students can share their first impressions. Teacher can take notes of students' noticings.
4. Have students research the food issue they chose and answer the following questions (noting sources):
 - How is the food issue defined and who defines it that way?
 - What organizations are doing work to address and/or raise awareness of this food issue?
 - How are they addressing and/or raising awareness of this food issue?
 - Where are these organizations doing this work (in a specific community, within a whole state, across the country, internationally)?
5. Have 4-5 students share research findings (noted on their worksheets).
6. Ask students to decide what type of policy maker they will be targeting as their audience and determine what information is most relevant to them and how best to present it visually. Remind students about the sample posts you looked at earlier as they decide (might be a quote pulled out, a short video, a picture, etc.)

CLOSING (teacher discretion)

1. Have students share their work with a peer. Give feedback based on the audience the student has defined. Be sure to remind students that they should be recording the feedback they receive from their peer on their worksheet, including: How have they tailored the text and image to fit their audience? What improvements could be made?
2. Have students share out their social media posts to the class or other audience as the teacher sees fit.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- List of food justice organizations (as of 2020 – this is not exhaustive!) from *FoodTank*:
<https://foodtank.com/news/2020/02/24-organizations-finding-food-justice/>
- Types of Policy Makers in US (not exhaustive – this varies by entity!) from *USHistory.org*:
<https://www.ushistory.org/gov/11.asp#:~:text=Congress%2C%20the%20President%2C%20the%20Cabinet,decisions%20in%20the%20United%20States.&text=The%20power%20to%20formulate%20and,often%20divided%20between%20several%20entities.>
- Examples of food issues (as of 2020 – this is not exhaustive!):
<https://foodedu.pilotlightchefs.org/community-advocacy/>
- Examples of videos around food issues created by previous Pilot Light High School students:
 - "Food Deserts & Food Access" by Students at Butler College Prep: <https://vimeo.com/453762558>
 - "Growing Gardens" by Students at Johnson College Prep: <https://vimeo.com/453765601>
- Tips for advocating for changes in school food:
 - All information collected from the cafeteria/about school meals should be based on facts. For example, students should record *all* food offered in a meal, not just a few items to ensure a full picture of what is served.
 - Students should work with adults to help guide advocacy in an appropriate and respectful way.
 - Contact the school food manager to find out more about why certain items are served at school and to answer questions.
 - Approach all topics related to advocacy with curiosity and respect. Point out to students how there are always many more viewpoints and facts to consider than those that they already know.

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



Understanding Food Advocacy

Today we will learn how we can advocate for food choices and changes that impact ourselves by researching a food issue and creating a social media post to share with your peers.

Pre-Writing Brainstorm

List 3 examples of food issues in your community:

1.
2.
3.

Determine the food issue

Write down the food issue you selected:

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Write down any information do you already know about this food issue:

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Research

Answer the following questions as you research your food issues:

1. How is the food issue defined and who defines it that way?

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2. What organizations are doing work to address and/or raise awareness of this food issue?

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3. How are they addressing or raising awareness of this food issue?

4. Where are these organizations doing this work (in a specific community, within a whole state, across the country, or internationally?)

Planning Outreach to Policy Makers

5. Who is your intended audience?

6. What information is relevant to this policy maker given their role?

Drafting Your Post

Below, you will be drafting your social media post. Be sure to include text and images that convey your message. Keep in mind who your audience is and what information is more important to communicate.

7. Draft your social media post below.



Peer Feedback

Share your social media post with a peer. Record the feedback you receive about your post below.

8. Based on your peer's feedback, how did you tailor the text and image to fit your audience? What improvements could be made?