



Paint Your Plate Lesson Plan

Grade 3 – Where Do Our Vegetables and Fruit Come From?

Minds on

Initiate a classroom discussion to get students thinking about how vegetables and fruit are grown and the journey they take from where they are grown to our plate.

Note to teachers

The goal of this lesson is to have students understand where the vegetables and fruit they eat come from; where (and how) they are grown, harvested, trapped, fished or hunted; whether and how it processed, transported, sold or prepared. Locally grown produce should be highlighted in terms of advantages and disadvantages to the environment and the local economy.

Key messages to share with students

- Vegetables and fruit can be eaten directly from the plant, tree or ground after they are rinsed properly (e.g. peaches, cucumbers, tomatoes, etc.). They can also be changed into a different form at home or in a factory/processing plant (e.g. turn apples into applesauce).
- Foods can be processed to help them last longer and not spoil quickly. Food processing can also make foods more convenient and easier to access when not in season.
- Food processing often leads to adding extra salt, fat and/or sugar in foods to help better preserve them for their long journey from the food processing plant

to your plate (e.g. fresh peach vs. canned peach in sugary syrup). Another reason why fresh vegetables and fruit are always healthy choices.

- The processing of food in factories and the transportation of the food from the factory to stores not only has an impact on nutrient content but can also negatively affect the environment (e.g. air and water pollution, extra garbage from packaging, etc.).

Dig deeper

Ontario grown vegetables and fruit

www.ontario.ca/foodland/foodland-ontario

Why buy local?

www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/why-buy-local

Teacher prompts

“Where do vegetables and fruit come from? What is needed to make sure they grow properly (e.g. soil quality, weather, etc.)?”

“Where can we find local vegetables and fruit (e.g. our own garden, farmers markets, farms close to us, at the grocery store – look for signs that state where the vegetables and fruit come from)?”

“Processing may change the form of a food, but there are other changes. Think of other changes that can happen when a food is processed (e.g. other ingredients might be added such as sugar, salt and fat, reducing the amount of fibre, taking away vitamins and minerals).”

Activities

Option 1: Plant a garden

Have students grow their own herbs or beans in your classroom. Discuss the life cycle of plants, properties of soil and how different plants are grown. Use the activities for grade 3 in **Seeds to Success Hamilton's School Garden Kit** <https://brightbites.ca/wp-content/uploads/seeds-for-success-final.pdf>. Checkout the **Green Thumb** <https://brightbites.ca/badge/green-thumb/> badge page for more edible school garden ideas.

Option 2: Find out where your veggies and fruit come from.

Ask students if they have ever thought about where their food comes from. Emphasize that you don't mean which grocery store but which country or region.

- Gather grocery store flyers from various grocery stores. Collect enough for each student or each pair of students.
- Instruct students to find all the different fresh fruit or vegetables within the flyer and highlight the country that the vegetable or fruit is from.
- Take out a world map and name a country. Ask students if they found a vegetable and/or fruit that is from this country. Place a sticky note on the country and write down all the different vegetables and fruit that students name.
- Start a discussion regarding the reasons why Canada purchases vegetables and fruit from different countries and explore which vegetables and fruit are grown here in Ontario. Check out the **Foodland Ontario Availability Guide** <https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide>.

Option 3: Field trip to a local farm

Take the class to visit a local farm to learn how foods are grown locally. Return to the classroom and discuss the experience. What types of vegetables and/or fruit were grown on this farm? How were they grown? What did we learn from the farmer? Where can we buy the produce grown on this farm?

Curriculum connections

Grade 3, D1. Understanding Health Concepts D1.1 Food origins, nutritional value, and environmental impact

Demonstrate an understanding of how the origins of food (e.g., where the food is grown, harvested, trapped, fished, or hunted; whether and how it is processed or prepared) affect its nutritional value and how those factors and others (e.g., the way we consume and dispose of food) can affect the environment.

Reference: The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8, Health and Physical Education, 2019

Grade 3, Systems and Interactions

Describe the different ways in which plants are grown for food (e.g. farms, orchards, greenhouses, home gardens) and explain the advantages and disadvantages of locally grown and organically produced food, including environmental benefits.

Reference: The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8, Science and Technology, 2007

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