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FOOD SYSTEMS SCAVENGER HUNT

Discover your community's food system strengths and weaknesses with a walking tour scavenger hunt.



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About the Activity

The food we eat often comes from all over the country and across the world. But what happens if food can't get from one place to another? In this activity you will go on a scavenger hunt to find out about your community's food system and its strengths and weaknesses — and see just how resilient your community's food system is to food shortages and food insecurity.

Supplies

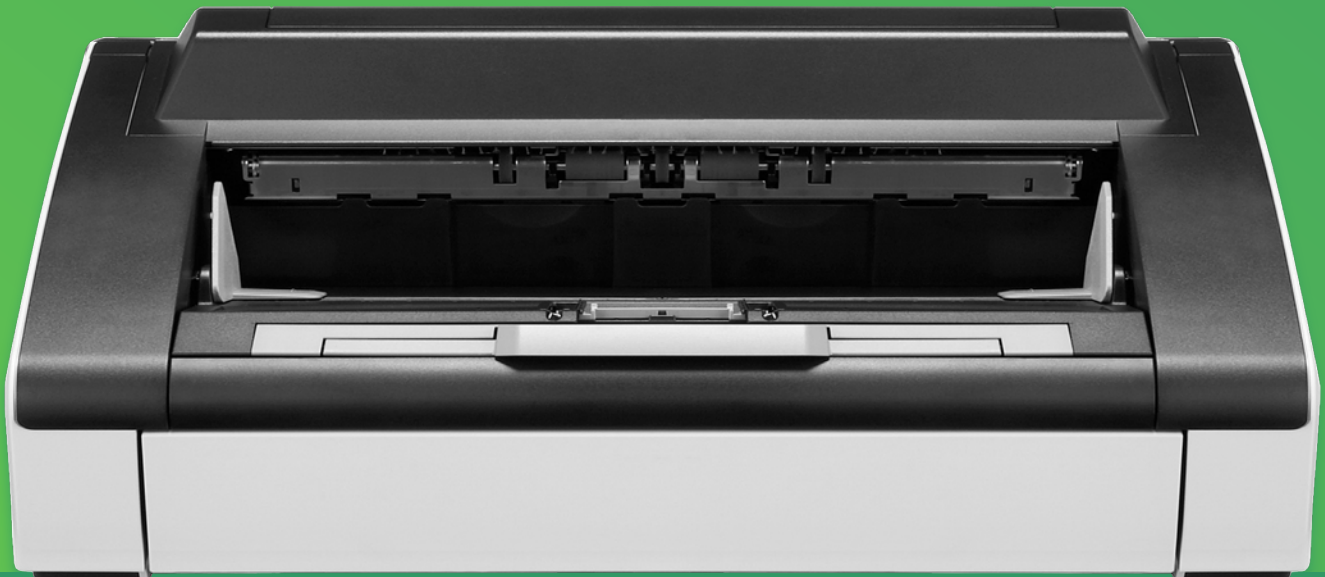
These simple supplies are all you'll need for this activity.

- Downloadable scavenger hunt list
- Printer
- Pen or pencil to mark the scavenger hunt list

Grades: 7-10

Topic: Food Systems, Civic Engagement

Time: 1 to 2 hours



Activity Steps

It's important to know how food-resilient your community is. In this activity, you will go on a scavenger hunt to uncover the different levels of your local food systems. You can use this knowledge to help show your friends and family how they can become more food resilient.

- 1 First, let's get familiar with the different levels of food systems, meaning the decisions we make about how we obtain our food — from household to global.
 - **Individual:** A personal decision about food based on experience, culture, preference, or finance. The decisions depend on the situation and can change over time.
 - **Household:** A group of people that live together may eat together, share a food budget, and affect one another's eating behaviors — for example, parents' influence on children.
 - **Local:** Direct-to-consumer markets such as farm stands, farmers' markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) as well as direct-to-retailer sales such as convenience stores, supermarkets, and restaurants.
 - **Regional:** A food system at this level tries to be self-reliant within a state or a cluster of states such as the Northeast, Southwest, West, Southeast, and Midwest.
 - **National:** Farm labor, food safety, pesticide use, and product labeling are all guided by federal regulations. Market agreements for commodities affect supply and prices on this level.
 - **Global:** This level relates to imports of agricultural products, movement around the planet, and food security of the world's population. It has a significant influence on our diets, economies, environmental quality, and policies of all levels of the food system.

DID YOU KNOW?

COVID-19 had a huge impact on food supply chains around the world, including farmers, food service distributors, food service producers, food packaging companies, and grocery retailers. You may have even experienced this if you went to the grocery store and could not find certain items because they were out of stock.

- 2 Now, let's get down to it! Print out (or view on your computer or phone) the downloadable scavenger hunt list for this activity.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina severely hit the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. The floods caused by the hurricane **damaged many food retail stores** in the city. Roads and communication infrastructures were also damaged, making food transportation difficult. As a result, residents had difficulty accessing fresh food and faced food shortages.

- 3 **Determine how food resilient your community is by:**
 - Calculating the total number of food sources from each level of the food system that you found in your scavenger hunt. Consider how much you depend on food that you eat that is grown or transported from places that are not part of your region.
 - Taking a closer look at other non-food things you found in your scavenger hunt (number 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14). How will they affect the ability of your community to supply food locally?
 - Considering your access to food in an emergency situation such as COVID-19 lockdown, natural disasters, severe weather, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?

The United States produces very limited amounts of its own bananas, mainly in Hawaii and Florida. Most of the **bananas sold in U.S. stores** are imported from Central American countries including Guatemala, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Columbia, and Honduras.

Test Your Knowledge

See how much you've learned about Food Systems!

Drag the words in the right column to the correct statements on the left:

H5P — Drag the Words with Tip

Reflection Questions

Bonus questions to inspire wonder.

- Where would you get food from if all the stores in the area were closed?
- Name two things that can disrupt food from traveling to your grocery stores.
- What are the things you like to eat that are NOT commonly grown in your region?
- What are some things you could do to be more food resilient?



Investigate & Explore

Take what you've learned to the next level to learn more and explore the possibilities.

A resilient food system will help communities secure food access in all situations of emergencies. For instance, during the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, many grocery stores could not keep up with the demands of shoppers as the traditional food supply chain was disrupted. Meanwhile, many local farms stand out to provide community members with direct access to fresh produce, through CSAs, farmers' markets, and food pantries. Buying locally produced food is not just a move to acquire food easily, it also helps to support the local economy and provides local food in case of a national emergency. On the other hand, charitable organizations, such as food banks, also play a vital role in providing food for many people who experience hardships. Items at food banks are mostly processed food that are not locally produced, but they can be stored for a long time.

Take a meaningful break to explore your community food spots. You can go shopping at a farmers' market, helping at a local farm, buying Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food boxes, or volunteering at a food bank. Think about how they can make your community more food resilient. You will also get to explore more local food projects in the last two activities in this series, **Become a Food Systems Influencer**, and **Act for Food Justice**.



Scavenger Hunt Worksheet

Instruction: Go to these locations and try to find the following items.

Location 1

Home & Walkable Distance Around the House <i>(less than half a mile from your home)</i>	
	1. Something you can eat that you grew or raised by yourself
	2. One food that someone in your household chooses for you to eat
	3. Food that is preserved at home <i>(canned, pickled, dried)</i>
	4. Food that is being grown near you: A farm, garden, or even container gardens that belong to your family or your neighbor
	5. Something that could hurt food availability <i>(examples: broken fencing around livestock, convenience stores closing, drought, etc.)</i>
	6. Food from a different state within your region <i>(hint: look at the food label)</i>
	7. Food made in another country <i>(hint: look at the food label)</i>
	8. A pollinator <i>(an animal that moves pollen from flower to flower)</i>
	9. A decomposer <i>(fungi, worms, or decomposing organic matter)</i>

Scavenger Hunt Worksheet *(continued)*

Location 2

Around The Community <i>(on a bicycle, bus, or with the help of a trusted adult driver)</i>	
	10. Food that is being grown or raised for community members.
	11. A place where you can find food from a direct-to-consumer market. <i>(examples: farm stand, farmers' market, community supported agriculture (CSA), etc.)</i> Think about what type of food you can find there.
	12. A place where you can find food from a direct-to-retailer sale in your community. <i>(examples: restaurant, supermarket, convenience store, etc.)</i> Think about what type of food you can find there.
	13. A place where you can find donated food in your community <i>(examples: food pantry, food bank, soup kitchen, a charitable organization, church, etc.)</i> Think about what type of food you can find there.
	14. Some factors that might harm food sources, like dirty water. These are known as environmental impacts. Think about where the dirty water came from, and why it is dirty. <i>(examples: farm, factory, restaurant, etc.)</i>

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