



This article and lesson discuss people who don't have reliable access to food. If the community you are serving experiences food insecurity, this might be a sensitive topic. Feeding America has tools to help you find local hunger resources. Visit ti.me/foodbanks for more information.

IMPACTING FOOD INSECURITY

Grade Levels 3–6

Note: Lessons are designed to support multiple grade levels. Modification suggestions and extensions are for alternative pacing and to engage students at various levels.

Standards

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

SOCIAL AWARENESS The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations

Social Studies Standards (NCSS)

Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity

Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

What You'll Need

"Lunch Money" article from TIME for Kids, writing materials, "Meal Math" worksheet

Essential Question(s)

- What is food insecurity?
- What exists in my community to address food insecurity? What else can be done?



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Learning Objectives

- I can define food insecurity and explain how it differs from hunger.
- I can name some ways that food insecurity might affect a person's well-being.
- I can think of ways that my community is addressing food insecurity and how I can help.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Introduction

Ask students to think about hunger and what it means to feel hungry. How does it affect the body? How does it affect the mind and mood? Introduce them to a term they'll see in this article: *food insecurity*. Ask students to take a moment to consider what the term means, deconstructing the word *insecurity*. Ask a volunteer to share the definition and how they know. Correct any misunderstandings. Before reading about what one boy is doing to combat the problem, have students think about how food insecurity might affect a person. Have them talk to a partner about what affects this might have on the body, mind, and mood.

- Differentiation: Students who require more support might be given the definition first, and you can deconstruct the word as a class to aid understanding. Explain that hunger can happen to anyone and is often a short-term feeling (physical), but food insecurity is a long-term situation which affects a person in many ways (physical, mental, emotional).

Discussion

Have students, as a class or independently, read the article "[Lunch Money](#)." While they're reading, ask students to underline the data that's included in the text. Have them note how the data helps them better understand the problem that's being discussed in the article. Have them discuss these notes with a partner after reading. Then bring the class back together for a discussion.

Discussion Questions

1. What led DeJuan (DJ) to start a fundraising campaign?
2. Why was the U.S. Department of Agriculture included in the article?
3. Which states have made school lunches free for all students? Why might a state do this for *all* students?
4. What does DJ mean when he says "Sometimes, school lunch is the only meal a kid can depend on"?
5. Why might DJ want to do more initiatives "on a larger scale"?

Small Group Activity

Provide students with the worksheet “Meal Math.” Have them use the data from the School Nutrition Association to answer the questions. Then have students partner up and compare their answers. Have them discuss the following: How does this information add to your understanding of the information in the text? Is there any other data you would have included in the article? Explain.

Closing

Bring the class together and ask a volunteer to share the definition of *food insecurity*. Call on other volunteers to share ways in which food insecurity can affect someone. Then work as a class to come up with ways to support students in the school who might be hungry or food-insecure. This could mean a change drive to raise funds for students who don’t have lunch money that day, or placing “take a snack, leave a snack” bins around the school for any schoolchild who might need a little extra fuel. Students can create advertisements to spread the word about the initiative they’ve chosen.

Then you can add to this discussion by asking how students might extend this in their community. Provide students with sticky notes to write down ideas. Give them time to research some resources that are already in place in the community. Possible ideas might include:

- Organizing a food drive for donating to a local food pantry (learn more at feedingamerica.org)
- Starting or donating to a community fridge (learn more at changex.org/us/communityfridge)
- Starting a community garden at school (learn more from kidsgardening.org)

Exit Ticket (Survey)

Have students complete the “[Impacting Food Insecurity Survey](#)” to capture the impact this lesson has had on them.

Optional Extension Opportunities

Read the following books and discuss themes and new understandings:

- *Saturday at the Food Pantry*, by Diane O’Neill
- *Stone Soup*, by Marcia Brown
- *Food for Hope: How John van Hengel Invented Food Banks for the Hungry*, by Jeff Gottesfeld
- *A Kids’ Guide to Hunger & Homelessness: How to Take Action!* by Cathryn Berger Kaye

Visit online resources to learn more about food insecurity in the U.S. and globally and how people can help:

- Free Rice (freerice.com)
- Heifer International (heifer.org)
- The Little Free Pantries (thelittlefreepantries.org)
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture data (ers.usda.gov)

Complete the mini-lesson in this unit to expand on the concept of empathy (ti.me/stars-resources).

Home-to-School Connections

- **Talk about it.** Read *Saturday at the Food Pantry*, by Diane O’Neill, or find a video of a read-aloud. Have children consider the quote “Everybody needs help sometimes.” Discuss a time when they or someone in their family needed help. What did they do? Did anyone else pitch in to help? How does it feel to ask for help? Then discuss people in their community who might need a little help.
- **Act on it.** Ask kids how you and your family might be able to pitch in to help. Remind kids that it might not always be obvious who needs help. And sometimes, people who need it do not know how to find or ask for it. Have kids think of places in the community that are available to help people. This could include hospitals, libraries, food pantries, etc. Come up with ways to support those organizations, or come up with ways to spread the word about places.