

Class Starters & Enders

Making the Most of Instructional Time Five Minute Lessons

Class Starters and Enders help utilize the last minutes of class when a lesson ends but there is not enough time to start another, or for an interest approach at the beginning of class. Mini-lessons correlate to GPS in the programs areas below.

Locavores

Program Areas: Family Consumer Sciences and Agriculture

Instructions: Read the narrative and make notes of important points, answer questions, and be ready to discuss this topic.

The local food movement is a movement in the United States and elsewhere that spawned as interest in sustainability and eco-consciousness become more prevalent. People who are interested in eating food that is locally produced, not moved long distances to market, are called "**locavores**." The food may be grown in home gardens or grown by local commercial groups interested in keeping the environment as clean as possible and selling food close to where it is grown. Some people consider food grown within a 100-mile radius of their home to be local, while others have other definitions. In general the local food is thought by those in the movement to taste better than food that is shipped long distances since it is fresher, riper when harvested, and may not depend as heavily on chemicals or irradiation to increase shelf life. On the other hand, local food is less regulated, so freshness, chemical use, and quality are variable and depend largely on the producer.



Local food networks play a role in efforts to eat what is local. These include community gardens, food cooperatives, community-supported agriculture (where individuals support a local farm, thus sharing the risk with the producers, in exchange for a weekly delivery of produce), farmers' markets, and seed saver groups. Preserving food for those seasons when it is not available fresh from a local source is one approach some locavores include in their strategies.

Critics of the local food movement point out that transport is only one component of the total environmental impact of food production and consumption (only 4% of greenhouse gases emitted by the food industry come from transportation). In fact, any environmental assessment of food that consumers buy needs to take into account how the food has been produced and what energy is used in its production. For example, it is likely to be more environmentally friendly for tomatoes to be grown in Florida and transported to New York City than for the same tomatoes to be grown in greenhouses in New York, requiring electricity for light and gas for heat. The solution to this, though, would be to use either low impact energy sources on the greenhouses, such as solar, geothermal or wind, or to switch to eating seasonally. However, living in a mild climate can make eating locally grown products very different from living where the winter is severe or where no rain falls during certain parts of the year.

Those in the locavore movement generally seek to keep the use of fossil fuels to a minimum, thereby releasing less carbon dioxide into the air. Other reasons for locavorism may include a desire for fresher, less processed foods, or to support of the local economy and small and family farms. Many approaches can be developed, and they vary by locale. Such foods as spices, chocolate, or coffee pose a challenge for some, so there are a variety of ways of adhering to the locavore ethic. Many advocates of the local food movement encourage only a partial dependence on local food, and suggest taking into account food miles, production methods, and availability in your decision.

Language Connection

Write a paragraph or more on each of the following:

- How would you plan to eat locally for a year? Visit <http://www.localharvest.org/> to see consumer-supported agriculture plans, garden seeds, and farmers' markets in your area, then write a short paragraph for each season. Be creative and resourceful!
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of eating locally? Consider the personal, economic, health, and environmental impacts of local vs. global foods.

Geography Connection

Write a paragraph or more on the following:

- Consider the geographical conditions of your area (summer/winter temperatures, rainfall, soil type, etc.) to determine what sort of garden crops you could grow in various seasons. What plants grow best in your area? What pests might be a problem?
- List some of the local crops grown in your area of Georgia.

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