

Food Waste and Food Access Classroom Activity

The Classroom Activity introduces students to the context of a performance task so they are not disadvantaged in demonstrating the skills the task intends to assess. Contextual elements include: an understanding of the setting or situation in which the task is placed; potentially unfamiliar concepts that are associated with the scenario; and **key terms** or vocabulary students will need to understand in order to meaningfully engage with and complete the performance task. The Classroom Activity is also intended to generate student interest in further exploration of the key idea(s). The Classroom Activity should be easy to implement with clear instructions.

Please read through the entire Classroom Activity before beginning the activity with students to ensure any classroom preparation can be completed in advance.

Throughout the activity it is permissible to pause and ask students if they have any questions.

Resources Needed:

- Chart paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard
- Markers or chalk
- Some method of displaying ancillary materials¹

Learning Goal:

- Students will understand the context of the key concepts related to the topic:
 - Background and causes of food waste
 - Hunger and other problems caused by limited access to food
 - Potential solutions that transfer potentially wasted food to those who have limited access to food

¹Facilitators can decide whether they want to display ancillary materials using an overhead projector or computer/Smartboard, or whether they want to produce them as a handout for students.

Food Waste and Food Access Classroom Activity

[Purpose: The facilitator’s goal is to introduce students to the key context of food waste and access that they will need to be familiar with to successfully complete the performance task. The activity will activate students’ prior knowledge of reasons for food waste and ways to improve food access.]

Facilitator says: “The performance task that you will be completing is about food waste and food access. Before you begin the task, we will explore some basic facts about the topic.”

[Display or pass out copies of **Figure 1**.]

Facilitator says: (from Parts A and B of **Figure 1**)

“A. Food Waste

- 40 percent of food in the United States today goes uneaten—the equivalent of \$165 billion each year.
- Up to 50 percent of the 4 billion tons of food produced worldwide goes uneaten.

B. Food Access

- About one out of eight of the world’s people went hungry over the last two years. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in four people was estimated to lack adequate food.
- 14.5 percent (17.6 million) of US households lacked a secure supply of food in 2012.”

Facilitator says: “In preparation for your performance task, you will first work with a small group to gain an understanding of the topic of food waste and food access. You will also meet with the class during this time to study the topic further.”

[Have students form groups of three.]

Facilitator says: “Answer the following questions with your small group.”

[Write the following questions on the board, then read them aloud. *Why do you think so much food is wasted in the United States? What might be some ways to get the food that is wasted into the hands of people who need food?*]

Facilitator says: “Your answers to these questions will not be scored. You will have 4-5 minutes to complete the activity. On a piece of paper, make notes about what you and your group members discuss.”

[After approximately 4-5 minutes, have the students meet as a whole class to share their responses to the two questions. Spend 5-10 minutes having groups share out.]

Possible student responses (unscripted):

- food is wasted because people purchase too much
- food spoils

- there is more food in grocery stores than can be consumed
- or a variety of other answers

[Encourage students to come up with creative ideas about how to get wasted food into the hands of people who need it.]

Possible student responses (unscripted):

- volunteers collecting extra food from grocery stores/restaurants and delivering it to the homeless
- people growing their own food in community gardens, etc.

Note: There are no correct answers.

Facilitator says: (from Part C of **Figure 1**) “Some groups are working to get food to those who need it. For example, the World Food Program ships food supplies to people in areas of the world that need food. Similarly, local groups in the United States offer food through soup kitchens, food pantries, and other programs to meet the food needs of people in their own communities.”

[Write the following question on the board, then read it aloud. *How well do you think this strategy works to get enough food to the people who need it most?*]

Facilitator says: “In your small groups, discuss the following question: How well do you think this strategy works to get enough food to the people who need it most?”

[Give students 4-5 minutes to discuss their answers to this question, then meet with the whole class once again. Spend 5-10 minutes sharing as a whole group. Student responses will vary. Students should come to the understanding that hunger is a major worldwide problem, but groups are working to redistribute food and end hunger in different ways and with varying levels of success.]

Facilitator says: “In your performance task, you will learn more about food waste and food access. The discussion we had today should help prepare you for the research and writing you will be doing in the performance task.”

Ancillary Material

Figure 1

Fact Sheet: Food Waste and Food Access

A. Food Waste

- 40 percent of food in the United States today goes uneaten—the equivalent of \$165 billion each year. (National Resources Defense Council, 2012)
- Up to 50 percent of the 4 billion tons of food produced worldwide goes uneaten. (Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 2013)

B. Food Access

- About one out of eight of the world's people went hungry over the last two years. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in four people was estimated to lack adequate food. (United Nations World Food Program, 2013)
- 14.5 percent (17.6 million) of US households lacked a secure supply of food in 2012. (United States Department of Agriculture, 2012)

C. Improving Food Access

Some groups are working to get food to those who need it. For example, the World Food Program ships food supplies to people in areas of the world that need food. Similarly, local groups in the United States offer food through soup kitchens, food pantries, and other programs to meet the needs of people in their own communities.