

## Food For Thought

This is an arts and crafts-based task that explores the distance our food may travel to reach your plate and introduces the Carbon Footprint of Food Travel & Sustainable Eating. It was originally used for Year 5.

### Group Work

60mins-120mins

### Aims

- Understand the impact our food choices have on the world and introduce carbon footprint.
- Develop young people's agency and understanding on how their choices matter
- Introduce how we can look global but act locally.

### Materials needed

- String
- Blue Tac
- World Map
- Large sheets of paper
- If you can get some fruit/veg packaging that is from non-UK places that can help with visuals

### Instructions

1. **MISSION:** If you want to use the Mantle of the Expert practice, think of a reason why you need the young people to create this challenge, why they are specifically needed to help you (or another character).
  - E.g. Even though you had another lesson planned, you have a very important meeting after work about how the school's food can be more sustainable and have run out of time, so you enlist the classes help.
  - Have a clear understanding on what success will look like if they complete the challenge
  - Having a member of staff you are trying to impress/impact is a good tactic here – could it be a member of the canteen staff or the headteacher?
2. **INTRO:** Begin with having a quick quiz on how much they know already
  - Do they know where a few set food items come from, how they are transported here and why they are brought over out of season?
  - Use the table below to help pick a few options
  - Play the game 'Higher/Lower' on the distance travelled
    - i. Pick an item and ask them if they think it is higher (and therefore further away) or lower (closer) to travel than the previous item.
  - Ask students to come and pick on the map where they think the fruit/veg originates from.
3. **UPSKILL:** Then ask the pupils to research more into food distances: <https://bit.ly/3xNOLIO>
4. **RESEARCH:** Ask the class to pick their favourite school meal and break down the ingredients needed to make that meal.
  - On large sheets of paper, create a table of the distance travelled for various fruit and vegetables, or they could have their own maps and draw string from each place the food comes from.
  - Discuss/research home grown/locally produced fruit and vegetables. You may want to link this to the schools' garden or the school meals and other options that could go onto the school menu.

5. **PRESENTATION QUIZ:** As a class create their own quiz that passes on the knowledge that you have discovered to the person you are trying to convince.
  - In small groups, they should come up with 1-3 questions they could ask.
  - They can create a fun introduction to their questions about the school meal they are focusing on by:
    - i. creating a little scene about the food choice – with the questions at the end
    - ii. an advert to promote how much they love the dish – with the questions at the end
    - iii. a news report explaining some of the information they have learnt– with the questions at the end
  - The class need to agree on a name for their Quiz and the intro music
  - The class need to decide what the player gets if they win.
  - If you have some confident students they can host the quiz, but you may be best placed to facilitate the quiz and hand over to the students for their questions.
  
6. **COMPLETE THE MISSION:** Invite the person/staff member you need to convince to the classroom for the quiz
  - They should arrive unconvinced to ensure the students buy into the challenge
  - They should not be convinced until the final part of the quiz and reveal their decision before they leave.
    - i. If there are any actual changes that could happen e.g., ingredients change or meals changed, then this is the time to introduce this.
  - You should thank the students for their help with the mission. Without them the mission would not have been a success.

### Extension

1. **Plastic Bottle Planter:** Your class could make their own herb garden in the class and tend to the garden over several weeks. Here is a video of how to make your plastic bottle planter: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/thingstodo/bp-make-a-flower-pot-from-a-plastic-bottle>
  
2. As you have focused on school meals, you could also investigate the wider food industry to discuss their carbon footprint and how we can change the way we feed the planet.
  - a. This can begin by following a similar model as above but focusing on the food they eat at home, and what they buy when they are out with friends and family.
  - b. This is a big task, but it could open up conversations on where we have power and what playful action could share the knowledge you have learnt with others.
    - i. Getting the students to focus on one action they can take will ensure they leave with something tangible.

Food	Country of origin	Distance travelled	Additional Information
Apples	USA	10,133 miles	76% of apples consumed in the UK are from overseas. Over 60% of the UK's apple orchards have been destroyed in the last 30 years.
Sugar snap peas	Guatemala	5,457 miles	Guatemalan sugar snap peas are flown to the UK. Air travel is the most polluting form of transport. Their journey releases more than 4,500g of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere on the way.
Pears	Argentina	6,886 miles	While pears - along with apples - used to be commonly grown in the UK, now they are more likely to have been grown abroad than picked from one of our fast disappearing orchards.
Grapes	Chile	7,247 miles	Transporting delicate foods long distances requires packaging to protect them: 60% of household waste is packaging, much of it plastic from food.
Strawberries	Spain	958 miles	UK strawberries are losing out to imports even during the British strawberry season.
Broccoli	Spain	958 miles	Large green broccoli can now be bought all year round. The traditional English varieties - such as purple sprouting broccoli - are only available from February to April. The FSA advise that frozen broccoli has more nutrients than fresh imported broccoli which has undergone a long-refrigerated journey.
Potatoes	Israel	2187 miles	The British Potato Council estimates that the UK imports about 350,000 tonnes of potatoes a year, including imports during the UK season. These are mostly the "baby" or "salad" potatoes varieties from the Middle East.
Tomatoes	Saudi Arabia	3,086 miles	About two-thirds of the tomatoes we eat are imported, according to the British Tomato Growers Association.
Peas	South Africa	5,979 miles	Imported fresh peas require approximately two and half times the energy to produce, package and distribute as those sourced locally.

Toby Peach is an award-winning theatre maker who uses games, stories and play to engage audiences in conversations. They are Associate Director at Coney, where he often work with young people through their Playful Activism practice, exploring what they want to change in the world and creating playful platforms where their voices can be amplified to reach adult audiences. Toby also makes work for young people to play in schools through our Box projects, in public parks through digital tools and landing in heritage spaces.

Find more about Toby's work and request a workshop in your school.

@tobypeach

tobypeach.co.uk