Live Net Zero Classroom Challenge
Our Food

Know Your Food

Overview

Research where your food comes from and explore its journey from production to your plate. Reflect on how food processing, transport, and disposal affect the environment, and how local or seasonal foods can support community resilience.

Learning outcomes

- Understand key environmental impacts of food over its life cycle, including during production, processing, transport and disposal.
- Recognize how local and seasonal foods contribute to community resilience and knowledge of food systems.

Materials

- Food origin list or internet access for research
- Map for visualizing food distances

Proof to submit

Food maps or sample meal plans and reflections

Activity

Grades K to 6

Students investigate one item from their lunch or dinner (e.g., an apple, bread, or cheese) and research where it came from. As a class, they mark all origins on a map to visualize food travel distances. They discuss what this shows about food systems and brainstorm which items could be grown or produced locally, exploring why local options matter for freshness and community resilience.

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Grades 7 to 12

Students research the origins and travel distances of ingredients for a meal. They redesign the meal using seasonal or regional foods and write a reflection on how these changes affect resilience, freshness, and understanding of food systems. After completing their reflections, students participate in a class discussion to share insights, compare meal redesigns, and explore broader implications for environmental impact and local food systems.

Tip: Students who cannot conduct independent online research can choose from a teacher-provided list of common foods with known origins for their region.

Resources for teachers

Visit the Live Net Zero Classroom Challenge website for additional resources and information.

Discussion prompts

- Why does food production usually have a larger environmental footprint than transport?
- If local food isn't always low-carbon, why can it still support resilience and food security?
- How can food waste across the entire food journey, including at home, be reduced?
- How do distance and mode of transport affect the environmental footprint?
- Which foods in your community could realistically be produced locally?
- What are the trade-offs between freshness, seasonality, and availability?