



National Agriculture in the Classroom

Relevancy and Engagement: agclassroom.org

My Life as a Fruit or Vegetable

Grade Level(s)

3 - 5

Estimated Time

Six 50-minute sessions

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an opportunity to enhance writing skills while simultaneously learning about the production and distribution of fresh produce.

Materials

For the class:

- Fresh produce resources—books, websites, and articles
- Writing paper
- Pens or pencils
- Blank paper for illustrations
- Construction paper or tagboard

For the teacher:

- Butcher or chart paper

Vocabulary

fruit: scientifically speaking, the matured ovary of a flower and its contents; some fruits such as squash are called vegetables because they are vegetation that is prepared for the table

vegetable: the edible part of a plant which is generally served as part of a main meal; also known as vegetation that is prepared for the table

Interest Approach – Engagement

1. To introduce the lesson, read aloud a winning [Imagine this... story](#) that highlights the life of a fruit or vegetable.
2. Explain to students that the goal of this activity is for each student to write a fictional, creative story about life as a fruit or vegetable. Each story should outline the life of one fruit or vegetable from the farm to the table.

Background - Agricultural Connections

This lesson is part of a series called *Fruits and Vegetables for Health*, which introduces students to the production, distribution, and nutritional value of fresh produce. Students will gain knowledge in geography, language arts, science, and math as they learn about the process through which fruits and vegetables are transported from California farms to kitchen tables. Other related lessons in this series include:

- [Making MyPlate YourPlate](#)

- [California Crops: From the Farm to the Table](#)
- [Nutritional Value of Fresh Produce](#)
- *My Life as a Fruit or Vegetable*

Cross-curricular writing is an integral part of every student's language arts education. When opportunities for writing in social studies, science, physical education, and math increase, the development of the whole student is expanded. A study of the vast produce industry in California can occur as students write fictional stories about the production and distribution of fresh **fruits** and **vegetables**. The writing process will include brainstorming, writing rough drafts, peer editing, illustrating, and publishing final copies of student work.

Procedures

1. Brainstorming. As a class, generate a list of fruits and vegetables. Also, brainstorm a list of questions that students will need to answer as they write their story about the production and development of a specific fresh produce item. Questions that students answer in their stories may include:
 - From where did I originate?
 - What is my biological classification?
 - To what other plants am I related?
 - How am I planted?
 - Where am I grown and why?
 - How am I grown?
 - What do I look like growing on the plant?
 - How am I harvested?
 - How am I transported?
 - What health benefits do I offer?
 - What potential problems could I cause, if any?
 - How am I stored?
 - How am I prepared/cooked?
2. Select a theme. Ask students to select one fruit or vegetable that will be the main character or theme of their stories. Each student should write about a different fruit or vegetable. Avoid duplicate produce items.
3. Write a rough draft. Using resources compiled by you and your students, or the commodity reports from the lesson [California Crops: From the Farm to the Table](#), and the list of questions brainstormed by the class. Have each student write a story about the life of the fruit or vegetable. The story should be written in the first person narrative, with the fruit or vegetable telling the story.
4. Peer editing. Have students edit each other's work. Explain to students that this is an important step in the writing process and should be taken very seriously. (Students could be assessed on the editing as well as the writing part of the lesson.) Assign each student a classmate's rough draft. Tell students to edit for the following:
 - Proper punctuation
 - Content
 - Spelling
 - Proper sequence (from farm to table)
 - Accuracy of facts
5. Rewrite a final version. Have students write final versions of their stories. Ideally, the final versions will include illustrations of each phase of the fruit or vegetable's growth, development, and distribution. Encourage students to illustrate as much as possible. Advise students to include a title page and verso which includes publisher, copyright, etc. Other requirements should be discussed before the final writing



phase.

6. Sharing. Have students share their stories with classmates, family, friends, and anyone else who might be interested.

Concept Elaboration and Evaluation:

After conducting these activities, review and summarize the following key concepts:

- Fruits and vegetables are part of a healthy diet. They provide many nutrients.
- Fruits and vegetables are grown on farms. They come from trees, vines, and various plants.



We welcome your [feedback](#)! Please take a minute to tell us how to make this lesson better or to give us a few gold stars!



Enriching Activities

- Place the published collection of stories on display in the school library or produce section of the local market.
- Have students make a stick or bag puppet of their fruit or vegetable and share their story through the puppet.
- Have students make a farm-to-table flow chart for their fruit or vegetable.
- Have students create unique hard covers for their books. Perhaps they could be in the shape of the fruit or vegetable, or a product made from the produce item.
- Have students read their stories to primary students.
- Inspire students daily with poetry featuring fruits and vegetables. Visit the [Harvest of the Month](#) website for healthy poetry. Prompt students to write their own.
- California teachers, encourage students to enter their stories in *Imagine this... Story Writing Contest*. Visit [website](#) for more information.

Suggested Companion Resources

- A Seedy Fruit Challenge (Activity)
[<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/resources.cfm?rid=267>]
- Stinky and Stringy: Stem & Bulb Vegetables (Plants We Eat) (Book)
[<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/resources.cfm?rid=662>]
- Plants Feed Me (Book)
[<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/resources.cfm?rid=337>]
- The Fruits We Eat (Book)
[<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/resources.cfm?rid=203>]
- Follow That Food: Carrot Edition (Multimedia)
[<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/resources.cfm?rid=872>]
- From the Field to the Farmers Market (Multimedia)
[<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/resources.cfm?rid=885>]
- Producepedia (Website)
[<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/resources.cfm?rid=528>]

Sources/Credits

This lesson was originally developed in 1996 through a partnership between the Fresh Produce and Floral Council, the California Farm Bureau Federation, and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. Fruits and Vegetables for Health was updated in 2012 in partnership with the California Department of Public Health's Network for a Healthy California with funding from USDA SNAP, known in California as CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps). Funding for 2017 updates were provided through a California Agriculture Special Interest License Plate grant (CalAgPlate) that supports agricultural education, agricultural career training, and agricultural leadership development.

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Special thanks to Harvest of the Month

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Organization Affiliation

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Curriculum Matrix: agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix