

Food Insecurity and Hunger Lesson Plan

Overview of Lesson Plan: In this lesson, students share interpretations of a child food insecurity in the United States. Students will work in groups to analyze the statistics and present their recommendations for target audiences.

Grades: 6-8, 9-12

Subjects: Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies

Suggested Time Allowance: 1 hour

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Share interpretations of a statistical graph.
2. Learn about food insecurity and hunger by reading and discussing the article "*Hunger in U.S. at a 14-Year High.*"
3. Interpret statistical data about food insecurity trends in order to make recommendations to an assigned target audience.
4. Prepare and present their recommendations to the class.

Resources / Materials:

- pens/pencils
- classroom board
- copies of the graph accompanying the article
- student journals
- copies of the article "*Hunger in U.S. at a 14-Year High*" (one per student)
- copies of the Feeding America 2011 child food insecurity graphs (one per group)

Activities / Procedures:

1. Before class, make copies of the Feeding America graphs and the N.Y Times article. Arrange the class into small groups of four and place a copy of the graphs at each student's desk. Begin by asking students what they know about the food insecurity. Is this a global issue? Is this a national, state or neighborhood issue? Then write the following prompt on the board for students to discuss in their groups: "What does the graph in your group show? What do you think this means? What evidence do you have to support your assertion?" After a few minutes, have 2 groups with different graphs share their findings. Prompt students to identify each element of the graphs, and the data sets in their explanations. On the board, write the analysis of the data presented in the article: "*Hunger in U.S. at a 14-year high in 2011.*" How does this interpretation of the data compare with their groups graph? How important is the information to them?

2. Have the class read the article "*Hunger in U.S. at a 14-Year High*". Choose from the following questions to help guide your discussion:

- a. What population group are the food insecurity and poverty statistics based?
- b. How does this support the article?
- c. How do the percentages relate to one another (state, county and nation)?
- d. How has food insecurity percentages changed (2009 vs 2011)?
- e. What are reasons for the food insecurity growth stated in the article?
- f. How do officials respond to that criticism?
- g. By what percentage has the food insecurity changed between 2009 and 2011?
- h. What types of biases are suggested about the survey that participants reported food insecurity?
- i. Does this change how you view the article or statistics surrounding food insecurity and poverty?

LESSON EXTENSION (cross disciplinary opportunities)

Explain to students that they will work in their groups assuming the role of advisory committee members given the task of making recommendations about child food insecurity. To begin, assign each group a target audience from the list below (you may assign the same target audience to more than one group, as necessary). Students will use the data provided in the article and the guiding questions below (provided as a handout for easier student access) to direct their recommendations to their target audience. Advise them to create a series of charts or graphs to help clarify the data and support their recommendations. At the end of the lesson, have each group share initial findings. What is the group's principle position? What primary data or statistics will be presented to support this argument?

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Students, teachers, parents and/or guardians
- Community leaders

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

ANALYZING THE DATA

- How might you present your data to show an overall trend?
- How might you allocate your data into smaller chunks, such as by year, income level, gender, or geographical location?
- How might the data suggest positive and/or negative trends?

UNDERSTANDING THE TARGET AUDIENCE

- Why and to what degree might the issue of food insecurity be important to this group?
- Should reducing or eliminating food insecurity be a significant concern for this group? Why or why not?
- How might socio-economic factors affect this group's perspective regarding food insecurity?
- What steps can your target audience reasonably take to improve food insecurity in your community?

PRESENTATIONS: Have groups complete their recommendations and prepare their presentations, which should include charts, graphs and any other visual information that supports their findings. Group members should work together to prepare the oral presentation of their argument for the next class. Remind students that they each must play a role in the presentation. One suggestion for dividing roles might be to have each student prepare one of the following:

- Overview of target audience
- Presentation of data (statistics, charts and graphs)
- Presentation of recommendation
- Explanation of the position

Have students present their work in the next class and convene a follow-up discussion about their findings.

Further Questions for Discussion:

- Do you think the complex issue of food insecurity can ever be solved?
- Do you feel the issue of food insecurity positively or negatively affects your community?
- How do you feel about the complex issue of food insecurity as a result of this activity?

Evaluation / Assessment:

Students will be evaluated based on participation in the opening exercise, thoughtful participation in the group work, and thorough presentation of their recommendations. s

Extension Activities:

1. Find statistics on your school or community's food insecurity. What support is currently available for members of your school and or community? Present and interpret the data in various ways and compare your findings with national averages. Prepare an analysis paper based on your information.
 2. Prepare a post or pamphlet for your school guidance office that offers helpful information regarding food insecurity and resources for area food banks, and instructions on planting a home garden.
 3. Poll students in your school about their feelings about poverty. Prepare a report with graphs and charts based on the poll results and present the information to student organizations.
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