



Central York School District
American Food, Culture, and Society
Overview
Grade Level: 10-12

Course Description:

Why does the South eat cornbread and grits while New England is famous for clam chowder? How did enslaved Africans, immigrants, and Native Americans create what we call "American food"? This course looks at how different regions of America developed different foods based on geography, climate, and the people who lived there. Students explore how migration and cultural diversity shaped American cooking, and how economics decides who has access to healthy food. It will also examine how society has changed food and how food shapes society. Students will connect with York County farms, restaurants, and markets, research family food traditions, and study current issues like food insecurity.

Course Big Ideas:

- Food is a cultural document — what Americans eat reflects who they are, where they came from, and what they value.
- The American food system didn't happen by accident; it was shaped by immigration, war, technology, and power.
- Access to food has never been equal, and those inequalities map onto race, class, and geography.
- Food is a site of both assimilation and resistance — people use it to fit in and to hold on.
- What we eat today is the product of centuries of negotiation between tradition and change.

Course Essential Questions:

- What does food tell us about American identity?
- Whose food gets called "American," and who decides?
- How have historical forces — immigration, industrialization, war — shaped what ends up on our plates?
- Who benefits from the way food is produced and distributed in America, and who pays the price?
- What do our food choices say about the future we want?

Course Competencies:

- Analyze food as a primary source — reading dishes, menus, and food traditions as cultural and historical evidence.
- Trace cause-and-effect relationships between historical events and shifts in American food culture.
- Identify and evaluate multiple perspectives on food, including those of producers, consumers, immigrants, and policymakers.
- Construct evidence-based arguments about the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of food in America.
- Connect historical patterns to present-day food issues and propose informed responses.

Course Assessments:

- Project-Based Assessments — Students will undertake projects that require researching, contextualizing, and presenting on current events.
- Media Literacy Exercises — Analysis of different media sources and formats to identify reliability, perspective, and potential biases.
- Writing Prompts & Discussion Forums — Reflective writing and discussions to analyze how context influences news interpretation.
- Performance-Based Assessments — Students will participate in debates, presentations, and collaborative activities that assess their ability to evaluate and communicate about current events.
- Stimulus-Based Assessments — Engaging with various media and primary sources to assess understanding and critical thinking around real-world issues.



Central York School District
American Food, Culture, & Society
Grade Level: 10-12
Unit 1: How America Learned to Eat
Time: 13 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards - History

- PA History 8.1.12.A — Evaluate chronological thinking: sequential order of historical narrative; continuity and change; context for events.
- PA History 8.1.12.B — Synthesize and evaluate historical sources: literal meaning of passages; data in maps, graphs, and tables; different historical perspectives.
- PA History 8.3.12.A — Evaluate the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to United States history.
- PA History 8.3.12.D — Evaluate how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the growth and development of the U.S.
- PA Geography 7.3.12.A — Analyze the human characteristics of places and regions using geographic tools.
- PA Economics 6.4.12.A — Evaluate the impact of international trade on the U.S. economy.
- PA Reading in History CC.8.5.11-12.A — Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- PA Writing in History CC.8.6.11-12.A — Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- C3 Framework D2.His.1.9-12 — Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

Know:

- The Three Sisters: corn, beans, and squash — the foundation of agriculture for many Native American peoples before European contact.
- The Columbian Exchange (beginning 1492): the transfer of plants, animals, and diseases between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.
- Key foods that moved east to west: wheat, sugar cane, cattle, pigs, chickens, coffee.
- Key foods that moved west to east: corn (maize), potatoes, tomatoes, cacao, squash, tobacco.
- Three distinct colonial food regions: New England (cod, baked beans, corn porridge), Mid-Atlantic (wheat, diverse immigrant foodways), Southern colonies (rice, pork, corn).
- The role of enslaved West Africans in colonial food production: rice cultivation techniques, okra, black-eyed peas, cooking methods (deep frying, one-pot stews).
- Key figures and sources: John Smith's accounts of Native food; Thomas Hariot's A Briefe and True Report; colonial plantation records.
- Definition of "foodways": the cultural, social, and economic practices related to the production and consumption of food.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Food systems reflect the power relationships, geography, and cultural values of the societies that create them.
- The exchange of food between cultures reshapes everyone involved — and that the consequences of exchange are unequally distributed depending on who holds power.
- The origins of a food tradition are often more complex and contested than the stories commonly told about them.

Do:

- Analyze primary sources (maps, journal entries, plantation records) to identify what they reveal about food, power, and daily life in a specific time and place.
- Compare and contrast the foodways of at least two colonial regions, identifying how geography, labor systems, and culture shaped what people ate.
- Construct a written argument, supported by evidence, explaining how a specific food exchange reshaped a food tradition that persists today.
- Evaluate the perspectives present and absent in a historical source about colonial-era food.
- Create an annotated map or visual timeline tracing the movement of at least three foods between hemispheres.

Unit Essential Questions:

- Where did American food actually begin, and whose traditions does it reflect?
- How did the collision of cultures in the Americas create a food system that still shapes what we eat today?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- What did the land provide before Europeans arrived, and how did Native peoples manage it?
- Was the Columbian Exchange a fair trade? For whom?
- How did geography determine what colonial Americans ate — and does it still?
- How did enslaved people shape Southern food, and why is that contribution often overlooked?

Materials/Resources:

- Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats: A Social History of U.S. Food and Culture* (Chapters 1–2)
- Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (selected chapters)
- Michael Twitty, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African American Culinary History* (excerpts)
- Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (excerpts on agriculture)
- Mark Kurlansky, *The Food of a Younger Land* (WPA food writing excerpts)
- Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian — online resources on Native foodways
- Primary sources: John Smith's writings, Thomas Hariot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*
- PBS documentary clips: The Columbian Exchange segment from *When Worlds Collide*

Vocabulary:

Foodways	Three Sisters	Columbian Exchange	Maize
Subsistence agriculture	Cash crop	Plantation system	Johnnycake
Pemmican	Indigenous	Crop rotation	Hominy
Staple crop	Cassava	Domestication	Cultural exchange

Assessments:

- Summative Assessment Option
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning



Central York School District
American Food, Culture, and Society
Grade Level: 10-12
Unit 2: The Food that Built America
Time: 13 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards - History

- PA History 8.1.12.A — Evaluate chronological thinking: continuity and change; context for events.
- PA History 8.1.12.B — Synthesize and evaluate historical sources: different historical perspectives; data presented in various media.
- PA History 8.3.12.A — Evaluate the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to U.S. history.
- PA History 8.3.12.B — Evaluate primary documents, material artifacts, and historic sites important in U.S. history.
- PA Economics 6.2.12.A — Evaluate the effect of supply and demand on price and quantity.
- PA Economics 6.2.12.D — Evaluate the impact of government involvement in the market.
- PA Reading in History CC.8.5.11-12.C — Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence.
- PA Writing in History CC.8.6.11-12.B — Write informative/explanatory texts about historical topics using relevant, well-chosen evidence.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- C3 Framework D2.His.5.9-12 — Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

Know:

- Corn's trajectory: Indigenous staple → colonial johnnycake → 19th-century industrial milling → 20th-century processed corn products (corn syrup, cornstarch, animal feed).
- Sylvester Graham (1830s): minister and dietary reformer who advocated whole-grain flour and plain food as moral hygiene.
- John Harvey Kellogg (1890s–1900s): Seventh-day Adventist physician at Battle Creek Sanitarium who invented corn flakes; his brother W.K. Kellogg founded the cereal company.
- The Chicago stockyards and the meatpacking industry (late 1800s): centralized slaughter, refrigerated rail cars, and the emergence of beef as the dominant American protein.
- The hamburger: origins in German immigrant street food (late 1800s); popularized at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair; later standardized by White Castle (1921) and McDonald's (1940s).
- Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906): muckraking novel about the meatpacking industry; led directly to the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act of 1906.
- Major immigrant food contributions: German (hot dogs, lager beer, hamburgers), Italian (pizza, pasta), Chinese (chop suey, adaptations for American palates), Eastern European (bagels, deli culture), Latin American (tacos, tamales, chili).
- Pizza as a case study: Neapolitan street food → Italian-American neighborhoods (late 1800s) → post-WWII national popularity (soldiers returned from Italy) → Domino's and Pizza Hut (1960s–70s).

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Specific foods become identified with a nation or culture through a process shaped by immigration, industrialization, marketing, and cultural negotiation — not by accident.
- When food crosses cultural boundaries, it is transformed by both the people who brought it and the society that received it, and that this process involves both appreciation and erasure.

- Economic incentives and government policy shape what a society produces, eats, and values — often in ways people don't see.

Do:

- Trace the transformation of a single food (corn, wheat, beef, or an immigrant food) across at least three historical turning points, identifying causes and consequences at each stage.
- Analyze excerpts from *The Jungle* to evaluate Sinclair's purpose, audience, and impact on food policy, and compare his findings to a modern food safety controversy.
- Research and present a "food biography" of one immigrant food, tracing its journey from country of origin through its transformation in America, using at least three sources (one primary).
- Write an evidence-based argument evaluating whether a specific food's Americanization represents appreciation, appropriation, or something more complicated.
- Interpret historical advertisements (cereal, meatpacking, immigrant restaurants) to identify persuasive techniques and the cultural assumptions behind them.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How did specific foods become "American," and what does that process tell us about who we are?
- Who decides which immigrant foods get embraced and which get rejected?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- How did corn go from sacred crop to industrial commodity — and what was gained and lost?
- Why did religious reformers care so much about breakfast?
- What does the meatpacking industry reveal about the real cost of cheap food?
- How did pizza go from Neapolitan street food to the most popular food in America?
- Is there a difference between a food becoming "American" and a food being taken from another culture?

Materials/Resources:

- Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats* (Chapters 3–5)
- Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (selected chapters, especially Chapters 3, 9, 14)
- Donna Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (selected chapters)
- Andrew Coe, *Chop Suey: A Cultural History of Chinese Food in the United States* (excerpts)
- Dan Jurafsky, *The Language of Food: A Linguist Reads the Menu* (selected chapters)
- Documentary: *The Foods That Built America* (History Channel, selected episodes)
- Primary sources: Kellogg's original advertisements, early 20th-century immigration cartoons, NYC health department records

Vocabulary:

Meatpacking	Stockyard	Pure Food and Drug Act	Muckraker
Industrialization	Assimilation	Americanization	Processed food
Commodity crop	Supply chain	Cultural appropriation	Street food
Mass production	Food safety regulation	Ethnic enclave	Market demand

Assessments:

- Summative Assessment Option
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning



Central York School District
American Food, Culture, and Society
Grade Level: 10-12
Unit 3: The Industrial Kitchen
Time: 13 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- PA History 8.1.12.A — Evaluate chronological thinking: continuity and change; context for events.
- PA History 8.3.12.C — Evaluate how continuity and change have impacted the United States.
- PA History 8.3.12.D — Evaluate how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the growth and development of the U.S.
- PA Economics 6.1.12.A — Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of traditional, command, and market economies.
- PA Economics 6.2.12.C — Evaluate the costs and benefits of government economic policies.
- PA Geography 7.4.12.B — Analyze how local and regional processes can have global effects (e.g., crop production, resource distribution).
- PA Reading in History CC.8.5.11-12.F — Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue.
- PA Writing in History CC.8.6.11-12.H — Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- C3 Framework D2.Eco.1.9-12 — Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.

Know:

- Key technologies and dates: Nicolas Appert's canning process (1809); mechanical refrigeration (1870s–80s); pasteurization (Louis Pasteur, 1864; widely adopted in the U.S. by 1920s); refrigerated rail cars (Gustavus Swift, 1870s).
- World War I and II food innovations: canned goods for troops, dehydrated meals, SPAM (Hormel, 1937; staple of WWII military rations), K-rations, victory gardens, civilian rationing programs.
- Major American food brands and their founding contexts: Heinz (1869), Campbell's (1869), Kraft (1903), Swanson TV dinner (1954).
- The McDonald brothers' "Speedee Service System" (1948): assembly-line food production. Ray Kroc's franchising model (1955). The Federal-Aid Highway Act (1956) and its role in enabling drive-through culture.
- Postwar suburban growth (Levittown, 1947–): the link between car culture, suburban living, and the standardization of American meals.
- Laura Shapiro's concept of "Perfection Salad": how early 20th-century domestic science reformers tried to make cooking "scientific" and industrialize the home kitchen.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Technological innovation changes not only what people eat but how they think about food — transforming it from something grown and prepared to something purchased and consumed.
- War, government policy, and economic incentives are among the most powerful forces shaping a society's food system, often in ways that persist long after the original conditions have changed.
- The benefits and costs of systemic change are rarely distributed equally — what makes food cheaper or more convenient for some may create new problems for others.

Do:

- Construct a cause-and-effect diagram tracing how one technological innovation (canning, refrigeration, or the interstate highway) changed American eating patterns.
- Analyze wartime primary sources (propaganda posters, ration books, government pamphlets) to evaluate the government's use of food as a tool of citizen management.
- Compare a 1950s convenience food advertisement with a modern meal kit advertisement, identifying continuities and changes in how convenience is sold to Americans.
- Write a research-based analytical essay/response evaluating whether the industrialization of food made America's diet better or worse, defining terms and defending a position with evidence.

Unit Essential Questions:

- What happened to American food when industry took over, and was it progress?
- How did war, technology, and profit reshape the American meal?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- How did canning and refrigeration change not just what we eat, but who controls our food?
- Why did the U.S. government become so involved in what Americans eat during wartime — and did it ever really stop?
- How did brands replace recipes in the American kitchen?
- Was fast food an invention or an inevitability?
- What did America lose when it stopped cooking from scratch?

Materials/Resources:

- Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats* (Chapters 6–8)
- Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (selected chapters)
- Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (excerpts)
- Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (excerpts)
- Mark Kurlansky, *The Food of a Younger Land* (WPA-era food writing)
- Documentary clips: *Super Size Me* (selected scenes), *The Founder* (2016 film on McDonald's)
- Primary sources: WWII rationing posters, 1950s food advertisements, Swanson TV dinner marketing, McDonald's franchise training manuals

Vocabulary:

Canning	Pasteurization	Refrigerated rail car	Rationing
Convenience food	TV dinner	Franchise	Fast food
Standardization	Suburbanization	Interstate Highway System	Brand loyalty
Processed food	Food science	Mass marketing	Vertical integration

Assessments:

- Summative Assessment Option
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning



Central York School District
American Food, Culture, and Society
Grade Level: 10-12
Unit 4: Food and American Identity
Time: 12 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- PA History 8.1.12.B — Synthesize and evaluate historical sources: different historical perspectives.
- PA History 8.3.12.A — Evaluate the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to U.S. history.
- PA Civics 5.1.12.F — Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens.
- PA Economics 6.2.12.E — Analyze the characteristics of effective economic decision making at the individual and government levels.
- PA Reading in History CC.8.5.11-12.H — Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
- PA Writing in History CC.8.6.11-12.A — Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content, introducing precise and knowledgeable claims.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- C3 Framework D2.His.4.9-12 — Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- C3 Framework D2.His.14.9-12 — Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

Know:

- Major regional food traditions and their geographic roots: Southern BBQ (Carolina vinegar-based, Texas beef, Memphis dry rub, Kansas City sweet); New England clam chowder; Cajun and Creole cooking (Louisiana); Tex-Mex (Texas-Mexico border region).
- Soul food: origins in the foodways of enslaved African Americans; staple ingredients (collard greens, black-eyed peas, cornbread, fried chicken, chitterlings); the term "soul food" emerged during the Black Power movement of the 1960s.
- Key figures: Edna Lewis (chef and author who documented Southern farming foodways), Adrian Miller (soul food historian), Gustavo Arellano (Tex-Mex and taco journalism).
- Timeline of U.S. dietary advice: Sylvester Graham (1830s) → Wilbur Atwater's calorie science (1890s) → USDA "Basic Four" (1956) → Food Pyramid (1992) → MyPlate (2011).
- Food industry marketing practices: engineered combinations of salt, sugar, and fat; "bliss point" research; targeted advertising by age, race, and income; portion size inflation since the 1970s.
- The concept of "food as cultural capital": how what you eat (or refuse to eat) signals identity, class, region, and values.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Food is a primary marker of identity — what people eat, how they eat, and what they refuse to eat reveals as much about a community as its language, religion, or politics.
- The concept of what is "healthy," "authentic," or "proper" to eat is shaped by cultural values, economic interests, and power — not by science alone.
- Industries and institutions actively shape consumer behavior, and that recognizing this influence is a form of critical literacy.

Do:

- Research and present on one regional food tradition, explaining its historical development, its meaning to practitioners, and how it has been represented to outsiders.
- Analyze at least two versions of U.S. government dietary advice (e.g., 1992 Food Pyramid vs. MyPlate), evaluating what changed, why, and whose interests each version served.
- Evaluate a set of food advertisements from different eras, identifying persuasive techniques and the cultural assumptions embedded in each.
- Write an argumentative essay defending a position on the question: “Does the food you eat define who you are?” using at least two historical or cultural examples.
- Conduct and write up a mini-ethnography: interview a family or community member about a food tradition and connect the personal account to broader themes from the unit.

Unit Essential Questions:

- What does food say about who we are as Americans — and who gets to decide?
- How do culture, marketing, and science compete to control what Americans eat?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- Why do people fight about BBQ? What’s really at stake in food pride?
- How did soul food become both a source of pride and a point of debate within Black communities?
- Who decided what the “American diet” should look like, and why has the answer kept changing?
- How do food companies engineer cravings — and is that different from other kinds of persuasion?
- Can food be “authentic”? Who decides?

Materials/Resources:

- Michael Twitty, *The Cooking Gene* (chapters on soul food, identity, and Southern cooking)
- Michael Moss, *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us* (selected chapters)
- Marion Nestle, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* (excerpts)
- Gustavo Arellano, *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America* (selected chapters)
- Adrian Miller, *Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine* (excerpts)
- Dan Jurafsky, *The Language of Food* (chapter on menus, marketing, and class)
- Documentary clips: *Salt Fat Acid Heat* (Netflix), *Ugly Delicious* (episodes on BBQ or pizza)
- Primary sources: USDA food pyramids (1992–present), vintage food ads, restaurant menus from different eras

Vocabulary:

Regional foodways	Soul food	Authenticity	Fusion cuisine
Food Pyramid	Dietary guidelines	Nutritionism	Bliss point
Brand marketing	Target demographic	Cultural capital	Comfort food
Food identity	Tradition	Nostalgia	Food media

Assessments:

- Summative Assessment Option
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning



Central York School District
American Food, Culture, and Society
Grade Level: 10-12
Unit: The Food System and Who Serves It
Time: - 12 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards - History

- PA History 8.1.12.B — Synthesize and evaluate historical sources: data in historical and contemporary maps, graphs, and tables.
- PA History 8.3.12.D — Evaluate how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the growth and development of the U.S.
- PA Geography 7.3.12.A — Analyze the human characteristics of places and regions using geographic tools.
- PA Geography 7.4.12.B — Analyze how resource distribution and utilization create global patterns and effects.
- PA Economics 6.2.12.D — Evaluate the impact of government involvement in the market.
- PA Economics 6.4.12.D — Evaluate the impact of multinational corporations and other organizations on the international economy.
- PA Civics 5.2.12.A — Evaluate citizens' rights and responsibilities in the policymaking process.
- PA Reading in History CC.8.5.11-12.B — Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence.
- PA Writing in History CC.8.6.11-12.E — Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update writing products.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- C3 Framework D2.Geo.6.9-12 — Evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions.
- C3 Framework D4.7.9-12 — Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems.

Know:

- Definition of food desert.
- Definition of food swamp.
- Current U.S. food insecurity data.
- Industrial agriculture basics.
- Key labor figures and movements: Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers (founded 1962); the Delano grape strike and boycott (1965–70); the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (founded 1993, Fair Food Program).
- Who works in the American food system: farmworkers (largely immigrant labor), meatpacking workers, restaurant workers, delivery workers — and their typical wages, injury rates, and legal protections.
- The USDA Food Access Research Atlas: a publicly available mapping tool showing food access by census tract.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Access to food is shaped by policy decisions, economic structures, and historical patterns of inequality — not simply by individual choices or market forces.
- The true cost of food includes consequences (environmental, health-related, labor-related) that are not reflected in its price, and that these hidden costs are borne disproportionately by vulnerable populations.
- Systems produce outcomes that reflect the priorities of those who designed them — and that changing outcomes requires understanding and challenging those underlying structures.

Do:

- Use the USDA Food Access Research Atlas to analyze food access in a specific community.
- Research elements of industrial agriculture (CAFOs, corn subsidies, pesticide use) and analyze who gains and who loses.
- Analyze primary sources from food labor movements (Cesar Chavez speeches, farmworker testimonies, meatpacking worker accounts) to evaluate what they reveal about power in the food system.
- Identify specific food system problems, explaining its causes, and proposing one realistic change supported by evidence from at least three sources.

Unit Essential Questions:

- Who does the American food system actually serve — and who pays the hidden costs?
- What would a more just food system look like, and what stands in the way?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- Why can't some Americans access fresh food — and is that a market failure or a policy choice?
- What are the real costs of a \$1 hamburger?
- Who grows and picks the food Americans eat, and what are their working conditions?
- How do agricultural subsidies shape what ends up on American plates?
- Is it possible to feed 330 million people without industrial agriculture?

Materials/Resources:

- Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* (chapters on meatpacking labor, agricultural economics)
- Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (chapters on industrial corn and the feedlot)
- Tracie McMillan, *The American Way of Eating: Undercover at Walmart, Applebee's, and a California Farm* (excerpts)
- USDA Food Access Research Atlas (online mapping tool)
- Feeding America annual reports and data (online)
- Documentary clips: *Food Inc.* (2008), *Wasted! The Story of Food Waste* (2017)

Vocabulary:

Food desert	Food swamp	Food insecurity	Food sovereignty
CAFO	Monoculture	Agricultural subsidy	Farm Bill
Food access	Environmental justice	Farmworker	Meatpacking
Supply chain	Externality	Living wage	Food policy

Assessments:

- Summative Assessment Option
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning



Central York School District

American Food, Culture, and Society

Grade Level: 10-12

Unit: What Comes Next

Time: 13 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards - History

- PA History 8.1.12.A — Evaluate chronological thinking: continuity and change; context for events.
- PA History 8.1.12.C — Construct research on a historical topic using a thesis statement and demonstrate use of appropriate primary and secondary sources.
- PA Civics 5.2.12.A — Evaluate citizens' rights and responsibilities in the policymaking process.
- PA Economics 6.1.12.C — Assess the strength of the national economy and compare it to another time period based on economic indicators.
- PA Geography 7.4.12.B — Analyze sustainability of resources.
- PA Reading in History CC.8.5.11-12.A — Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights to broader understanding.
- PA Writing in History CC.8.6.11-12.C — Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- PA Writing in History CC.8.6.11-12.I — Write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- C3 Framework D4.6.9-12 — Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems.
- C3 Framework D4.7.9-12 — Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems.
- C3 Framework D4.8.9-12 — Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action.

Know:

- Major contemporary food movements and their key claims: organic (USDA certified since 2002); local/farm-to-table; slow food (founded in Italy, 1986; U.S. chapter 2000); veganism and plant-based eating; food justice and food sovereignty.
- The distinction between food justice and food charity: food charity provides meals (food banks, soup kitchens); food justice addresses the structural causes of hunger and advocates for community control over food systems.
- Emerging food technologies: cultivated (lab-grown) meat (first public tasting 2013); vertical farming; CRISPR gene editing in crops; ultra-processed food science; AI and precision agriculture.
- Key figures: Leah Penniman (Soul Fire Farm, food justice); Will Allen (Growing Power, urban farming); Michael Pollan (food movement writing); Pat Brown (Impossible Foods founder).
- Global food projections: the United Nations estimates a world population of approximately 9.7 billion by 2050; the FAO estimates food production must increase by roughly 60% to meet demand, constrained by water, arable land, climate change, and energy.
- The concept of "food apartheid" (term used by food justice advocates to describe racially segregated access to quality food, as distinct from the more passive term "food desert").

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Movements for change reflect the values, economic positions, and cultural assumptions of the people who create them — and that no single movement serves everyone equally.
- Technology can solve production and efficiency problems but cannot, on its own, solve problems rooted in power, distribution, and justice.
- The ability to analyze a system's history, identify its stakeholders, and evaluate competing proposals is the foundation for meaningful participation in shaping that system's future.

Do:

- Research and evaluate contemporary food movements, identifying who they serve, who they exclude, and what the strengths and blind spots are.
- Investigate one emerging food technology and assess its potential benefits, risks, and unintended consequences; present findings with a recommendation.
- Select one food or meal and analyze it through every lens the course has built (history, culture, identity, industry, access, labor, future).

Unit Essential Questions:

- Where is American food headed — and who gets to shape that future?
- What can history teach us about building a better food system?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- Who benefits from the “organic” and “local” food movements — and who is left out?
- Can technology solve America's food problems, or will it create new ones?
- What's the difference between food charity and food justice?
- What does it take to feed 10 billion people — and who decides how?
- If you could change one thing about the American food system, what would it be and why?

Materials/Resources:

- Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* (selected readings)
- Mark Bittman, *Animal, Vegetable, Junk: A History of Food, from Sustainable to Suicidal* (final chapters)
- Current journalism: recent reporting from The New York Times Food section, The Counter, Civil Eats, and Eater
- USDA and FAO reports on food security and 2050 projections (online)
- Documentary clips: *Kiss the Ground* (2020), *Gather* (2020, Indigenous food sovereignty)
- TED Talks on lab-grown meat, food justice, vertical farming

Vocabulary:

Organic	Farm-to-table	Food justice	Food sovereignty
Plant-based	Cultivated meat	Vertical farming	CRISPR
Ultra-processed food	Sustainability	Carbon footprint	Food waste
Food charity	Food policy council	Regenerative agriculture	Food apartheid

Assessments:

- Summative Assessment Option
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning