

Africa and Rice Project

Intro Activity: Where does your food come from?

The goal of this activity is to connect food to plants. Therefore, plants are important in everyone's life, even if they haven't thought about it!

It could easily be done in a (shorter?) teacher-led class discussion instead of a worksheet. The class could pick one "meal" to work on and could then work in small groups. The class could do an example and then students could work in small groups to do another example.

1. What did you eat for breakfast this morning? What did you eat for dinner last night?
2. Make a list of the ingredients. (For example, a cheeseburger contains: ground beef, cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, ketchup and bread. The bread is made of wheat flour, water, salt and yeast.)

Encourage students to break this down as far as they can. The point is for them to take familiar foods and work their way back to the plants they come from. Beef and milk ultimately come from grass and grain.

3. Where does the food come from? (Trace the food back as far as you can. For example: cereal comes from the grocery store. Before that, it was made in a factory. Before that, it was flour. Flour comes from wheat. Wheat is a plant.)

This is a simple question that is not at all simple to answer. Note that the routes for each food will be of different lengths... a tomato comes from the grocery store, but before that from a farm and a plant. A cheeseburger comes from McDonalds and before that... well, it's a long way back to wheat plants and the corn plants that fed the cow.

4. When you trace your foods back as far as you can, what is at the "root"?
Plants.

Discussion and segue: And what do plants need to grow? We'll design an experiment to find out...