

Lesson five: Food and farming

This lesson introduces pupils to the different types of food grown in the USA as well as some of the challenges that face farmers in this region.

Key Questions

- What foods come from the USA?
- What types of agricultural products does the USA produce?
- Where in the USA do different types of farming take place?
- What factors affect farming?
- What challenges face farmers in the USA?
- How important is food and farming for the USA?

Subject content areas

- Locational knowledge: Understanding the wide variety of agricultural products from the USA.
- Place knowledge: Understanding the different regional dominance of different products across the USA.
- Physical geography: Knowledge of the impact of physical features and processes on agricultural production.
- Human geography: Understanding of the different factors that affect farming livelihoods in the USA.
- Geographical skills and fieldwork: Interpreting data tables and maps

Downloads

- Lesson Plan PDF | MSWORD
- Food and Farming (PPT)
- Factsheet for teachers PDF | MSWORD
- Scenario Cards PDF | MSWORD
- Bean Tokens PDF | MSWORD

Additional Resources

- Computer access for pupils
- Printing (and laminating) of Scenario Cards
- Printed (and laminating) of Bean Tokens
- Dried beans if possible for Task two

Starter

Using slide two *Food and Farming* PowerPoint (see downloadable resources), pupils to discuss in groups the foods they have brought to the class which come from the USA. See *factsheet for teachers* (downloadable resources) for suggested items.

Discuss what types of food pupils associate with the USA.

- What type of products are they?
- Are all the ingredients from the USA?

Main

The main teaching for this lesson is upper level Key Stage 2 and may need to be adapted for lower abilities.

Task one: In group discussion, ask pupils what key crops they think are important for the foods of the USA.

Slides three to ten on *Food and Farming* PowerPoint (see downloadable resources), can be used to support the pupils understanding of the different crops which are grown in the USA.

Go to the US Agricultural Census data website

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/Ag_Census_Web_Maps/

Note: Teachers may want to explore the use of the website before the lesson to have time to understand the different functions in terms of maps and tables of data which can be displayed.

Show pupils the maps which identify the top producing states for a number of different agricultural products. The data can be explored in detail at the State level. If computer access is available and pupils are confident with how to use the website, they can pick a state and describe the types of pastoral farming which take place there and how this has changed using the interactive features on the map.

Ask pupils to pick three states in different areas of the country and produce a profile of farming activities that take place there. How do farming activities differ between these states?

Task two: The next activity encourages pupils to consider different factors that affect farming activities including economic, environmental, social and political. Use slides 11 and 12 on *Food and Farming* PowerPoint (see downloadable resources).

- In groups pupils take on the role of a farmer.

- Each farmer begins the activity with 50 beans (see Bean Token document in downloadable resources, or if possible you could bring some dried beans to the lesson to use in the activity).
- Each pupil takes it in turns to pick a *Scenario Card* (see downloadable resources) which describes an event or issue which is affected farmers. Each scenario card will describe an impact which may lead to pupils losing beans or gaining beans (hail storm damage, pests, market price falling etc.). Pupils take turns until all scenario cards have gone and then count their remaining beans. Which farmers have been affected the most?

Plenary

In a class discussion at the end of the activity pupils can then consider which events or issues had the biggest impacts on farmers (positive or negative).

- Pupils to organise the scenario cards in order of importance for agriculture in the USA.
- Ask the pupils: Which factors affect farming the most?
- Pupils should be prepared to justify their choices.

To close, pupils are welcome to share their foods from the USA (discussed at the beginning of the lesson).