



What's for Lunch?

How Schoolchildren Eat Around the World

BY **ANDREA CURTIS**

Photography by Yvonne Duivenvoorden



Teachers' Resource

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Red Deer Press

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Contents

Overview	5
Purpose	5
Curriculum connections	5
About the Author and Photographer	6
Discussion Questions	7
Activities	
Pizza Pie	9
What's for <i>Your</i> Lunch?	14
Untangling the Food System	17
Whole Food Advertising	20
Food-tionary	22
The Lottery of Life	24

Overview

What's for Lunch? travels the globe peering into lunch trays, mugs, bowls and school bags in 13 countries — including a refugee camp in Kenya, a community school in Birmingham, England, a remote Andean village in Peru, and an eco-school in downtown Toronto, Canada. It uses the food we eat as a tool to explore worldwide issues like poverty, inequality, social justice and climate change. It also features examples of kids and organizations doing amazing things to reclaim their school lunch and the food system.

The Purpose of this resource is to support teachers in lessons and activities that increase children's awareness of the importance of food, and the way it is connected to so many issues they care about. It is also aimed at encouraging students to consider what they can do in their own lives and communities to improve the nutritiousness, accessibility and sustainability of the food they eat.

Curriculum connections: health & nutrition, health and physical education, healthy living / eating, healthy choices, food system / food production, food groups, environmental sustainability / food, sustainability, social responsibility, social studies / diversity, urban/rural connections, globalism, media literacy / interpreting media texts, media education / language, art, mathematics, data management.

About the author

Andrea Curtis is a writer and editor in Toronto, Canada. She loves mucking around in her family's small backyard veggie patch and dreaming up new recipes for kale and tomatoes. Her writing—on everything from urban politics to lost shipwrecks—has won numerous awards. She also teaches creative writing to kids, and volunteers at a local school garden. Vist her blog on food and kids at www.whatsforschoollunch.wordpress.com; to read some of her work for grownups, go to www.andreacurtis.ca.

About the photographer

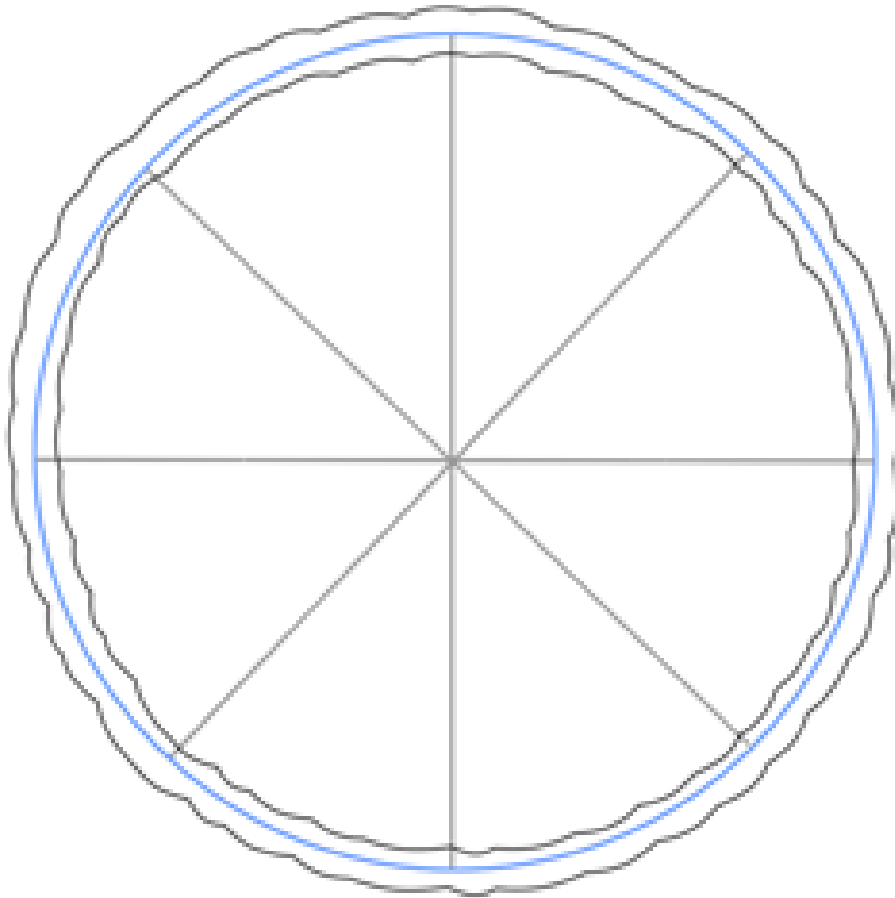
Yvonne Duivenvoorden grew up on a dairy farm in New Brunswick's Chaleur Bay region. Her mother often threw extra potatoes into the pot at suppertime, so that leftovers could be sliced, pan-fried and packed into Yvonne's lunch the following day. That, along with a bottle of farm fresh milk was the best lunch she could wish for! Yvonne is now a photographer based in Toronto. She creates images for magazines, advertising campaigns and cookbooks.

What's for Lunch? Discussion Questions

1. School lunch is important on many different levels in many different countries. In what ways does lunch matter—in your school and for children around the world?
2. What is the food system? What does the author mean when she writes that it is like the human body with many moving and interconnected parts (page 38)?
3. Look through the photographs of lunches throughout the book. What country has the tastiest looking lunch? The healthiest? What country has the worst? Why do you think this is so? Explain.
4. Have students look at the case studies on page 13 (Italy) and page 12 (the United States). Then ask them to discuss the following questions: What does it mean to have sustainable food (see glossary on page 40)? What kinds of foods grow around your city or town? Are they sold in your community? Do you eat them? Have you ever been to a farm?
5. Some children and schools in the book have lots of food and some have very little. Why do you think some children around the world go to school hungry? What role do you think climate change, war, global and/or national politics and poverty play?
6. What is food justice (see glossary on page 40)? Who or what is responsible for ensuring everyone has the right to healthy food? The grocery store? The government? Community leaders? Farmers? The school? Young people like you?

7. The author mentions the term food security (defined on page 40 and discussed on page 38). What does that mean? Why is it important that everyone have "food security"? Is it something that is only important for children in the developing world or do children in your own community face food insecurity?
8. Is the food at your school healthy? How do you know if certain foods are healthy?
9. Is there anything you can do at school or at home to ensure the food you and your classmates eat is healthy? What can you do to ensure that kids at other schools around the world have access to healthy and sustainably produced food?
10. How does food connect you to other people?

1. Pizza pie



Curriculum connections: health & nutrition, healthy living / healthy choices, art, data management, mathematics

Class materials: paper, art supplies

1. Ask children to draw a picture of a pizza and put all the foods they love on it—it doesn't matter how weird and wonderful. In fact, the weirder, the better. If there's time, use a collage or cut pictures from old newspapers or magazines to illustrate the pizza toppings.

2. Discuss food groups and recommended daily intakes according to government recommendations, such as Canada's Food Guide (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/basics-base/quantit-eng.php>) or the American guide (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/>). (Extra: use the "Food-tionary" game below.)
3. Brainstorm with the group to plot out the recommended food groups on a rough "pizza pie" chart. Each food group should be a different color. What food group takes up the most space? What takes up the least? Why?
4. Ask the children to break down the food groups on their crazy pizza pie in a bar graph. (Extra: have them translate it onto a pie chart).
5. Have your students imagine they were eating the pizza they created for lunch. Would it meet recommended daily requirements?

From Canada's Food Guide showing the types of food and how much should be eaten per day for a healthy diet. (from: Health Canada, <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>)

What is One Food Guide Serving?
Look at the examples below.

Vegetables: Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables: 125 mL (½ cup); Leafy vegetables: Cooked: 125 mL (½ cup), Raw: 250 mL (1 cup); Fresh, frozen or canned fruits: 1 fruit or 125 mL (½ cup); 100% Juice: 125 mL (½ cup)

Grains: Bread: 1 slice (35 g); Bagel: ½ bagel (45 g); Flat breads: ½ pita or ½ tortilla (35 g); Cooked rice, bulgur or quinoa: 125 mL (½ cup); Cereal: Cold: 30 g, Hot: 175 mL (¾ cup); Cooked pasta or couscous: 125 mL (½ cup)

Milk: Milk or powdered milk (reconstituted): 250 mL (1 cup); Canned milk (evaporated): 125 mL (½ cup); Fortified soy beverage: 250 mL (1 cup); Yogurt: 175 g (¾ cup); Kefir: 175 g (¾ cup); Cheese: 50 g (1½ oz.)

Meat: Cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat: 75 g (2½ oz.)/125 mL (½ cup); Cooked legumes: 175 mL (¾ cup); Tofu: 50 g or 175 mL (¾ cup); Eggs: 2 eggs; Peanut or nut butters: 30 mL (2 Tbsp); Shelled nuts and seeds: 60 mL (¾ cup)

Oils and Fats

- Include a small amount - 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 Tbsp) - of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.
- Use vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean.
- Choose soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats.
- Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.

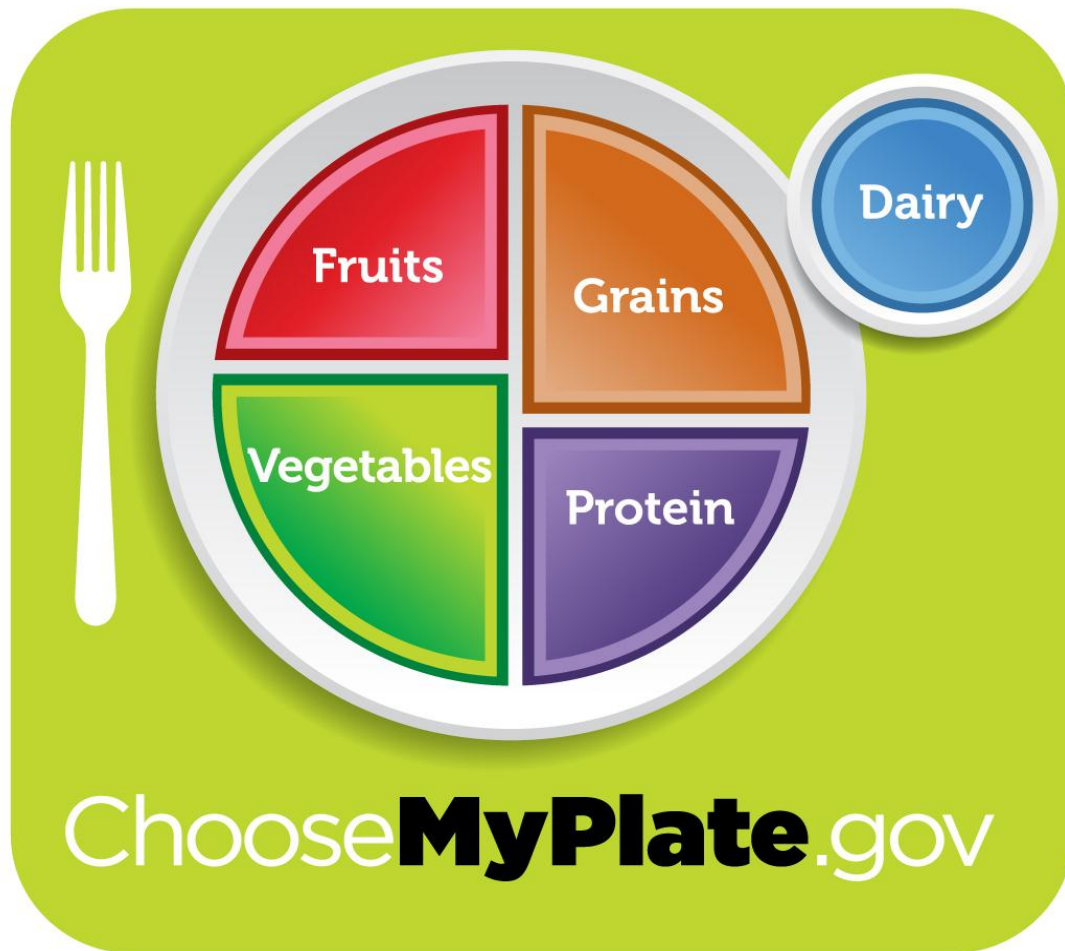
Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day

Age in Years	Children			Teens		Adults			
	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18		19-50		51+	
	Sex			Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Vegetables and Fruit	4	5	6	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	3	4	6	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	2	3-4	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	1-2	2	3	2	3	2	3

The chart above shows how many Food Guide Servings you need from each of the four food groups every day.

Having the amount and type of food recommended and following the tips in *Canada's Food Guide* will help:

- Meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.
- Reduce your risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.
- Contribute to your overall health and vitality.



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed this image to show you what proportions of the five food groups make a healthy meal.

“MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image—a place setting for a meal.” (from the USDA,

www.choosemyplate.gov)

Extras

- a. Read the fun pizza rhymes of *Nothing Beats a Pizza* by author Loris Lesynski (<http://www.lorislesynski.com/index.html>) to start off the exercise. Have students write their own pizza poems based on Lesynski's rhyme scheme or a simple one they create.
- b. Bring in a typical packed lunch as an example, or look at a lunch served in your school. Break down the meal according to food groups on a pie chart or bar graph.
- c. For older children, look at the American and Finnish nutrition guidelines and compare to Canada's food guide (**Canada:** <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php> **USA:** <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/> **Finland:** http://www.ravitsemusneuvottelukunta.fi/portal/en/nutrition_recommendations/). What is the same and what is different? Discuss the way that national nutrition guides are designed and how different groups representing food interests (dairy, beef, pork) lobby for inclusion and prominence in the food guide (for background visit here: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/story/2012/07/27/f-food-guide-70.html>). What does the success of such lobbying efforts mean to our diet?

2. What's for *Your* Lunch?

Curriculum connections: social responsibility, social studies / diversity, globalism, healthy choices, environmental sustainability / food, data management/ mathematics, art.

1. Have your students read *What's for Lunch? How Schoolchildren Eat Around the World*.
2. Over the course of a week, ask students to chart the food in the lunch provided at school. Ask them to create a typical meal and draw it (or use collage) so the food is presented visually in a similar way to the photographs in the book. If lunch is not provided, ask 5 or more students to volunteer to have the lunches they brought to school charted and presented in the same manner. If there is a mix of packed meals and school-provided ones in the classroom, students could compare the lunches of the 5 volunteers' to lunches provided by the school. If this is a challenge in your class, ask the children to imagine the perfect school lunch (packed or offered in school).
3. Have students annotate these lunches as the author has done for the lunches in the book. Research anecdotes and facts related to the items in the meal. Encourage them to look for fun and cultural facts as well as more serious ones related to the environment, equity and politics.

4. Are the lunches the students have depicted healthy? Is the food sustainably produced? If the lunch is provided by the school, does the provider have policies about health or sustainability? Discuss with the class how their lunches compare to those in the book.

Extras

1. Make your class's lunches (those described above) into a book: *What's for Lunch? How Schoolchildren Eat at Our Public School*.
2. Consider having older classes research the nutritional value of the food in the lunches they chose to represent. Go online to determine whether it meets nutritional standards in your country. Research the nutritional value of one or more of the lunches in the book. Compare, for instance, the caloric intake of the biscuits eaten in Afghanistan to the four-course meal in France. Discuss. Are calories the only thing to consider? What are the other factors to think about in creating healthy school meals?
3. Have the class complete a confidential survey asking: what percentage of their typical lunch is made up of vegetables; fruits; grains; dairy; and protein. Figure out the total percentages and compare your class to the ideal in the Canadian or American nutrition guides.
4. Do the lunches students have researched represent the different cultures in your class? Discuss the ways that different people/nations/cultures value different types of food. Talk about the different foods in *What's for*

Lunch?—what was the strangest item? Why do students find it strange? Would a person in Afghanistan, England or Peru find your lunches equally strange? Brainstorm with the class about their own family's food cultures. Consider having an imaginary (or real) potluck lunch in which people bring in food that represents their family's culture. How many different cultures do these lunches represent? How many countries? What does this say about your class and its place in the world?

3. Untangling the food system

Curriculum connections: urban/rural connections, healthy eating / living, food system / food production, media literacy, data management.

1. After reading *What's for Lunch?* with your class, ask the children about the most common item in their own lunches. If lunch is provided, ask smaller groups to discuss their favorite food on the menu and explain why.

2. Play the Human Knot game (optional) to illustrate the interconnections within the food system. Ask children to stand in a big circle and on your signal have them walk slowly to the centre where they will meet everyone else. Ask each child to take their right hand and clasp someone else's right hand across the group. Have them do the same with their left hand but with someone else. They should all be connected to two people, one with each hand. Now break apart one pair's hand and ask the group to slowly and carefully unwind the human knot without releasing hands until they are standing in one long line.

3. Return to the food item the group has chosen. Brainstorm with the class about how they think that item moves from seed and field to the kitchen table.

"Untangle the knot" by breaking it down into 10 steps (each will have several substeps): growing, harvesting, washing/grading, storing, transporting, processing (i.e. how does that potato get turned into French fries); packaging/marketing/retailing, cooking, eating, disposing/composting/recycling (organic material and packaging).

4. As a group or in pairs, encourage the children to first brainstorm, then actively research one of the steps in the food system (at the school library, public library or online). For instance, if the step is growing the food item, ask them to consider cultivating the soil, testing it, amending the soil with compost, buying seeds, planting, weeding, and watering.
5. Have the children draw and illustrate their step in the path from field to table (using illustrations and facts). For the good copy, ask each group to put the information and images on a similarly shaped piece of paper (i.e. a circle). Ask each pair to share their findings with the class. Encourage them to present it in an interesting way—as a play or perhaps as dialogue or a tableau.
6. Once everyone is done, put the different parts together on a board or wall so you have a map of the food system in your class to refer to as you continue to explore the ideas in *What's for Lunch?*

Extras

1. Instead of starting with a seed, untangle the food system by beginning with a finished product like a bag of chips or a cake mix or a taco from a fast-food chain. Trace the food backward to its source.
2. Have your class brainstorm about all the people who participate in the food system. (For instance, farmers, truck drivers, processors, grocery store staff, farmers' markets, chefs, restaurants, lunch room staff, sales/marketing people, packagers, advertisers, consumers.) Draw a food web showing their links and connections.

3. Grow the item the class has chosen to "untangle" in your classroom. For instance, if it's French fries, grow a potato in a tub (see **link** here: <http://www.ontariopotatoes.ca/Kids%20Corner/159/91> or <http://www.potatoes.co.nz/schools/activities-growing.php>)

4. Whole food advertising

Curriculum connections: media literacy, media education / language, interpreting media texts.

1. Choose a processed food popular with your students (the more extreme the better) that currently has an active advertising campaign. Bring the food item, and any of the media or advertising that you can find, into class.
2. Brainstorm with students to create a mind map of the product's marketing and advertising strategy. What do they do to sell their product to kids? Do they use music? A jingle? Celebrity endorsement? New! Improved! Language? Health claims? Food styling? The bandwagon approach? Internet-based games? Treating parents/adults as if they are stupid and kids and the food company are in it together? Games/ toys/ bribes? Are they selling the product itself, or are they selling a "lifestyle" that advertisers are linking to their product?
3. Ask the kids about what advertising strategies work on them. Can they think of a product they found themselves wanting after seeing /experiencing the ads? Does a particular jingle run through their head? Do they remember knowing a logo or sign of a particular store or product before they could even read? Ask students to consider why people choose the foods they choose? Should we believe the hype? Is this product actually healthy or good to eat? Does it taste as good as the advertising says it does? Look at the label and explore what is in the product. Ask

- students to research what the ingredients are. Do a taste test. For instance, if it's strawberry-flavored, compare the taste to real strawberries.
4. Ask the children to go away in pairs or small groups to create an ad for a whole food such as broccoli, tomatoes, and apples, using the same techniques they've seen with the processed food. The ad could be a bumper sticker, a jingle, a TV spot, a radio spot, a print advertisement, even an ad in the subway or bus shelter.

Resources:

1. Unpacking advertising tricks. Meet a makeup artist for food:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xA14pAGW4UA>
2. PBS kids' *Don't Buy It: Get Media Smart* website is full of great resources (web links, ideas, stories) for teachers: <http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/>

Food-tionary

(Please note: this works best to reinforce concepts related to food groups, nutrients, etc. that have already been discussed in class).

Curriculum connections: food groups, healthy choices.

Classroom materials: hourglass timer, newspapers and magazines for cutting out pictures, small box, paper.

1. Before class, cut out pictures (as many as possible, up to 30-40) from magazines and newspapers of different food items commonly found in the students' lunch bags or school meal (i.e. bread, cheese, sliced meat, pasta, apple, chips, pop, juice, etc.). Glue them onto pieces of paper that can be folded in half so the food is hidden. Place them in a shoe box or other small box.
2. Divide the class into groups of 2-3 (possibly using food groups or favorite food as their name, i.e. Victorious Veggies, Fantastic Fruits, Gorgeous Grains, Delicious Dairy). (Extra: have them make a song for their team or create a poster about why their food group is great.)
3. Group one begins and has one minute (use the timer) to get through as many of the food pictures from the box as possible. One person describes the item and the others must guess what it is. The hitch is: they must use only words they've learned to describe the item (grain, dairy, vitamins,

- nutrients, etc.), and never the name of the item itself. For example, bread might be described as a carbohydrate and a grain, an orange as a fruit and a source of vitamin C.
4. The group works as a team, one person describing, the others guessing, rotating through each member after each successful guess until the minute is up. The next group is then up, and they do the same thing. The group with the most successfully described items wins.

The lottery of life

Curriculum connections: health & nutrition; food system / food production; food groups; social responsibility; media literacy; language, art; mathematics, data management.

Classroom materials: "lottery" tickets with family identity (provided); fake paper money (black line provided); recent savings flyers from local grocery stores.

Please note: the purpose of this exercise is to allow students to experience the reality of inequality and understand the challenges of eating healthily and adequately on low-incomes. It is appropriate for older children and involves a field trip to a grocery store. It is important to secure permission from the store before you go.

1. Read *What's for Lunch?* and discuss issues of poverty, health, food access and food justice in the book (see page 8, 18, 20 and 22, especially).
2. Divide students into groups or "families" before class (no more than 5 children per group) and present them with the family identities provided below. This is their "lottery ticket." There are two families each representing low-income; middle income; and high income. Feel free to customize the family identity according to the communities and cultures in your neighborhood.
3. Provide each family with fake money (blackline below) that represents their daily or weekly budget for food. Working with a weekly budget will be

- more complicated; a daily budget is more likely to be appropriate for younger students. Teachers may want to research the current situation in their community or begin with simple figures—it is the range and inequality that is important, not the exact figure. For instance, low-income families of 4 might have \$45 per week for food; middle-income families might have \$100; high-income families \$200.
4. Tell the students that they are going to go to the grocery store to see what they can buy within their weekly or daily budget. Ask them to brainstorm and do some research with their group (online or in the library) to find out what is nutritionally appropriate for the particular family members (for instance, if there is a baby in the family or an elderly person or a pregnant woman, they will have different nutritional needs). Use the national food guides (see links above) to determine what a healthy diet for the family might look like. Consider the culture of the family and typical foods they might enjoy. Provide each group with savings flyers for the store you will go to. Ask the "family" to plan an ideal week's menu using the nutritional requirements, the family's preferences and (possibly) the store's sales or coupons.
 5. Take the students to a local grocery store. Have them bring paper or a clipboard. They will have one hour to go around the store and plan what they will buy with their budget. Half-way through the exercise, each group will be given an obstacle/bonus card (provided below). It might be that one person is given a birthday gift of money that makes it possible to buy more

- food or a sudden illness in the family means some of the food budget must go to medicine.
6. Back in school, ask the students to brainstorm what they learned with the whole class. What foods did they choose? Were some foods more expensive than they thought? Were they able to buy healthy food or food that is sustainably produced? Did they run out of money? Was it a frustrating experience or a fun one? How did they feel about themselves or their "family" in relation to the other groups? How did dietary restrictions or cultural needs play into their food choices? What foods were easy to find? What kinds of foods were hard to find? What kinds of questions did the exercise raise about food or food access? Does it seem fair that some families could buy whatever they want and others had to be much more careful or even go without?
 7. Have the students go back to their family group and create a poster in class that shows what they bought. Have them illustrate with cut out images from the flyers or their own drawings. Make sure they include the family identity on the poster. Have the families compare their "purchases" to the nutrition guidelines and meal plan they have already researched. How do they match up? What were the barriers they encountered to meeting these guidelines?
 8. Explore as a group what the students learned on their field trip. Why is this exercise called "The lottery of life"? Is it like winning the lottery to be born

into a high or middle income family? Why do some people have access to adequate amounts of healthy food and others don't? Is this fair? If not, what kinds of social and political policies would make sense to support every family to have enough healthy food to survive and thrive? Should minimum wage be increased? Would more community gardens help? What about food banks or food pantries?

9. Depending on the solutions students come up with, ask them to act on their ideas. Write a letter to a local politician telling them about the class experience and asking what they are doing to create more equitable access to healthy food in your area. Ask them to write back! Research the emergency food supports in your neighborhood or town and ask someone from one of the organizations to come in and speak to the class.

Extra

1. Have students reflect on their experience as a member of their "family." Ask them to write a one-page journal entry either in their own voice or the voice of one of the imaginary members of that family. How did it feel to go to the grocery store and be able to buy everything you want, or to have to carefully budget or to have to buy the cheapest food available? How did it feel to know others were in different circumstances? Did the exercise make them think differently about how others live?

2. Ask students to find a blank piece of paper and give them 5 minutes to brainstorm words that describe how they felt. Ask them to craft a 6-word sentence that sums up the experience. (See six word memoirs for inspiration: <http://www.smithmag.net/sixwords/>)
3. For another in-depth experience that explores income inequality on the international stage, host an Oxfam Hunger Banquet. See <http://www.oxfam.ca/what-you-can-do/fundraise-for-oxfam/hungry-for-change/hungry4change-hunger-banquet> for details and a full package of materials.

HIGH INCOME

We are the Jackson family—two adults, three kids (one is a baby). Our own parents were immigrants from the Caribbean who raised us in the suburbs and scrimped and saved so they could make a better life for us. Both of us worked our way through college and now have good, high-paying jobs. We own a large home in an upscale neighbourhood, our children all go to private schools and we travel as much as our busy jobs allow. We recently funded a scholarship that helps disadvantaged young people like we once were attend college.

HIGH INCOME

We are the Lawrence family. We're a family of four with two young children. We live in the countryside and have a lot of land where we keep horses and even have a small vegetable patch. We met at university and were both lucky to inherit money from our wealthy parents so that we could afford to buy this place. Only one of us works, the other stays home to look after the kids, but money isn't an issue. We can afford to do whatever we like. We hope we'll be able to leave some of what we have to our kids.

MIDDLE INCOME

We are the Oliviera family. We are a family of (almost) four—two adults, one school-aged child, one baby on the way. We live in a mid-sized city in a small house that we are working hard to pay off. We're lucky that our parents, who immigrated from Portugal before we were born, live nearby so they can help with childcare. Our older child attends the local school and we hope our baby will go there, too. We're really involved in our community. We make sure the elderly

people who are our neighbors are looked after and every summer we organize a street party.

MIDDLE INCOME

We are the Sampson family. We are a divorced father and two kids, one in high school, the other in sixth grade. We live in an apartment on a public transit line so we can get to work and our two different schools easily. The children have been taking the bus and metro on their own since the family split up a few years ago. Dad has a good job in construction, but he's too tired when he gets home to do much more than fall asleep in front of the TV. He worries that changes in the economy will mean he goes without work for a long stretch. He lived on welfare when he was a child and doesn't want to go back there.

LOW INCOME

We are the Grace family. We are a single mother, two adult children and elderly grandmother. We live in a small two-bedroom apartment that is partially subsidized by the city. Both adult children have minimum-wage jobs in the retail sector but Mom hasn't worked since her own mother came to live with us after she broke her hip in a fall two years ago. The apartment is bursting at the seams with Mom sharing a room with one of the adult children, Grandma in the other and the second child sleeping on a couch in the main living space. The close quarters and financial worries mean there is a lot of stress in our family.

LOW INCOME

We are the Kraus family. We are an elderly married couple. We have two children but they moved to the city to find work and we rarely see them. We still live in the small house on a quiet street we bought when we moved to this town after immigrating in the 1970s. One of us hasn't been able to work for years following a workplace injury. The other has a small pension but it's not enough to live on. We struggle to pay our mortgage and put food on the table. It doesn't seem right after working all our lives that we are struggling so much.

Jackson family obstacle

Dad receives a financial bonus for outstanding performance in his field. Add \$200 to the weekly budget.

Lawrence family

A developer wants to buy some of the family's land and they've made an offer that's too much to refuse. Add \$100 to the weekly food budget.

Oliviera family

Grandma who looks after the kids after school dies suddenly. Grandpa can't look after himself so he moves in with the young family. Deduct \$20 from the weekly food budget to pay for childcare.

Sampson family





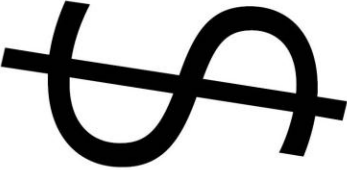
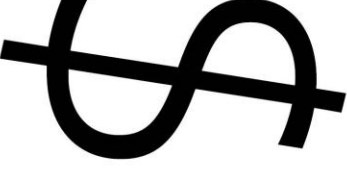
The eldest child gets a partial scholarship to a good university. Deduct \$30. from the weekly budget to save for tuition costs not covered by the scholarship.

Grace family

The apartment building is infested with bed bugs and needs to be fumigated. Most costs for relocation are covered but not all. Deduct \$15. from the weekly food budget.

Kraus family

One of the children just landed a solid job and wants to help her parents. She sends money. Add \$20. to the weekly food budget.

<p>I'm a Jackson I'm high income</p> 	<p>I'm a Lawrence I'm high income</p> 
<p>I'm a Oliviera I'm middle income</p> 	<p>I'm a Sampson I'm middle income</p> 
 <p>I'm a Grace I'm low income</p>	 <p>I'm a Kraus I'm low income</p>

