Climate is an Environmental Justice Issue Monthly Planning Guide for LINKS Chapters

December 2022

Overview

Monthly Theme	Environmental Awareness Days	Cultural and Identity Awareness Days
Environmental Health: Food	International Volunteer Day (5) World Soil Day (5) Christmas Bird Count	Universal Human Rights Month Rosa Parks Day (1) International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (2) PEARLS Founder's Day (7) Kwanzaa (26-Jan 1)

Elementary	1. Activity 1: Sustainable Food: Where Does our Food Come From? **2.** Activity 2: Community-based Food Justice Projects and Leaders 3. Activity 3: Make a Community Food Map 4. Community Activity: Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Middle and High School	1. Activity 1: What is a Food Desert? 2. Activity 2: Community-based Food Justice Projects and Leaders 3. Activity 3: Make a Community Food Map 4. Voter Education & Engagement: The History of Voting Rights 5. Community Activity: Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Mentoring Moment Suggestions

seek out passionate volunteers, activists, elders, and Indigenous members of the community, consider accessing the expertise of community gardeners, farmers, public health practitioners, medical professionals, or agriculture and food policy experts.

Environmental Health: Food

ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

Youth will examine the relationships between food, health, and environmental justice in their community this month. In the first activity, they will research where the food that they eat is grown and calculate **food miles**. During the second activity, they will be introduced to community-based **food justice leaders** and projects. They will also explore their neighborhood's food resources and create a **community food map** in the third activity. And finally, they will find info about how to participate in the **2022 Audubon Christmas Bird Count.**

MATERIALS

- Internet connection and computer or tablets
- Worksheet #1: Where Does our Food Come From?
- Video: Ron Finley Urban Gangsta Gardener in South Central LA (5:11)
- Video: Young Food Justice Advocate | Teens for Food Justice
- Video: How This Activist Farmer Fights Racism Through Food
- Video: Connecting Food, Land, and People
- Video: Grow Food | Appetite for Change (youth-created song about healthy food)
- Video: Regenerative Gardens (for reversing climate change)

BACKGROUND

Scientists say the impacts of climate change—higher temperatures, extreme weather, drought, increasing levels of carbon dioxide, and sea level rise—threaten to decrease the quantity and jeopardize the quality of our food supplies. Climate change will not only affect crop yields, but impact meat production, fisheries, and other fundamental aspects of our food supply. Many students may not fully understand where their food comes from and how it gets to their plates: how it is grown, harvested, processed, and distributed and the associated environmental impacts. This lesson will provide them with a pathway to build the knowledge and skills to participate in and advocate for sustainable food systems.

Food production across the world has benefited from new technology and we can eat practically whatever we want, whenever we want it. Never before has food been so easy and so cheap to find. But what is the true cost of this food to our health as well as to the environment? Growing, producing and distributing food in a sustainable way will not only reduce our impact on the environment but also provide us with fresh, less processed, and healthier food.

Vocabulary

- **sustainability**- the quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance.

- **carbon footprint**- the amount of carbon dioxide or other carbon compounds emitted into the atmosphere by the activities of an individual, company, country.
- **food miles** - a mile over which a food item is transported during the journey from producer to consumer, as a unit of measurement of the fuel used to transport it.
- **climate change-** a change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.
- **greenhouse gases** - any of the gases whose absorption of solar radiation is responsible for the greenhouse effect, including carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, and the fluorocarbons.

WHAT TO DO

Activity 1: Sustainable Food: Where Does our Food Come From? [flexible timing depending on how many resources the class explores]

1. Begin the activity by asking questions about the food that students eat.
   - What are some of your favorite foods? Have you ever wondered where this food comes from?
   - Where is the food we eat grown or raised? How does it get to grocery stores, restaurants, or the school cafeteria?
   - How much food do you think comes from other countries?
   - How many miles do you think a food like chocolate has to travel in order to get to your supermarket? (food miles)

2. Research where our food comes from.

Option #1: Visit a supermarket.
- Choose 6 foods from the produce department, 3 vegetables and 3 fruits.
- Record the place of origin from each food (for example, bananas from Ecuador). Most supermarkets label the place of origin of their produce.
- With this information, students can complete Worksheet #1.

Option #2: Generate a list of common food items found in students' kitchens (these can be cereal, a bag of rice, soda, juice, milk, meat, cookies, chips, etc.). If there is a kitchen (with food items) where the program takes place, students can also choose food items there.

- Working in pairs or small groups, students can choose 1-2 of these items.
- Ask them to look up these specific items on the internet to find and make a list of the ingredients in their food items. For example, the main ingredients of corn flakes cereal are: corn, sugar, salt, wheat, and barley malt.
- Groups can use the internet to research where the ingredients in the product are grown or produced. For the corn flakes example, the United States imports the majority of its sugar from Mexico and the corn comes from farms in Idaho.
- With this information, students can complete Worksheet #1.

3. Extension: Students can conduct research to find out what agriculture products are grown or raised in their states.

Activity 2: Community-based Food Justice Projects and Leaders

1. Use the following resources to introduce students to food justice leaders and community-based food projects.

- Video: Ron Finley Urban Gangsta Gardener in South Central LA (5:11)
- Video: Young Food Justice Advocate | Teens for Food Justice
- Video: How This Activist Farmer Fights Racism Through Food
- Video: Connecting Food, Land, and People
- Video: Grow Food | Appetite for Change (youth-created song about healthy food)
- Video: Regenerative Gardens (for reversing climate change)

Activity 3: Make a Community Food Map [flexible timing, but plan for a minimum of 3-4 sessions]

- **Introduce the Project**

1. Begin this activity by discussing where people can find food in the community. Students are likely to think of grocery stores, restaurants, farms, or their own kitchens. Encourage them to consider all the places where food is available: the school cafeteria, convenient stores, dollar stores, community or home gardens, senior centers, food banks, food trucks, farmers markets, food co-ops, etc.

2. With each place that is mentioned, ask follow-up questions:
    a. Who can get food at this location?
    b. Is the food expensive/affordable/free? Is the food fresh? Is it healthy?
    c. Is it easy for people to get to this place? Do they need a vehicle? Do have to wait in line for a long time to get food?
    d. Is this food relevant or important to my culture or the culture of this community?

3. Consider all the people who work or volunteer at each of these places to help the food reach hungry mouths.
    a. Cooks, farmers, gardeners, store clerks, drivers, food packers, bakers, butchers, family members, and more.

4. Explain that the group will be creating a **community food map**. The map will feature the places where people can access food. Students can decide what types of places/categories in their community they would like to be represented in their maps. Here are a few suggested categories: grocery stores, fast food restaurants, fresh food, convenient stores, community gardens or farms, food banks. (It may be difficult to map all of these places, so feel free to select a few categories to make it manageable for the group).

➢ Create the Map

5. **Choose boundaries for the map.** Groups in larger cities may choose to include only the local neighborhood; groups in rural areas may want their maps to show a greater area to illustrate distances between community food resources.

6. **Draw or create the map:** Maps can be drawn/copied on chart paper or poster board or they can be created using a digital resource like Google My Maps. Find a detailed tutorial for using Google My Maps HERE. Feel free to also create a map in an abstract shape, as long as the data can be represented clearly on the maps.

7. **Collect data and add it to the map.**

a. Take a walk through the neighborhood and note the locations of community food resources.
b. Conduct searches using google maps or on the internet. Note the locations where people can find food in your selected categories.
c. Use symbols or sticky notes to represent each type of food resource on the map; if the group is using Google My Maps, add pins to the map.
d. Be sure to add a key to the map to illustrate the food categories.

➢ Analyze the Map and Brainstorm Ideas

7. **Analyze the map.**

a. Discuss the map; encourage students to think critically about their findings: is it easy to find fresh food in our community? Does our community have more fast food restaurants than grocery stores? Is any of the food available in our community grown here? Can I find food important to my culture here?

b. Tally up the data. Create graphs to compare and visually represent the number and types of food sources in your community.

8. **Brainstorm ideas and solutions** for making it easier for people in our community to find fresh, healthy food. *Can you build a garden at your school or on land that is not being used? Can groups deliver groceries or meals to people with limited means to travel? Can people come together and organize to create a food co-op?*

➢ Share the map with members of your community

8. **Share the map** and the ideas for increasing opportunities for finding healthy food with family members, partners, local farmers, medical professionals, or other members of the community.

Extension Ideas

- Interview food workers or food justice leaders in your community. Create profiles of them and add them to map.
- Send thank you cards or notes of gratitude to people in your community who work to provide healthy food.
- Volunteer at a community garden or a food bank.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Audubon's 123rd Christmas Bird Count will be held from Dec 14, 2022 to January 5, 2023!

- https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count

Gather your friends, families, binoculars, and bird guides! Here's what you need to know to participate in your town.

Follow these steps to participate in Audubon's Christmas Bird Count:

Step 1: Read **these details** to become familiar with Audubon's Christmas Bird Count.

Step 2: Check out the map to find a count near you. Green and yellow circles are open to new participants, and red circles are full.

Step 3: To arrange participation contact compilers by email in advance of count day by using the information from the circle pop-ups on the map.

Step 4: **Sign up for American Birds** so you can hear about the results of the Christmas Bird Count and other Audubon community science programs!

Step 5: Already signed up for a count? Then head over to our **CBC Live tracker** to see photos posted from others who are scouting for or participating in the Christmas Bird Count, and upload your own photos!

- **Find FAQ here.**

Here are some tips to make it a successful and fun day.

- Make memories! Take photos of your bird sightings, the landscapes, and your group.
- Use a journal to record additional observations or sketch scenes and sightings from the day.
- Build in breaks throughout the day so people in your group can refuel or rest.
- Compare your bird lists/data to other groups in your town or with data from past years.
- If you use social media, share your sightings with your friends. Use or follow hash tags to see how others are participating in the Christmas Bird Count.
- Follow local birding groups or individual birders to see their photos and sightings.
- Be inspired! Read about the birds that first inspired birders.
- Once you're back home, make a **pinecone bird feeder** for all the birds that reside in your neighborhood through winter.
- Here are some other tips for attracting birds to your yard.

Environmental Health: Food

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

Youth will examine the relationships between food, health, and environmental justice in their community this month. In the first activity, they will learn about food deserts and critically think about the causes and consequences of **food deserts.** During the second activity, they will be introduced to community-based **food justice leaders** and projects. They will also explore their neighborhood's food resources and create a **community food map** in the third activity. And finally, they will find info about how to participate in **the 2022 Audubon Christmas Bird Count.**

Voter Education & Engagement: Youth will examine the history of voting rights through videos and discussions.

MATERIALS

Activity 1:

- Video: What is a Food Desert?
- Video: Food Deserts in DC, Let's Talk- NPR (3:30 min)
- Video: Trying to Eat Healthy in a Food Desert
- Video: Healthy Corners – Combatting DC's Food Deserts
- Worksheet #1: *Food Deserts: Causes and Consequences* (also attached)
- Worksheet #2: What's in Store? (also attached)
- Resource: United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Desert Locator

Activity 2:

- Video: Ron Finley Urban Gangsta Gardener in South Central LA (5:11)
- Video: Young Food Justice Advocate | Teens for Food Justice
- Video: How This Activist Farmer Fights Racism Through Food
- Video: Connecting Food, Land, and People
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BACKGROUND

It is reported that the term **food deserts** first appeared in Scotland in the 1990's to describe regions of the country that often feature large proportions of households with low incomes, inadequate access to transportation, and a limited number of food retailers providing fresh produce and healthy groceries for affordable prices. Currently, there is much debate about what constitutes a food desert, their root causes, and for many, even the term food desert is considered misleading, and have coined a different term, **food apartheid**. Many establish that food apartheid is a more accurate description of how the lack of access to healthy food is intrinsically tied to systematic racism. Regardless of what we call this

detrimental situation, which affects millions of people in the US, there is consensus on the main factors that contribute to its development:

1. Neighborhood income levels
2. Racial composition of neighborhood
3. Physical proximity (how far it is to the nearest grocery store)
4. Lack of access to transportation
5. Lack of nutritional education

Vocabulary

- **disparity** (noun): lack of equality, inequality, difference

- **food desert** (noun): a neighborhood where there is little or limited access to healthy and affordable food such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk and other foods that make up the full range of a healthy diet

- **food insecurity** (noun): lack of access to a sufficient amount of food because of limited funds. More than 49 million American households are considered food insecure and are vulnerable to poor health as a result.

WHAT TO DO

Activity 1: What is a Food Desert? [flexible timing depending on how many resources the class explores][1]

1. Use the following questions to guide a discussion about food deserts. A food desert is an area (neighborhood, community, etc.) where healthy, affordable food is difficult to obtain.

- What do you think we mean by the term food deserts?
- How does our neighborhood influence the choices we make about our food choices?
- How would having a grocery store near or far away from your home affect you?
- What does it mean to have a healthy diet?
- What causes a community food desert?
- What are the solutions to reducing the food desert prevalence?

2. Use one or more of the following resources to help students more fully understand how food deserts affect individuals and communities.

- Video: What is a Food Desert?
- Video: Food Deserts in DC, Let's Talk- NPR (3:30 min)
- Video: Trying to Eat Healthy in a Food Desert
- Video: Healthy Corners – Combatting DC's Food Deserts

[1] [1] Adapted from Learning for Justice; Food Deserts: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions

2. After watching the videos, students can complete Worksheet #1: *Food Deserts: Causes and Consequences* to brainstorm about the causes of food deserts, the consequences within communities, and possible solutions.

3. Working in pairs or small groups, ask students to complete the Worksheet #2: What's in Store?. Share and discuss responses with the larger group.

4. If time allows, go online to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Desert Locator. When you enter the locator, you will see a map of the United States with food deserts highlighted in red to find out where food deserts are located in your town or community.

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Additional Resource: Food Justice: In the Community curriculum [GrowNYC]. This curriculum includes 8 lessons and features ready-to-use powerpoint presentations with resources and activities for each topic.

Activity 3: Make a Community Food Map [flexible timing, but plan for a minimum of 3-4 sessions]

➢ Introduce the Project

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VOTER EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

The History of Voting Rights

Is voting a right or a privilege?

These activities are excerpted from Facing History: Voting Rights in the United States and PBS Learning Media: To Vote of Not to Vote.

BACKGROUND

Elections are crucial to democracy, ensuring people a voice in their government. Throughout US history, different groups of Americans have fought for the right to vote, both because this right is crucial for participating in democracy and because the right to vote is symbolic of the right to belong in the nation.

Since the 2020 election, 17 states have enacted legislation that makes it easier to vote, such as legislation that registers voters automatically and expands access to early or absentee voting. Other states have moved in the opposite direction, passing laws that create barriers to voting. These laws include requiring people to present IDs to vote, disenfranchising people who were previously convicted of felonies, restricting early and absentee voting, and removing voters' names from registration lists if they have not recently voted. The Supreme Court's 2013 decision in Shelby County v. Holder to strike down portions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act has made it easier for states to enact new restrictions on voting, and many of these new restrictions are being challenged in the courts, with critics arguing that they disproportionately affect voters who are racial minorities, poor, or young.[2]

[2] https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/voting-rights-united-states-0

VOCABULARY

- **Franchise** (noun): a right or privilege that a government guarantees its people. This usually refers to the right to vote. The verb "**enfranchise**" means to grant the right to vote to a person or group of people. The verb "**disenfranchise**" means to take the right to vote away from a person or group of people.

- **Voter Suppression** (noun): an effort or activity designed to prevent people from voting by making voting impossible, dangerous or just very difficult. Voter suppression can be legal and organized (for example, literacy tests or laws limiting the number of polling places), illegal and organized (for example, mailers or robocalls telling people to vote on the wrong day), or illegal and unorganized (for example, an individual showing up to a polling place to intimidate others into not voting).

WHAT TO DO

PART 1

1. Place students in pairs, and give each pair a copy of *KQED*'s **U.S. Voting Rights Timeline** (also attached). **Note**: You can also share a portion of this timeline if you wish to focus on one time period in US history.

2. Ask students to read through the timeline with their partner. For each event, they should decide if it is an example of an *expansion* of voting rights, a *limitation* on voting rights, or *both*.

3. When students have finished, ask them:
   - What information on the timeline surprised you?
   - How do voting rights reflect who is considered to be "American" at different points in the country's history?

PART 2

1. Watch the video, So You Think You Can Vote. Watch more than once if necessary.

2. Reflect on the video using the following **discussion questions:**

- How important is voting to you? Would you have risked life and limb as civil rights demonstrators did during the march on "Bloody Sunday?"
- Explain why a key section of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 authorized the federal government to oversee voting laws.
- How did the decision in Shelby v. Holder affect the federal government's power to regulate how states administered voting? Explain whether you agree with the majority of the Supreme Court justices that this ruling was necessary.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Video: A History of Voting Rights 3:19 [NYTimes]
- Video: The Fight for the Right to Vote in the U.S. [Ted-Ed]
- Lesson and Video: To Vote of Not to Vote [PBS Learning Media]

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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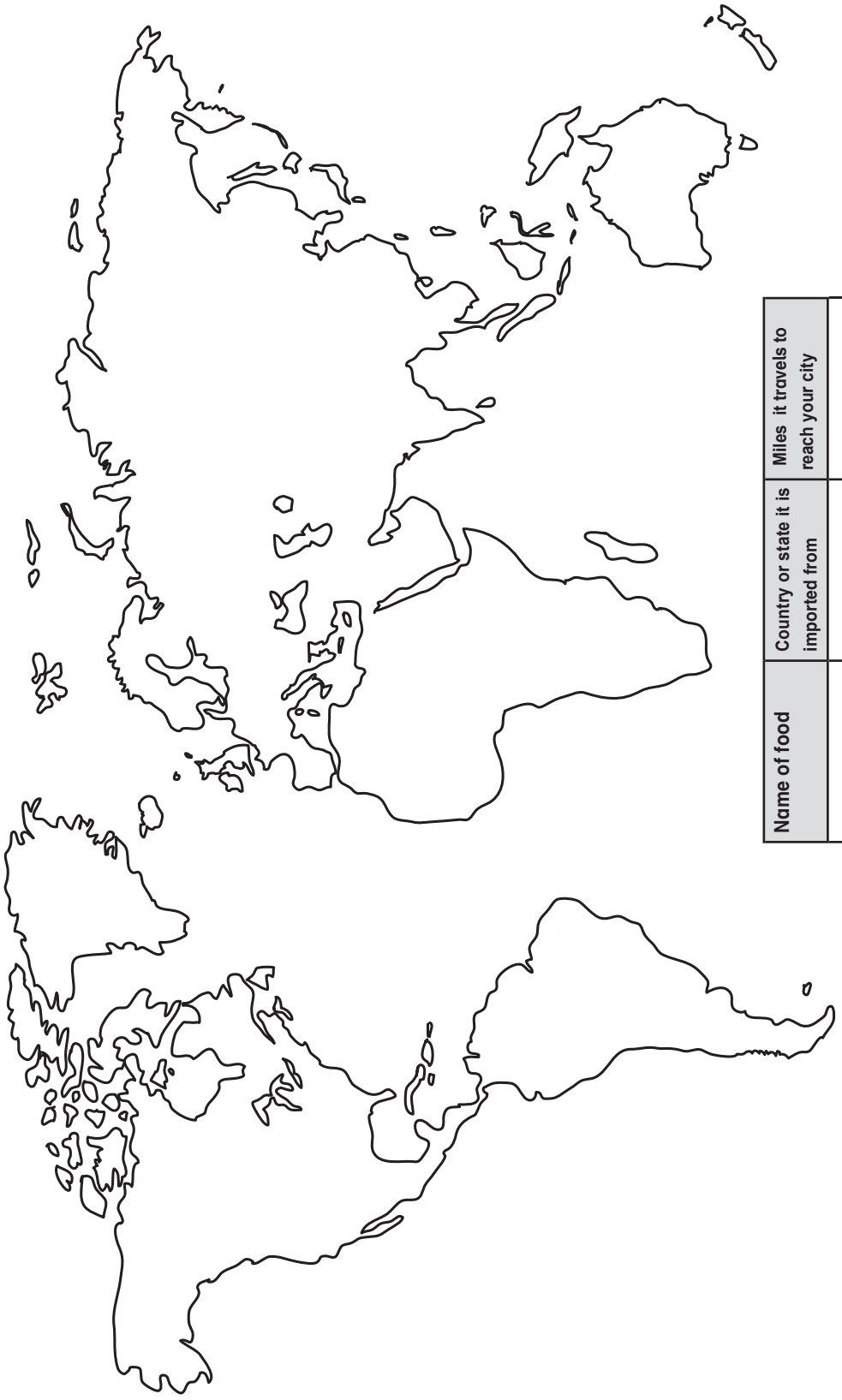
Worksheet #1:

Where does our food come from?

Choose 6 foods or food ingredients. Label the food name and draw a line from the country or state of origin to your city. Complete the table.



Name of food	Country or state it is imported from	Miles it travels to reach your city

Worksheet #1 Food Deserts: Causes and Consequences

After watching the introduction to Food Deserts and Washington D.C. Case study videos (4), describe at least three causes and consequences of food deserts within a community.

Possible causes of food deserts	Consequences to the communities

TEACHING TOLERANCE
A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
WWW.TOLERANCE.ORG

MIDDLE & UPPER GRADES ACTIVITY
K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

What's in Store?

The chart below lists three different retail categories where you can purchase food and a series of questions/ characteristics about each. Complete the chart. Then answer the questions that follow.

My community is (check one): ☐ rural ☐ urban ☐ suburban

	GROCERY STORE/ SUPERMARKET	CONVENIENCE STORE	FAST FOOD RESTAURANT
Example closest to my home			
Approximate distance from home			
Are there healthy options such as fresh fruit, vegetables, low-fat milk products, whole wheat products, and lean meats?			
Rank from 1 to 10 (1 = expensive and 10 = economical)			
How many of these are in a one-mile radius of your home?			

1. Would you characterize your community as a food desert? Why or why not?

2. If possible, research and compare the availability and cost of at least three staple items at each of the retailers you listed above. The items could be a loaf of bread (preferably whole wheat), a gallon of milk (preferably low-fat), a piece of fresh fruit, a head of lettuce, a half-gallon of orange juice, etc. What conclusions can you drawfrom your research? What light do your findings shed, if any, on the impact of living in a food desert?

U.S. Voting Rights Timeline

1776	**Only people who own land can vote** Declaration of Independence signed. Right to vote during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods is restricted to property owners—most of whom are white male Protestants over the age of 21.
1787	**No federal voting standard—states decide who can vote** U.S. Constitution adopted. Because there is no agreement on a national standard for voting rights, states are given the power to regulate their own voting laws. In most cases, voting remains in the hands of white male landowners.
1789	George Washington elected president. **Only 6% of the population can vote.**
1790	**Citizen=White** 1790 Naturalization Law passed. It explicitly states that only "free white" immigrants can become naturalized citizens.
1848	**Activists for ending slavery and women's rights join together** Women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, NY. Frederick Douglass, a newspaper editor and former slave, attends the event and gives a speech supporting universal voting rights. His speech helps convince the convention to adopt a resolution calling for voting rights for women.
1848	**Citizenship granted, but voting denied** The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American War and guarantees U.S. citizenship to Mexicans living in the territories conquered by the U.S. However, English language requirements and violent intimidation limit access to voting rights.
1856	**Vote expanded to all white men** North Carolina is the last state to remove property ownership as a requirement to vote.
1866	**Movements unite and divide** Two women's rights activists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, form an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal voting rights. The organization later divides and regroups over disagreements in strategies to gain the vote for women and African Americans.
1868	**Former slaves granted citizenship** 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution passed. Citizenship is defined and granted to former slaves. Voters, however, are explicitly defined as male. Although the

U.S. Voting Rights Timeline

	amendment forbids states from denying any rights of citizenship, voting regulation is still left in the hands of the states.
1870	**Vote cannot be denied because of race, explicitly – so other discriminatory tactics used** 15th Amendment passed. It states that the right to vote cannot be denied by the federal or state governments based on race. However, soon after, some states begin to enact measures such as voting taxes and literacy tests that restrict the actual ability of African Americans to register to vote. Violence and other intimidation tactics are also used.
1872	**Women try to vote** Susan B. Anthony is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York, for attempting to vote in the presidential election. At the same time, Sojourner Truth, a former slave and advocate for justice and equality, appears at a polling booth in Grand Rapids, Michigan, demanding a ballot but she is turned away.
1876	**Indigenous people cannot vote** The Supreme Court rules that Native Americans are not citizens as defined by the 14th Amendment and, thus, cannot vote.
1882	The Chinese Exclusion Act **bars people of Chinese ancestry from naturalizing to become U.S. citizens.**
1887	**Assimilation=Right to Vote** Dawes Act passed. It grants citizenship to Native Americans who give up their tribal affiliations
1890	Wyoming admitted to statehood and becomes **first state to legislate voting for women in its constitution.**
1890	**Indigenous people must apply for citizenship** The Indian Naturalization Act grants citizenship to Native Americans whose applications are approved—similar to the process of immigrant naturalization.
1912-13	**Women lead voting rights marches** through New York and Washington, D.C.
1919	**Military Service=Citizenship for Native Americans** Native Americans who served in the military during World War I are granted U.S. citizenship.

U.S. Voting Rights Timeline

1920	**Right to vote extended to women** 19th Amendment passed, giving women right to vote in both state and federal elections.
1922	**Asian≠White≠Citizen** Supreme Court rules that people of Japanese heritage are ineligible to become naturalized citizens. In the next year, the Court finds that Asian Indians are also not eligible to naturalize.
1924	**Again, citizenship granted but voting denied** The Indian Citizenship Act grants citizenship to Native Americans, but many states nonetheless make laws and policies which prohibit Native Americans from voting.
1925	**Military Service=Citizenship for Filipinos** Congress bars Filipinos from U.S. citizenship unless they have served three years in the Navy.
1926	**State violence used to prevent people from exercising their right to vote** While attempting to register to vote in Birmingham, Alabama, a group of African American women are beaten by election officials.
1947	**Legal barriers to Native American voting removed** Miguel Trujillo, a Native American and former Marine, sues New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. He wins and New Mexico and Arizona are required to give the vote to all Native Americans.
1952	McCarran-Walter Act **grants all people of Asian ancestry the right to become citizens.**
1961	23rd amendment passed. **It gives citizens of Washington, D.C. the right to vote for U.S. president.** But to this day, the district's residents—most of whom are African American—still do not have voting representation in Congress.
1963-64	**Voting rights as civil rights** Large-scale efforts in the South to register African Americans to vote are intensified. However, state officials refuse to allow African Americans to register by using voting taxes, literacy tests and violent intimidation. Among the efforts launched is Freedom Summer, where close to a thousand civil rights workers of all races and backgrounds converge on the South to support voting rights.

U.S. Voting Rights Timeline

1964	**No special tax to vote** 24th Amendment passed. It guarantees that the right to vote in federal elections will not be denied for failure to pay any tax.
1965	**Grassroots movement forces change in law** Voting Rights Act passed. It forbids states from imposing discriminatory restrictions on who can vote, and provides mechanisms for the federal government to enforce its provisions. The legislation is passed largely under pressure from protests and marches earlier that year challenging Alabama officials who injured and killed people during African American voter registration efforts.
1966	**After the legal change, struggle continues for social change** Civil rights activist James Meredith is wounded by a sniper during a solo "Walk Against Fear" voter registration march between Tennessee and Mississippi. The next day, nearly 4,000 African Americans register to vote. And other civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Stokely Carmichael continue the march while Meredith heals. Meredith rejoins March at its conclusion in Mississippi.
1971	**Voting age lowered to 18** 26th Amendment passed, granting voting rights to 18-year-olds. The amendment is largely a result of Vietnam War-protests demanding a lowering of the voting age on the premise that people who are old enough to fight are old enough to vote.
1975	**Voting materials in various languages** Amendments to Voting Rights Act require that certain voting materials be printed in languages besides English so that people who do not read English can participate in the voting process.
1993	**Making voter registration easier** National Voter Registration Act passed. Intends to increase the number of eligible citizens who register to vote by making registration available at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and public assistance and disabilities agencies.
2000	**Residents of U.S. colonies are citizens, but cannot vote** A month prior to the presidential election, a federal court decides that Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico, though U.S. citizens, cannot vote for U.S. president. Residents of U.S. territories including Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin

U.S. Voting Rights Timeline

	Islands—nearly 4.1 million people total—cannot vote in presidential elections and do not have voting representation in the U.S Congress.
2001	**Debate—Should voting rights be taken away from felons? For how long?** The National Commission on Federal Election Reform recommends that all states allow felons to regain their right to vote after completing their criminal sentences. Nearly 4 million US citizens cannot vote because of past felony convictions. In California, felons are prohibited from voting while they are in prison or on parole. But, in other states, especially in the South, a person with a felony conviction is forever prohibited from voting in that state. These laws are a legacy of post-Civil War attempts to prevent African Americans from voting. Ex-felons are largely poor and of color.
2002	**Trying to solve election inconsistency with more federal voting standards** Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passed in response to disputed 2000 presidential election. Massive voting reform effort requires states comply with federal mandate for provisional ballots, disability access, centralized, computerized voting lists, electronic voting and requirement that first-time voters present identification before voting.