



Lesson #1: What is Food Security?

Lesson Focus & Goals

- Students will explore the concept of food security by simulating real-world challenges and trade-offs through a game.

Materials Needed

- Printed Food Security Game cards/pieces (from Peace Corps resource)
- 4–5 sets of tokens (beans, paperclips, coins, etc.) to represent resources
- Large chart paper or whiteboard for group tallying
- Markers

Student Learning Objectives

- Define food security and understand its four dimensions: availability, access, utilization, stability.
- Experience how limited resources and external factors affect food security.

Lesson Components

- [**lesson modified from peace corp**](#)
- (5 min): Ask students: “What does it mean to be food secure?”
- Students will engage in a role-playing activity to help them understand how different factors can affect their access to food.
- Distribute a card to each student and ask them all to line up. Each student reads the card they were given and then assumes that identity for the game.
- Now the teacher of the game should read each of the sentences below (or revised sentences that you have written). After reading each sentence, each participant must take a step forward or backward, depending on who that person happens to be.
 - If you are under 18 or over 70 years old, take a step back.
 - If you have a steady, fixed-salary job (teacher, nurse, social worker), step forward.
 - If you work in seasonal, part-time, or hourly jobs (construction, retail, restaurant, farm), take a step back.
 - If you are currently unemployed, take a step back.
 - If you rely on public transportation, biking, or walking instead of having your own reliable car, take a step back.

- If you own your home outright (no mortgage), step forward.
- If you rent or live in temporary/subsidized housing, take a step back.
- If you have student loan or mortgage debt, take a step back.
- If you have no dependents, step forward.
- If you have two or more children, take a step back.
- If you are responsible for someone with a disability or chronic illness, take a step back.
- If you personally have a chronic health condition (e.g., diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure), take a step back.
- If you have no current health concerns, step forward.
- If your work provides health insurance or benefits, step forward.
- If you rely on SNAP or food pantries for part of your food, take a step back.
- If you live close to a grocery store (within walking distance), step forward.
- If you live in a rural area or far from a grocery store, take a step back.
- If you have reliable access to a kitchen for cooking, step forward.
- If you often rely on fast food or take-out because of cost, time, or cooking space, take a step back.
- If you are retired with a fixed pension or Social Security, step forward.
- If your work schedule includes nights or split shifts, take a step back.
- If your education level is a Bachelor's degree or higher, step forward.
- If you have not completed high school, take a step back.
- If you are a student who depends on school meal programs, take a step back.

Debrief (10 min)

- What did you notice during this activity?
- Why do you think that one's level of education and ability to read, speak, and write their country's national administrative language are important for food security? (These can increase people's chances of obtaining good-paying jobs, which can enable them to purchase ample food and pay for their children's education. Also, the ability to read can provide access to information that can help people make sound decisions about a range of food security-related issues: e.g., making healthy food choices, maintaining the health of their family, making good decisions in their personal and professional lives.)
- How do diseases and disabilities contribute toward food insecurity? (Unhealthy people cannot work to the best of their ability; thus, their income suffers. Often, sick people cannot hold food down and become malnourished.)

Wrap-Up (5 min)

- Connect to real-world issues: "Where do we see these challenges in our own community?"

Food Security Game Cards

<p>Age: 40 Work: Delivery Driver Transportation: Car Housing: Rents Education Level: High School Graduate Number of Dependents: 2 Health: None Other:</p>	<p>Age: 19 Work: Fast Food Employee Transportation: Bus Housing: Shares apartment with roommates Education Level: High School Graduate Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Works variable shifts, income not steady</p>
<p>Age: 67 Work: Retired Teacher Transportation: Owns car (old, unreliable) Housing: Owns home, mortgage paid off Education Level: Bachelor's Degree Number of Dependents: 0 Health: High blood pressure Other: Fixed income (pension + Social Security)</p>	<p>Age: 28 Work: Grocery Store Cashier Transportation: Walks/bike Housing: Rents studio apartment Education Level: Some college Number of Dependents: 1 child Health: None Other: Works part-time, no benefits</p>
<p>Age: 54 Work: Construction Worker (seasonal) Transportation: Pickup truck Housing: Mobile home Education Level: High School Diploma Number of Dependents: 3 Health: Chronic back pain Other: Laid off during winter months</p>	<p>Age: 12 Work: Student Transportation: Dependent on parents Housing: Rents apartment with family Education Level: 7th Grade Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Relies on school lunch program</p>
<p>Age: 35 Work: Nurse Assistant Transportation: Car Housing: Rents Education Level: Associate's Degree Number of Dependents: 2 Health: None Other: Works night shifts</p>	<p>Age: 46 Work: Farm Worker (migrant) Transportation: Carpool with others Housing: Temporary housing provided by employer Education Level: Limited formal schooling Number of Dependents: 4 (living abroad) Health: None Other: Sends remittances home, limited English</p>
<p>Age: 22 Work: College Student (part-time retail) Transportation: Bicycle Housing: College dorm Education Level: Some college Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Limited cooking space/resources</p>	<p>Age: 70 Work: Retired, previously factory worker Transportation: Relies on senior shuttle Housing: Senior housing Education Level: 8th grade Number of Dependents: 0 Health: Diabetes Other: Limited mobility</p>

<p>Age: 30 Work: Restaurant Line Cook Transportation: Car (shared with spouse) Housing: Apartment Education Level: GED Number of Dependents: 2 Health: None Other: Long work hours, late nights</p>	<p>Age: 50 Work: Unemployed (recently laid off) Transportation: Bus Housing: Couch surfing with friends Education Level: High School Diploma Number of Dependents: 1 Health: Anxiety/depression Other: Searching for work</p>
<p>Age: 26 Work: Preschool Teacher Transportation: Car Housing: Apartment with partner Education Level: Bachelor's Degree Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Student loan debt</p>	<p>Age: 61 Work: Small Farmer Transportation: Truck Housing: Owns farm (mortgage) Education Level: High School Diploma Number of Dependents: 0 Health: Arthritis Other: Farm income varies by season</p>
<p>Age: 15 Work: High School Student, part-time babysitter Transportation: Bus/walk Housing: Lives with parents Education Level: 10th grade Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Family relies on free school meals</p>	<p>Age: 42 Work: Teacher Transportation: Owns car Housing: Owns home (mortgage) Education Level: Master's Degree Number of Dependents: 3 Health: None Other: Balances work and childcare</p>
<p>Age: 33 Work: Warehouse Worker Transportation: Bus (no car) Housing: Rents apartment Education Level: High School Graduate Number of Dependents: 2 Health: Asthma Other: Works night shift, limited time to cook, limited English</p>	<p>Age: 48 Work: Small Business Owner (hair salon) Transportation: Car Housing: Rents townhouse Education Level: Associate's Degree Number of Dependents: 1 teenager Health: None Other: Income depends on client flow</p>

<p>Age: 65 Work: Retired Nurse Transportation: Car Housing: Owns home Education Level: Bachelor's Degree Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Volunteers at food pantry</p>	<p>Age: 24 Work: Mechanic Apprentice Transportation: Car Housing: Lives with parents Education Level: Trade School Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Saving money for independence</p>
<p>Age: 37 Work: Social Worker Transportation: Car Housing: Rents apartment Education Level: Master's Degree Number of Dependents: 2 children Health: None Other: High stress job</p>	<p>Age: 55 Work: Custodian Transportation: Walks to work Housing: Subsidized apartment Education Level: Some high school Number of Dependents: 1 adult child with disability Health: Chronic knee pain Other: Limited income</p>
<p>Age: 39 Work: Hotel Housekeeper Transportation: Bus Housing: Shared rental with extended family Education Level: High School Diploma Number of Dependents: 2 Health: None Other: Works split shifts</p>	<p>Age: 75 Work: Retired Rancher Transportation: Pickup truck Housing: Owns home Education Level: High School Diploma Number of Dependents: 0 Health: Heart condition Other: Lives in rural area, long distance to grocery store</p>
<p>Age: 29 Work: Tech Support (remote) Transportation: Car Housing: Apartment Education Level: Bachelor's Degree Number of Dependents: 0 Health: None Other: Limited cooking skills, often eats take-out</p>	<p>Age: 44 Work: Janitorial Contractor (multiple jobs) Transportation: Bike Housing: Rents basement apartment Education Level: 9th grade Number of Dependents: 3 Health: None Other: Works nights, food access limited by store hours</p>