Where Did My Lunch Come From? A U.S. Regional Tour

Students learn about U.S. regions with a lunch menu!

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Grade Level: 5-8
Duration: 3 class periods

National Geography Standards
ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS
5. People create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.

ELEMENT FOUR: HUMAN SYSTEMS
11. The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on earth's surface.

ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY
16. The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

Arizona Geography Strand
Grade 5
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 2 Places and Regions
PO 1 Describe how the following regions exemplify the concept of region as an area with unifying human or natural factors:
b. West, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest

Grade 6
Concept 5 Environment and Society
PO 1 Describe ways that human dependence on natural resources influences economic development, settlement, trade and migration.

Grades 5 and 6
Concept 6 Geographic Applications
PO 2 Use geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing patterns, mapping, graphing) when discussing current events.

Grades 7 and 8
Concept 6 Geographic Applications
PO 3 Use geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing patterns, mapping, graphing) when discussing current events.

Other Arizona Standards
ELA Common Core Standards
Reading
Informational Text
Key Ideas and Details
5.RI.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
5.RI.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Writing
Production and Distribution of Writing
AZ5.W.4
Produce clear and coherent functional writing (e.g., formal letters, recipes, experiments, notes/messages, labels, timelines, graphs/tables, procedures, invitations, envelopes) in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
5.W.7
Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
6-8.RH.2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
6-8.RH.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
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Overview

The United States is comprised of five regions: the West, Southwest, Midwest, Southeast, and Northeast. The foods that we eat everyday come from many of these regional locations including: orange juice from Florida citrus groves, beef from Texas ranches, milk from Wisconsin dairies, bread from Nebraska grain fields, and avocados from sunny California. These regional specialties are transported cross-country to grace American dinner tables with a variety of menu choices. In many cases, agricultural products and food processing industries help to define the economic “flavor” of U.S. regions and help to establish the trade relationships between them. It is important for students to understand that the interdependent nature of U.S. regions helps to create a stronger overall economy.

Purpose

In this lesson, students identify the various agricultural products and food-processing industries that characterize each of the five major regions of the U.S. and create a lunch menu that illustrates the interdependence between these regions.

Materials

- Large wall map of the United States or student atlases
- Copies of a political map of the United States
- An overhead transparency of Regions and Their States and Regions and Their Foods
- Color pencils for map work.
- The National Geographic Reading Expeditions book series, Travels Across America including 6 copies of each of the following titles: The Southwest, The West, The Midwest, The Northeast, and The Southeast - ideally one book per student.
- Copies of your school lunch menu or the Typical School Lunch Menu example provided

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Production and Distribution of Writing

6-8.WHST.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- Copies of Analysis of a Typical School Lunch Menu and an overhead transparency for the teacher.
- Copies of Analysis of Group School Lunch Menu
- Optional: Copies of Food Guide Pyramid Handout showing daily-recommended servings from each food group

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Locate the five major U.S. regions on a political map.
- Read the Travels Across America books and take notes identifying the main ideas and supporting details on the economies of U.S. regions.
- List examples of foods produced in each region and accurately identify their regional origins on a political map of the United States.
- Analyze a school lunch menu to determine the U.S. regional origins of different menu items.
- Create an original lunch menu with food items that represent all five of the major U.S. regions.

Procedures

Prerequisite Reading Skills: Identifying the author’s main ideas and supporting details.
Prerequisite Writing Skills: Note-taking formats.
Prerequisite Geography Skills: Basic map reading skills and location of 50 U.S. states.

SESSION ONE

1. Set Activity: Survey students with the question: “How many of you like orange juice?” Count the show of hands. Continue with: “Does anyone know which U.S. state produces the most oranges?” (Florida) Have students locate Florida on a wall map or in an atlas. Ask: “In which area of the United States is Florida located? (The southeast) Explain that geographers refer to this area as the Southeast region of the United States. Ask students similar questions about, foods from the four remaining regions of the U.S.
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Some examples are: French fries--Idaho potatoes / West region, Hershey's Chocolate Kisses--Hershey, Pennsylvania factory / Northeast region, popcorn--Iowa corn / Midwest, and hamburgers -- Texas cattle ranches / The Southwest region. Explain that the U.S. can be divided into five major regions and that each region is known for producing specific foods.

2. Distribute copies of the political map of the United States. Project the overhead transparency of Regions and Their States which lists which states are included in the five major U.S. regions. Instruct students to trace the regional boundary outlines onto their individual maps. Warn students NOT to color INSIDE the regional boundaries, as this space will be used later to record notes. Students need to save their maps for the next session.

3. Break the class into five groups, and assign each group to one major region of the United States: The Northeast, The Southeast, The Midwest, The Southwest, and The West. Distribute copies of the National Geographic Reading Expeditions, Travels Across America region books in accordance with the group's assigned region.

4. Instruct students to read Chapter 2, "The Economy" in their respective books, paying particular attention to the foods produced in the region. Students take individual notes on the chapter, using the chapter subtitles for the main ideas and supporting each main idea with a minimum of two details. Students need to save their book notes for the next session.

SESSION TWO
1. Instruct students to meet in their respective U.S. regions groups. Using their completed book notes from Session One, each group should brainstorm and print a list of foods produced in their region.

2. Students take out their completed maps from Session One. Project the Regions and Their Foods on the overhead. As each group reports on the list of foods produced in their region, students will duplicate the lists onto their individual maps.

3. Distribute copies of the Typical School Lunch Menu (or copies of your actual school lunch menu) and copies of the Analysis of a Typical School Lunch Menu. Discuss the menu items that comprise a typical school lunch, breakdown the major ingredients that make up some of the menu choices, and locate the U.S. region from which each food was produced.

4. Discuss the organization and format of the Typical School Lunch Menu example, focusing on the menu's layout, subheadings, font size, letter style, and graphics. Explain that in groups of 3-4, students are to create an original lunch menu with food items representing all five U.S. regions. Suggest that students use the format modeled in the "Typical School Lunch Menu" example, if they have trouble designing their menus. Encourage creative embellishments such as clipart or original student artwork. Explain that their Group Menu will be graded based upon accuracy, organization, conventions, and neatness.

5. Allow students to organize into their small groups. Then distribute the Analysis of Group School Lunch Menu, one per group. Instruct the groups to complete an analysis of their group menu to ensure that the menu includes food items from all five U.S. regions. This Analysis worksheet is to be turned in with the Group Menu assignment.

6. If time permits, distribute copies of the Food Pyramid, discussing the food group criteria for a nutritionally balanced menu. Menus may also be graded based upon the selection of food items that include appropriate food group selections.

7. Students utilize the rest of the work session to design their group lunch menu.

SESSION THREE
1. An additional work session may be necessary for students to complete their group menus. This session may also be used to allow student groups to present their lunch menus. The remainder of the class can perform an analysis of the menus using duplicate copies of the Analysis of a Typical School Lunch Menu.

Assessment

Individual Assessment
Student notes can be graded for accuracy and completeness. A score of 80% or higher will be considered mastery.

Group Assessment
The group lunch menus can be graded with the Simplified Writing Traits Rubric in the area of Ideas & Content. A score of 4 or higher indicates mastery level for that particular writing trait.

Extensions
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**Art** - Menus could be designed for foods of a specific region and illustrated with regional art.

**Science** - Food crops from each region could be researched regarding the type of soil, amount of water, and climate needed for optimum growth. In the case of cattle or other livestock, what kind of land best supports grazing?

**Mathematics /Consumer Economics** - Do a cost comparison of the price of similar food items in different regions to observe the added cost of shipping and handling.

**History** - What foods were produced by native peoples in that area? Why were these foods selected?

**Sources**