

Postcards From A Farmer



Lesson Plan

LESSON OVERVIEW

Over the last few decades, families have lost their agricultural connections. Many students have never visited a farm and do not have a strong understanding of how food is grown. This activity uses creative story-telling from photographs to help students better envision the range of work encompassed by agriculture and farming. Through their interactions, **students will increase their understanding of the diverse work and decisions farmers make over the course of a year.** They will also articulate a more accurate description of the complex, skilled work of modern farming, as well as a better understanding of the food supply system.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does a farmer do?
- What is involved in the process of growing food to feed the world?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Write and share a story describing the jobs and decisions farmers make during the year.
- Identify the diverse skills and technologies farmers use in their work.
- Construct a timeline of what happens on a farm throughout the year.

STANDARDS

Social Studies: SS.Econ2.c.3
SS.Econ4.a.3

Environmental: ELS.EN6.A.i

Literacy: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED

- Photos of Farming PDF
- Photo Captions PDF
- PowerPoint
- Student Worksheet

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- optional: Bring in postcards you have received as examples

TIME REQUIRED

Before Class: 30 minutes
During Class: Two-three 45 minute classes

LESSON ACTIVITIES OUTLINE

1. Write about chosen postcard
2. Share and collaborate on combined story
3. Share group stories
4. Sort and discuss seasonal work of farming

CONNECTION TO OTHER F+FEC LESSONS

- How Am I Connected to Agriculture?
- Wisconsin Agriculture: More than America's Dairyland
- Seasonality of Foods
- Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt



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LESSON INTRODUCTION

Most people are now three to five generations removed from the farm which has resulted in families losing their connections to agriculture. Many students have never visited a farm, nor do they understand how food is grown. Much of what people imagine happens on a farm comes from what they've seen on TV or read in books, which does not accurately reflect the highly skilled, technical, variable work that farmers do. This activity exposes students to a range of activities and events connected to growing, processing, and delivering food. It uses creative storytelling from photographs to help students better envision the range of work encompassed by agriculture and farming.

PREPARATION

1. Make copies of lesson materials
 - 1 set of Photos of Farming (slides 2-18), cut out
 - 1 set of Category Names (slides 19-20), cut out
 - 1 postcard template per student
 - 1 notes page per student (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

ENGAGE

1. **Show slide 3** and **handout the first page** of the student worksheet. Ask students to draw a picture of a farmer. Ask them to think about what the farmer is doing, what they are wearing, where they are located. They should label or caption the picture with some of these ideas.
2. Share out some of the pictures and note how students portray the farmer and what jobs they do. Use the drawings as a formative assessment of what students know and what stereotypes they may have about who farmers are and the roles they play. (People often draw farmers with bib overalls and straw hats sitting on an old-fashioned tractor, or holding a pitchfork. In Wisconsin, they often draw dairy farmers with red barns.) We will return to these drawings at the end of the activity for students to make their own comparisons.
3. Collect the drawings so they can be returned at the end of the lesson.
4. Lay the photographs on a surface where students can see them all. Explain that these are all photos related to farming. Show the first prompt on **slide 4**. Ask students to choose one to take back to their seats.
5. Each of the photographs shows something that a farmer does to grow food that we eat. Some of the photographs show people and some do not, but all the photos show something related to the work farmers do. Click through the prompts on **slide 5**. Look at your photograph carefully and search for clues that tell you what the farmer might be doing OR think about what a farmer might need to do in response to what you see. They should use their imagination, even if they aren't sure what's happening in the photographs, to come up with a reasonable scenario. Additional prompts:
 - a. What time of year do you think it is? Why? (Bare soil, size of plants)
 - b. Where is the farmer working?
 - c. What is the farmer trying to do?
 - d. Is there something shown in the photograph that would pose a problem to a farmer? Do they have a decision to make?



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Note: Use the included Photograph Captions PDF to find explanations of each photograph for your own knowledge. We discourage you from telling students exactly what each photograph shows, but the resource could help you provide students with hints should they get stuck. It is ok if they make mistakes interpreting the photograph if the clues they follow are logical.

EXPLORE

6. Show the images on **slide 6**. Imagine that each photograph is a postcard. A postcard is a type of short note that people send in the mail. On one side is a photograph and on the other side, people write a short note to a friend or family member about what they were doing when the photograph happened or why the photo is important to them.

Optional: show students examples of postcards.

7. Click to reveal the instructions on **slide 6**. Provide students with a blank postcard template on **page 2** of student worksheets. Students should pretend they are a farmer sending this photograph to a friend or family member. Write a short note about what is happening. Think about how the farmer would be feeling when they write the note: Are they excited? Worried? Puzzled? Tired? Proud?

Optional: tape or glue the photograph to the back of the postcard note

8. Put students into groups of 3-4. Ask them to share their postcard with their group. As they listen to others stories, they should think about how the story they hear could be connected to the one they wrote. What details could they add to build a larger story?

9. In their small group, have the students look at their collective photos and put them in an order that makes sense. The group should then create a new story in the form of a storyboard, oral story, or in writing that they will share with the class. Use **slide 7** to show the following prompts:

- Think about cause and effect; If this happens, then this will happen...
- How long does this story last? one day, one month, one year, two years
- Could they reinterpret their photo another way after listening to others?

Differentiation option: If photographs 30-32 remain unchosen, bring one to groups that do not already have one and ask them to incorporate the image into their story. These photographs show challenges farmers face. These images may provide an anchor for groups struggling to find a common story or add a more complex problem for a group that needs a more difficult task.

10. Show **slide 8**. Bring the class together again and ask each group to share their collective story. After each group finishes, discuss the types of jobs the farmer was doing, the technologies they used, and challenges farmers faced. Talk about what time of year the stories take place and how the work of farming changes during the year.

Optional: Use the notes page to record what they hear from each store about the type of jobs, technology, or challenges of farming

11. Discuss any questions students have about farming.



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EXPLAIN

12. Lay out the six category names where the photos were laid out at the beginning of the lesson.
Show **slide 9**. Ask students to return their individual photographs/postcards to the front of the room by placing them in one of the six categories: planning, planting, growing, harvesting, processing food, and consumer use. Provide some think time and clarify terms as needed. Allow students to quietly discuss the best category with peers if needed as they come up.
13. Summarize what students learned about the work of a farmer and the steps for growing food by talking through the categories in order. Hold up the title cards, beginning with the planning category along with the photographs students placed there. Why does each photograph belong in that category? The photograph caption resource provides a guide to the categories, but it would be easy to argue that photographs could be moved from one category to another depending upon how they are interpreted. Discuss these possible interpretations in an open-ended way. Use the photo captions if there are any disputes about what is shown. Allow students time to complete **page 3** of the student worksheet.

EVALUATE

14. Show **slide 10** and discuss what students learned.
 - a. What did they learn that they didn't know before about farmers?
 - b. What did they learn that surprised them about the work farmers do?
15. Return the drawings students made in step 1. Show **slide 11**. Ask students to look at the image they drew at the beginning of the lesson. Do they need to add or change anything after learning more about what a farmer does? What stereotypes did they have of farming before they started the lesson? **Handout page 4**. Ask students to consider what changes they would make to their original drawing. Ask them to write an explanation of what should be changed and why using what they learned from the activity as evidence. If time allows, also ask them to revise their drawings or create new ones.

EXTENTIONS

- Research some of the farm technology that was shown in this lesson.
- If you will be doing a larger unit on agriculture, wait to complete step 15 until after all lessons are complete.

STANDARDS

Social Studies:

SS.Econ2.c.3 Compare the skills and knowledge required to produce certain goods and services. Provide an example of the factors of production (i.e., land, labor, capital, entrepreneurship)

SS.Econ4.a.3 Trace the chain of supply for a needed product (e.g., food, shelter).



food+farm
EXPLORATION CENTER

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Literacy:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Environmental Education:

ELS.EN6.A.i Identify cause and effect relationships and examine how a system's structure or behavior needs to change to achieve intended outcomes. Make connections between parts, systems, relationships, and perspectives in a system to identify how things work.

TEACHER ANSWER KEYS

<p>JOBS A FARMER DOES</p> <p>Planning what and where to plant, planting seeds, learning, educator, looking for disease, turn on water, check plants, harvest plants, package food, raise family, wash crops, sell food, inspect and sort food, spray crops with fertilizer, pesticide, herbicide, drive trucks, weed, store food, read maps, interpret data, make sure food is safe and healthy to eat, boss of other people</p>	<p>TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT FARMERS USE</p> <p>GPS, planter, seeder, drone, tractors, trucks, harvester, soil probe, moisture monitor, irrigator, computers, sprayers, maps, conveyor belt, optical sorters, weather station, surveillance camera, satellite images, credit card machines, soil test kits, communication radios, etc.</p>
<p>CHALLENGES THEY FACE</p> <p>Floods, storms, disease, learning to use equipment, fixing equipment, storing food without rotting, growing enough food, earning a living, getting food to consumers</p>	<p>QUESTIONS I HAVE</p> <p>Encourage students to ask questions to clarify what is shown in the pictures, to ask about how farmers cope with challenges, to learn how farmers complete certain tasks, etc.</p>

