



## **YCS Farm to School Committee**

### **School Garden Curriculum**

#### **Introduction to Food Systems and Choices**

##### **Overview**

Students will read and discuss an article about the Mandela Foods Cooperative (MFC), a small community-run grocery store in West Oakland. Using MFC as a case study, students analyze and discuss the intersections of health, environment, labor, economic inequality, and food access.

##### **Grade Level**

6-8

##### **Subject(s)**

English, Social Studies

##### **Objective**

- Understand and define a variety of basic vocabulary to do with the theme of food choices and food justice.
- Articulate the concept of food choice and give examples of different considerations someone might have when choosing what food to buy or where to shop.
- Discuss and give examples of ways in which issues of health, economic status, and food access intersect.

##### **Time**

45-60 minutes

##### **Materials**

- Printed copies of commentary article: <https://www.edibleschoolyard.org/file/864977/download?token=ZxDnllr1>
- Printed copies of discussion questions and glossary: <https://www.edibleschoolyard.org/file/864978/download?token=k1KVUprH>
- Debate Plate visual aid: <https://www.edibleschoolyard.org/files/debateplatevisualaid>

##### **Source Acknowledgment**

Adapted from Edible Schoolyard Project *Debate Plate Series*

<https://edibleschoolyard.org/resource/debate-plate-introduction-food-systems-and-choices>

## Background Information

### Procedure

1. Explain that today's lesson examines factors and considerations that influence personal food choices and the impacts of those choices.
2. Hand-out copies of the article about the Mandela Food Cooperative in West Oakland. Point out that the title of the article labels it as a "commentary". *Ask students to define "commentary" and elaborate on what that tells them about the information presented in the article.* This is an opinion piece. It is written by an individual with a specific point of view and a purpose in sharing that point of view with an audience.
3. Hand-out copies of the discussion questions and glossary. Have students read the article — independently, in small groups, or as a class. Point out to students that they can use the glossary as a resource while reading the article.
4. After students have read the article, use the discussion questions to facilitate a class discussion, either as a full class or in small groups.

### Evaluation

Use the following prompts as a reflection tool:

1. To me, the motto "food plus people equals power" means...
2. The author argues that the Mandela Foods Cooperative impacts West Oakland in a variety of ways beyond just providing food for people to buy. Think about the store or market where the majority of the food you eat is bought. What are some of the impacts you think this store might have in its neighborhood?
3. The Mandela Foods Cooperative is located in an area with very few other places to buy groceries. Think about the area where you live - how many places to buy groceries are located within walking distance from your home?

### Extension Activities

As a group activity, map out the nearest grocery stores and identify what kind of options they have available.