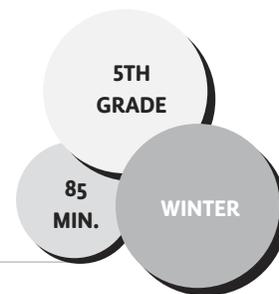


# Changemakers

**THEME:** GROWING AND ACCESSING HEALTHY FOODS



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How can we be agents of change within our community?*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to identify problems in their community and suggest possible solutions.
- ✓ Students will know that they can create change.

## CONCEPTS

action plan   activist   outcome

### *Engaging the Classroom Teacher*

- Prior to the lesson, discuss with the teacher their level of commitment in having this be a true project-based learning experience for students. Determine how you will both support students in whatever ideas arise from this activity. Together you can decide on a realistic number of class sessions to devote to this project.
- During Action Step 7, ask that the teacher support students in getting into groups based on their topics of interest.
- During Action Step 8, suggest that the teacher help circulate through the room, supporting groups in filling out their Action Plan Worksheet.

## LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students hear about an activist who addressed a sustainability issue within their community. They'll then brainstorm issues within their own community and work in teams to generate solutions and action steps they could take to be agents of change. This lesson is a springboard for student-initiated projects, and it is ideally led with significant input and support from the classroom teacher. It is important to have a plan for supporting students after the lesson with opportunities to take action on the projects they design, such as in a subsequent class period or during a lunchtime club when students can work together on letter-writing campaigns, posters for the school, or the like. You can easily teach this lesson over two or three class periods, stopping after the gallery walk in Action Step 4 on the first day. This lesson is the fifth-grade version of the fourth-grade lesson Agents of Change.

## MATERIALS

- Computer and overhead projector
- Chart paper
- Tape
- Markers
- Action Steps and Outcomes Worksheet (pp. 563-564)
- Action Plan Worksheet (p. 562)
- Kitchen timer

## PREPARATION

- › Visit the Brower Youth Awards website, and browse its list of awardees to find a video to share with your students, such as the video about Maya Salsedo who addressed issues she saw with the food system by creating a Youth Food Bill of Rights and mobilizing other youth to get involved. Alternately, if you know a youth in your community who has led a successful service-learning project or community initiative, invite them to talk with your students!
- › Write the following Margaret Mead quote where all students will see it: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
- › Hang chart paper throughout the room, labeling each with different issues that relate to food systems that might arise in their community: Access to Healthy Food; Habitat for Pollinators; Food Waste; Food Packaging and Recycling; Conditions and Pay for People Working on Farms, in Markets, or in Restaurants; Pollution; and Other.

## ACTION STEPS

**1. Real-Life Story:** Share with students the following quotation by Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Ask them to discuss in pairs and share: *What does this quote mean to you?* Explain that you’ll be showing them a video of a student who embodies the spirit of that quote. Show students a video of a Brower Youth Award winner. Ask students for their impressions: *Do*

*you think you and your peers could create change like that in this community? (5 min.)*

**2. Freewriting or Drawing:** Say, *I’m going to give you five minutes to think about your neighborhood and, specifically, about how people in your neighborhood get food. A neighborhood or community is its own ecosystem. We’re all connected, and different parts of the ecosystem can affect others positively or negatively. Imagine you’re flying over your neighborhood, seeing all the different parts of your community. What do you observe that affects what people in your neighborhood eat? What are the things you enjoy or are proud of? Is there something you wished looked different? Describe or draw what you see and what you wish were different with as much detail as you can. After five minutes, have students turn and talk to a neighbor and share as much as they feel comfortable sharing. (10 min.)*

**3. Brainstorming Issues:** Show students that you’ve hung posters around the room highlighting big, global issues. Their task is to use the ideas from their freewrite to elaborate on how one or more of these issues show up in their community. If the issue they brainstormed doesn’t fall under one of the categories, they can write it on the chart paper with the heading “Other.” Pass out markers and instruct students to add issues to the charts under the appropriate category. If students write issues unrelated to food, you can say, *I appreciate that we’re calling out so many things that make us want to be agents of change. For the purpose of this lesson, our goal is to focus on something that is related to food. If you have an issue that doesn’t seem to relate to food, you can take action on this individually, and we*

can also discuss if there might be a connection to food (like climate change and agriculture). **(10 min.)**

**4. Gallery Walk:** After students have written their issues, encourage them to walk through the room reading each chart and writing comments of affirmation or ideas for solutions next to other people's ideas. Explain that they can also draw a star next to an issue to indicate that they agree. If ending day one of this lesson here, consider using some of the script in Action Step 5 to synthesize the day's activities and explain what you'll be doing next session. **(10 min.)**

**5. Identifying Action Steps and Outcomes:** Have students take their seats again and say, *That probably feels good to express some of those issues out loud, but we don't just want to rant or complain. We want to figure out how we can do something about them.* Display the Action Steps and Outcomes Worksheet. Say, *Once we identify an issue, it's important to figure out what we want to see happen instead. That would be our desired outcome.* Have pairs of students discuss the Brower Youth Award winner as an example. Have students identify the problem award winner saw, the steps they took, and the outcomes of their actions. **(5 min.)**

**6. Whole-Group Practice:** Have students share the problems they identified. Then select one of the problems from the chart paper to examine as a class. Ask students, *What would be your desired outcome?* Make note of their responses, then ask, *What steps do we need to take to make that change happen?* Encourage students to think of specific, immediate steps they can take. If students need guidance, you might ask, *What's causing this*

*problem? Or Who in our school community needs to know about this problem?* But let the ideas for solutions come solely from students. You might want to introduce the concept of SMART goals, having small, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely goals. **(5 min.)**

**7. Sorting into Solution Teams:** Tell students now that they've practiced together as a class, they'll have a chance to work on the issue they feel most strongly about. Have students self sort into teams based on the issue they're most interested in. Explain that when you give a signal, they'll get up and stand next to the chart paper that contains their issue. Give the disclaimer that there should be no more than four people in each group, and if they're not self-sorted after three minutes, you will help them find a group. If more than four students want to work on one issue, have them divide into multiple teams, each with up to four students. These teams can work on the same issue. Give the signal and set the timer. **(5 min.)**

**8. Finding Solutions:** Once students are settled into their groups, assign or have them self-select roles. Each group could have the following: a recorder to take notes, a time manager to keep the group on task, a facilitator to ask questions and make sure everyone's voice is heard, and a presenter to share information with the class. Have students determine the specific problem they'll be tackling. Then have them work together to fill out the Action Plan Worksheet. Say, *Make sure that everyone's voice in your group is heard. For instance, if you've just shared a lot about how you feel, it'd be nice to then ask someone on your team for their opinion.* Circulate through the room, ensuring students are taking detailed notes, and all team members are getting air time. **(15 min.)**

**9. Sharing Action Plan:** Have each team report to the class. Have team representatives share the issue they decided to work on and what action steps they determined would lead them to their desired outcome. *(15 min.)*

## REFLECTION

Have students discuss the following questions in small groups, then share with the class: *(5 min.)*

### Social and emotional learning

- *What strategies did your team use to hear from everyone?*
- *How did your group agree on how to approach your problem?*

### Check for understanding

- *How would the community benefit if we were to implement these changes?*
- *Why is it important to consider your desired outcome for a problem before taking action?*
- *What are ways you can help to create change in our community?*

## ADAPTATIONS

**Classroom Extension:** Have each team become an action group for their chosen issue. Have them meet once a week to check in on their progress toward their desired outcome using the Action Group Log (see p. 564).

## ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.4**

Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Action Plan Worksheet

**Directions:** Fill out the following with your team.

The problem we chose is

We chose this problem because

Instead, we want to see

We believe what's causing the problem is

The first step we'll take is

The next step is

The next step is

We'll know we've made an impact when

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Action Steps and Outcomes

**PROBLEMS**

**ACTION STEPS**

**OUTCOMES**

	↓		↓	
	↓		↓	
	↓		↓	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Action Group Log

What have we accomplished since our last meeting?

What do we need to follow up on?

What goals do we have this week?

Who do we need to contact or get support from this week?

What resources do we need?

TO DO:

#1 \_\_\_\_\_ Who will do this? \_\_\_\_\_

#2 \_\_\_\_\_ Who will do this? \_\_\_\_\_

#3 \_\_\_\_\_ Who will do this? \_\_\_\_\_