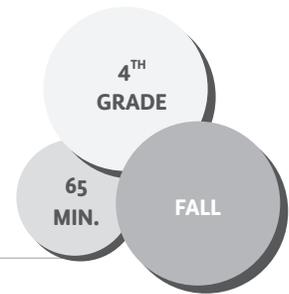


# Agents of Change

**THEME:** GROWING AND ACCESSING HEALTHY FOOD



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

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

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

## LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students hear about an activist who created change in the food system. They then brainstorm issues around food and health in their school 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 tasks such as letter-writing campaigns, posters for the school, or action steps to instigate change.

## MATERIALS

- A picture book about a food activist such as *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull

- Chart paper
- Tape (masking or painter's)
- Markers
- Action Steps and Outcomes Worksheet (p. 433)
- Action Plan Worksheet (p. 432)

## PREPARATION

- › Hang chart paper throughout the room, labeling each with different issues that might arise in school related to food and health: Cafeteria Space, Lunch Food, Recess, Snack Program, Waste and Recycling, Physical Education, School Culture, Garden, and Other.
- › Photocopy the Action Steps and Outcomes Worksheet and Action Plan Worksheet for each team of 3–4 students.

## ACTION STEPS

**1. Reading a Real-Life Story:** Gather students in a circle, and explain that you're going to read a story about someone who saw an issue in their community and took action. Read a book about a historical food activist, such as Kathleen Krull's *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. **(10 min.)**

**2. Brainstorming Issues:** Say, *If we were to focus on the issues at our school around food and health, what would they be?* Show students that you've hung chart paper throughout the room. Pass out markers and instruct them

to add issues to the chart paper under the appropriate category. Demonstrate with an example, such as by writing, “There aren’t enough balls for everyone to play four square at recess” on the Recess poster. **(5 min.)**

### **3. Identifying Action Steps and Outcomes:**

Have students return to their desks and say, *It 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 these issues.* 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 real examples from the story they heard at the beginning of class. Have students identify the issue the activist saw, the steps they took, and the outcomes of their actions. Have students share what they discussed. **(5 min.)**

**4. Practicing Finding Solutions:** Select one of the issues from the chart paper to examine as a class. Ask students to discuss in teams of three or four: *What would be your desired outcome?* Have teams share, and make note of their responses. Then ask, *What steps do we need to take to make that change happen?* Encourage students to think of concrete, 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. **(5 min.)**

**5. Sorting into 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 the 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 people 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.)**

**6. Finding a Solution:** 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 their opinion.* Circulate through the room, ensuring students are taking detailed notes and that all team members are getting air time. **(15 min.)**

**7. Sharing Action Plans:** 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.)**

- *What other examples of citizens who've been agents of change can you think of?*
- *What strategies did your team use to hear from everyone?*
- *How did your team come to consensus on how to approach your problem?*
- *Why is it important to consider your desired outcome for a problem before taking action?*



## ADAPTATIONS

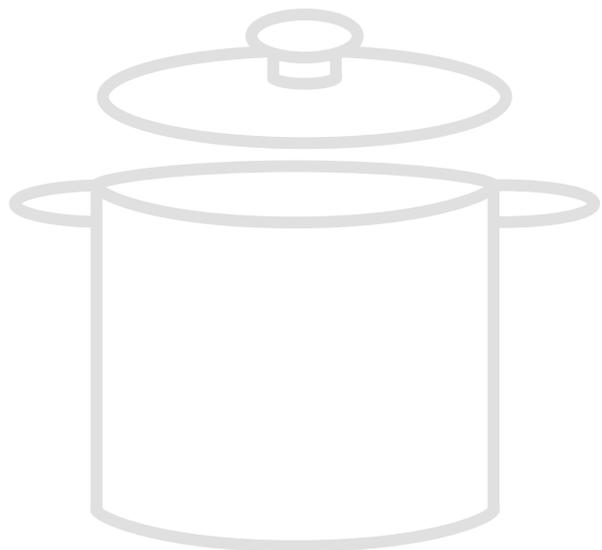
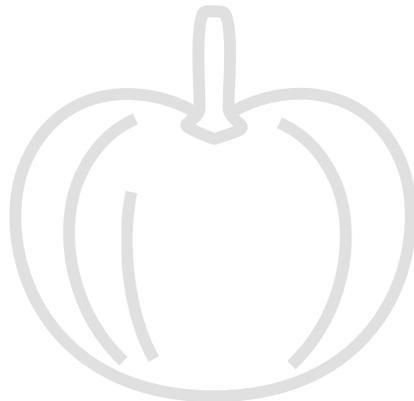
**Classroom Extension:** Have each team become an action group for their chosen issue. Have them meet once a week to check in on their progress toward their desired outcome, using the Action Group Log.

## ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

### **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.



Names: \_\_\_\_\_ 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 we'll take is

The next step we'll take is

We'll know we've made an impact when

Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Action Steps and Outcomes

**PROBLEMS**

**ACTION STEPS**

**OUTCOMES**


# Action Group Log

Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Week: \_\_\_\_\_

**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:**

- |           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| <b>#1</b> | <b>Who will do this?</b> |
| <b>#2</b> | <b>Who will do this?</b> |
| <b>#3</b> | <b>Who will do this?</b> |