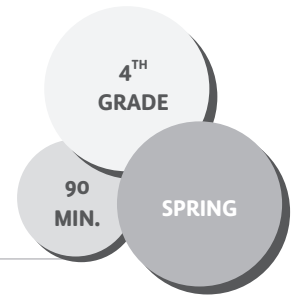


# Learning from Our Elders

**THEME:** MAKING HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES



Session 1: 45-min. planning period

Session 2: 45-min. session with guests

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*What can we learn from our elders about food traditions and healthy eating?*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to articulate how one person's food preferences, experiences, and traditions have changed over time.
- ✓ Students will be able to compose thoughtful questions and conduct an interview with an elder in their community.

## LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students consider the elders in their families and communities and determine what they'd like to learn from them around the themes of food and healthy eating. Students learn about effective interviewing, generate a list of questions, and interview an elder they know. During the next class meeting, students share what they learned and have elder community members share their stories, wisdom, and recipes with the class.

## MATERIALS

- Nice paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Guest Interest Form Template (p. 457)
- Learning from Our Elders Worksheet (p. 458)
- Cooking and tasting supplies (if guest plans to demonstrate a traditional skill or dish)

## PREPARATION

- › If some of your students don't have anyone in their immediate network to interview, make a list of adults in the community who they could interview. This list could include members of the school staff, volunteers, or others. Ask these people in advance if they would be open to being interviewed by students about cooking, eating, and healthy living.
- › Reach out to a local storyteller or elder from whom you'd like your students to learn; schedule a class visit with this individual.
- › Photocopy Learning from Our Elders Worksheet for each student.

## ACTION STEPS

**1. Who Our Elders Are:** Explain why elders have so much to teach us about cooking, eating, and healthy living. *Our food supply has changed a lot in recent years. Elders have seen this change. Many elders have thought a lot about what they want to eat to be able to stay healthy. You can learn a lot from elders by interviewing them.* Ask students to brainstorm with a partner what makes someone an elder. Have students share as a class, identifying attributes such as being older than you or having wisdom or life experience to share. Ask students, *Who are the elders in your life? Who in your life do you feel you have something to learn from?* Have each student make a list of these people. **(5 min.)**

**2. Brainstorming Questions:** Say, *With these people in mind, what do you want to learn about them related to cooking, eating, and healthy living?* Have students generate a list as a class of things they'd like to know. **(5 min.)**

#### SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What did you eat growing up?
- What's a food you used to not like that you like now?
- What does healthy eating mean to you?
- When you were a kid, what did you eat at school?
- What did you eat with your family?
- What traditional meals from your culture were you taught to make?
- Do you have ways of preserving food?
- What's your favorite tool in the kitchen?
- What's your favorite recipe?
- What's a food or meal from your childhood that you recommend I try? Why?
- What's your all-time favorite food memory?
- When you were a kid, what did you eat on special occasions?
- Is there a recipe or traditional cooking method that you'd enjoy sharing with my class?

**3. Learning What Makes a Good Interview:** Tell students, *You will each be interviewing an elder. To gather as much information as possible, it's important to keep a few guidelines in mind.* Explain that while some yes or no questions are OK, open-ended questions encourage people to give details and tell more stories. Explain how it's always good to have follow-up questions prepared for yes or no questions but to also be flexible in the moment and think of follow-up questions to ask on the spot. Give students an example of a yes or no question, and ask them

to revise it into an open-ended question. For example, "Did you have school lunch when you were a kid?" can become, "Describe what you ate for lunch when you were a kid." Have students write their own list of interview questions. Ask students, *What are ways that we can show respect and communicate that we're actively listening?* Discuss making eye contact, nodding their heads, and expressing genuine interest through their responses. **(10 min.)**

#### WHAT MAKES A GOOD INTERVIEW?

- Asking open-ended questions
- Asking follow-up questions
- Being flexible
- Respecting someone's privacy
- Showing genuine interest
- Recording/writing important points

**4. Practicing Interviewing:** Demonstrate holding a practice interview with a volunteer student or with the classroom teacher. Model positive interview techniques by asking open-ended questions, making eye contact, and expressing genuine interest through responses. Have students give you feedback on what you did well and what you could have done to improve your interview. Then have students pair up and practice interviewing one other, keeping the good interview guidelines in mind. Circulate through the room, listening to students' exchanges and encouraging active listening where needed. After about seven minutes, have students switch so that each partner has a chance to be interviewed. Have partners provide each other with feedback on how they can be better listeners or how they can revise their questions to get more interesting responses. **(20 min.)**

**5. At Home:** Explain that students should somehow capture their discussion, whether by taking notes during the conversation, summarizing it afterward, or recording the conversation on a device with the interviewee's permission. Let students know the date that you'd like to invite guests in to share stories, and tell them to be sure to ask their interviewee whether they'd like to be a part of the event. Pass out the Guest Interest Form Template for students to share at home. **(5 min.)**

**6. (Next Meeting) Follow-Up Sharing:** Give students time to write a personal reflection or share what they learned from the elder they interviewed with a partner. Then gather as a class to do a round robin where each student shares one interesting thing they learned. Tell students they'll have a time limit of 30 seconds. **(20 min.)**

**7. Inviting Guests to Class:**

**a.** Facilitate a conversation where each student has a couple prepared questions to ask the guests. Students take turns asking a question and having all the guests who'd like to share a story or response. If you have three or more guests, set up this activity so that students are rotating among speakers in small groups. Have students use the Learning from Our Elders Worksheet to record interesting facts and questions about the guests.

**b.** Have guests bring in a traditional cooking tool and demonstrate how to use it.

**c.** Have guests bring in their favorite recipes and share memories of that food. Then compile a class cookbook of all the recipes.

**d.** Ask elders to demonstrate traditional

food cooking skills to the class. (Be prepared to provide support and supplies if needed. Depending on the level of involvement of the cooking project, this may need to be scheduled as a separate activity)

**8. Writing Thank-You Notes:** After guests of honor visit the class, have students write them letters of gratitude. Have students use their Learning from Our Elders Worksheet to remember to share personal details about what they enjoyed learning. **(10 min.)**

## REFLECTION

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

- *What was the most interesting thing you learned from your interview?*
- *How did what you learned from our guests compare with what you learned during your first conversation with an elder?*
- *How is your life similar to and different from the life of our elders when they were your age?*
- *How has the idea of healthy eating changed over the years?*
- *What are some things you do now that you think might be interesting to kids 50 years from now, when you are an elder?*

## ADAPTATIONS

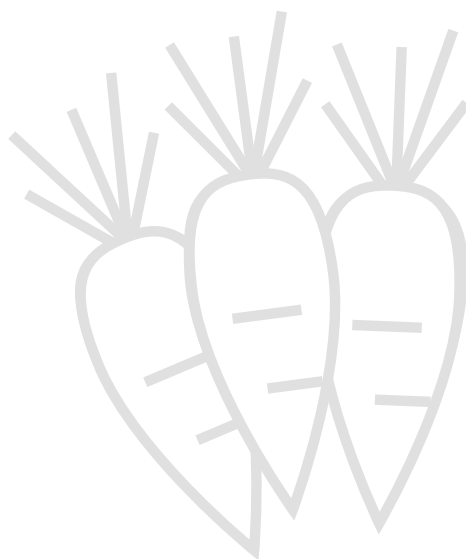
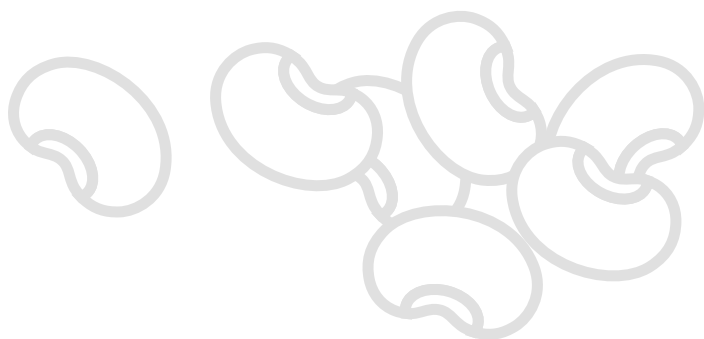
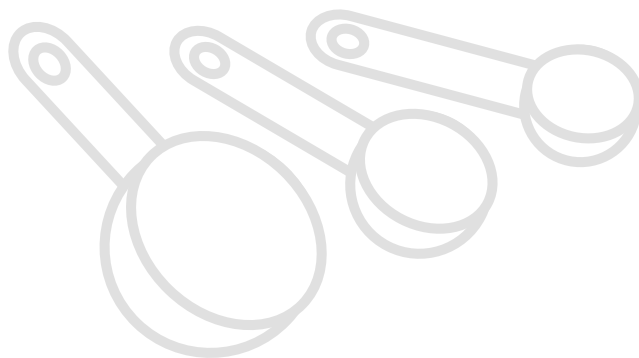
**Classroom Extension:** Plan a field trip to a senior center where pairs of students can engage in conversation with elders in the community using their prepared interview questions.

## ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)



# Guest Interest Form Template

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Name: \_\_\_\_\_

On \_\_\_\_\_, we'd like to invite you to our classroom to share your food traditions and cooking experiences.

Would you like to participate?

- Share a story and recipe about a food tradition you have
- Bring in a cooking tool and demonstrate how to use it
- Teach the class a traditional cooking skill
- Share an experience cooking and eating foods

If sharing a skill or food, please briefly describe it:

\_\_\_\_\_

What supplies would you need us to provide?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your student by \_\_\_\_\_.

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

# Learning from Our Elders

**Directions:** After listening to each guest today, write three interesting facts that you learned about the person or his or her experience with food. Write at least two questions you have about what the person shared.

Guest #1 Name \_\_\_\_\_

What I learned:

Follow-up questions I have:

Guest #2 Name \_\_\_\_\_

What I learned:

Follow-up questions I have:

Guest #3 Name \_\_\_\_\_

What I learned:

Follow-up questions I have:

Guest #4 Name \_\_\_\_\_

What I learned:

Follow-up questions I have: