



# The Book Planter



## Ag in the Classroom

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## *Saturday at the Food Pantry*

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Molly and her mom don't always have enough food, so one Saturday they visit their local food pantry. Molly's happy to get food to eat until she sees her classmate Caitlin, who's embarrassed to be at the food pantry. Can Molly help Caitlin realize that everyone needs help sometimes?

**Teacher's Note:** This book deals with a sensitive topic of hunger and food insecurity.

### Before Reading – Set the Stage:

- Due to the sensitive topic of this story, it could be a good idea to begin with an introductory discussion of 'need vs. want' with the students. Begin discussing how food insecurity and poverty may affect some of the families in their community.
- Model how to connect to the story by discussing experiences and thoughts about community engagement. For example, you might start by asking, "Can you think of a time when someone helped you or we helped someone else? How did that make you feel?"

### As You Read – Monitor Students:

- In the story, Molly has many questions for her mother about why her family has to eat some of the same meals over and over again, and why visiting a food pantry is different from visiting a grocery store. Discuss how Molly's mother helps her understand why their family needs to get food from the food pantry. Make a T-chart or Venn diagram to establish the differences and similarities between a food pantry and a traditional grocery store.
- As you progress through the story, you could ask questions like, "What does Molly's kindness teach us about how to treat others who might be in a tough situation? How can we support friends or classmates who might be going through difficult times like needing food assistance?" This encourages students to think about support and the importance of empathy in friendships.

### **After Reading – Discuss comprehension by analyzing each character’s perspective:**

- Think about how Molly and Caitlin have different feelings when it comes to having to get food from the food pantry. What are some of the ways they explain their feelings to each other? How do they help each other understand their perspective?
- Come back to the issue of food insecurity and need vs. want. Have a discussion with the students about how they connected to the characters in the story. Talk about their needs versus their wants.
- Why is it important to have places like food pantries in our community?
- How does the story help us understand it is okay to ask for help?

### **Discussion Questions – Asking text dependent questions enables students to draw on specific examples from text to provide evidence and verify the rationale for their answers.**

1. At the beginning of the story, Molly is upset about having to eat chili again and again. How does mom try to make her feel better about having to eat the same food over and over again?
2. What does mom say to help Molly understand why they will be going to the food pantry for groceries instead of shopping at the grocery store?
3. Why was Molly having trouble falling asleep?
4. How did Molly pass the time while waiting in line for the food pantry to open up?
5. Why did Caitlin not want to come and talk to Molly when she saw her in line?
6. How did Molly and Caitlin greet the workers when they entered the food pantry?
7. Why was Molly told that she could not get the sugar cookies she wanted?
8. Many of the signs at the food pantry said “Take one...” Why do you think they have those signs placed throughout the pantry?
9. Why did the food pantry worker give Molly the sugar cookies?
10. How did Molly help change Caitlin’s feelings about going to the food pantry for groceries?

### **Activity 1: Mapping Food Resources**

1. Together with the students, identify local resources such as food pantries, community gardens, and free meal programs.
2. Print a map of your county or town.
3. Tell students to map out the places, and create an appropriate map key.

### **Activity 2: The importance of Fruits and Vegetables<sup>2</sup>**

#### **Day 1**

1. Ask the students to complete the sentence in their journals, “When I feel hungry, I \_\_\_\_\_.” Ask volunteers to share what they wrote. (Answers may vary, but may include, “get grumpy,” “feel sick,” “can’t concentrate,” “feel tired.”)

2. Explain to the class that food security means having consistent access to enough safe, nutritious food for an active, healthy life. Food insecurity is not having consistent access to enough safe, nutritious food.
3. Ask the students, “What are some ways food insecurity might affect elementary students?” After listening to their ideas, emphasize the following points:
  - a. Children who are hungry can experience headaches and feel tired. They may have frequent colds or other illnesses which cause them to be less active.
  - b. Students who are hungry may have difficulty concentrating on their school work. They are also more likely to be frequently absent from school.
  - c. Hungry children have an increased risk of mental health issues and behavioral problems.
4. Discuss the book *Saturday at the Food Pantry*. How did the food pantry help Molly’s community?
5. Ask the students, “What are some ways we can help students who experience food insecurity?”
6. Show the [What is the Backpack Program?](#) video or invite a guest speaker from the school Backpack Program, local food pantry, or food bank to visit the class and explain the program.
7. Tell the class that their school participates in a Backpack Program to discreetly provide students in need with nutritious food for the weekends. The program would like to offer more fresh fruits and vegetables to the students they serve.

## **Day 2**

1. Show the [MyPlate Food Groups video](#).
2. Project the [MyPlate Image](#) onto a large screen. Discuss the section sizes:
  - Each food group’s size is slightly different because our bodies need different amounts from each food group to stay healthy.
  - The fruits and vegetables sections take up half the plate, with the vegetable food group being slightly larger than the fruit group.
  - The grains section is larger than the protein section.
3. Ask the students, “What would happen if you never ate fruits and vegetables?”
4. Show the [What if You Never Ate Fruits and Vegetables?](#) video.
5. Lead the students through a discussion about why it is recommended to make half your plate fruits and vegetables daily. Integrate the following points into the discussion:
  - Fruits and vegetables are the only source of vitamin C in the diet. Vitamin C helps the body heal wounds and lowers the risk of infection. It also helps keep the body from bruising and builds the tissue that holds muscles and bones together. Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, helps the body absorb the iron found in foods and strengthens the immune system.
  - Leafy greens, carrots, sweet potatoes, squash, spinach, apricots, and green peppers are all excellent sources of vitamin A. Serving several functions in the body, vitamin A helps maintain good vision, fight infection, support cell growth, and keep skin healthy.

- Fruits and vegetables are a good source of complex carbohydrates, whose energy release is slow, gradual, and long-lasting. Sugar provides quick energy, but its effects are short-lived. This knowledge is important when choosing foods to eat before an athletic event.
  - Fruits and vegetables contain fiber. Fiber helps move food through the body to prevent constipation and provide a sense of fullness.
  - Fruits and vegetables are quick, often ready to eat, easy to carry, and tasty foods to have as snacks. They provide the energy needed to function throughout the day.
  - Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables provides health benefits. People who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy eating style are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.
  - Fruits and vegetables provide nutrients that help us grow and stay healthy.
  - Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. No fruits or vegetables contain cholesterol.
6. Organize the class into groups of five students. Identify a leader for each group. Provide the leader with the Fruits and Vegetables Scattegories instruction sheet and a timer. Tell them to lead their group through the instructions to brainstorm many, varied fruits and vegetables.
- Using fruits as the first category, give everyone one minute to write down as many fruits as they can think of. Tell the group that the goal is to list as many fruits as they can think of, including fruits that other students might not think of. Start the timer for 1 minute and say, “Go.”
  - When the timer beeps say, “Pencils down.”
  - Choose one person to read their list. The rest of the group should raise their hand if they listed the same fruit and everyone who has it on their list must put an X next to the word. Continue until every student has had a chance to read their list.
  - Each person should count the words that do not have an X by them.
  - Repeat steps 1-4 with vegetables as the category.
  - Each person should add the points from their two categories together to determine who had the most words that no one else thought of.
  - Compile a list of all the fruits and vegetables the group thought of in their journal.

#### Sources

1. <https://www.albertwhitman.com/book/saturday-at-the-food-pantry/>
2. <https://iowamatrix.agclassroom.org/matrix/lesson/780/>

#### K-5 Subject Areas: English Language Arts, Healthful Living, and Social Studies

##### English Language Arts

- RL.K.1 With guidance and support, identify a detail in a familiar text.
- RL.K.2 With guidance and support, identify the main topic of a familiar text.
- RL.1.1 Identify details in a familiar text.
- RL.1.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- RL.2.2 Identify the main topic of text.

- RL.2.4 Identify words that relate to the topic of a text.
- RL.3.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- RL.3.4 Identify key words that complete sentences in a text.
- RL.3.5 Locate key facts or information in a familiar text.
- RL.4.1 Identify explicit details in an informational text.
- RL.4.4 Determine the meaning of words in a text.
- RL.4.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- RL.5.1 Identify words in the text to answer a question about explicit information.

### Healthful Living

- K.NPA.1 Identify sources of food and water and their importance to the body.
- 1.NPA.1 Describe where food and water come from and their importance to the body.
- 2.NPA.1 Explain where food and water come from and their importance to the body.
- 3.NPA.1 Recall why the body needs a variety of foods.
- 3.NPA.2 Investigate factors that influence which foods we eat.
- 4.NPA.1 Interpret tools to apply nutrition information.
- 4.NPA.2 Explore external factors that affect which foods we eat.
- 5.NPA.1 Use tools and resources to interpret nutrition information.
- 5.NPA.2 Investigate external factors that affect which foods we eat.

### Social Studies

- K.E.1 Analyze basic economic concepts.
- K.G.1 Apply simple geographic representations, tools, and terms to describe surroundings.
- 1.C&G.1 Understand how people engage with and participate in the community.
- 1.E.1 Understand the role of basic economic concepts in the decisions people make.
- 1.G.1 Apply geographic representations, tools, and terms to describe surroundings.
- 2.E.1 Understand how the availability of resources impacts economic decisions.
- 3.E.1 Understand how economic decisions and resources affect the local economy.
- 4.E.2 Understand the impact of personal financial decisions.
- 5.E.2 Understand the impact of personal financial decisions.

## **Fruits and Vegetables Scattergories Instruction Sheet**

1. Using fruits as the first category, give everyone one minute to write down as many fruits as they can think of. Tell the group that the goal is to list as many fruits as they can think of, including fruits that other students might not think of. Start the timer for 1 minute and say, "Go."
2. When the timer beeps say, "Pencils down."
3. Choose one person to read their list. The rest of the group should raise their hand if they listed the same fruit and everyone who has it on their list must put an X next to the word. Continue until everyone has had a chance to read their list.
4. Each person should count the words that do not have an X by them.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 with vegetables as the category.
6. Each person should add the points from their two categories together to determine who had the most words that no one else thought of.
7. Compile a list of all the fruits and vegetables the group thought of.

<b>Fruits</b>	<b>Vegetables</b>

