



Identifying Agriculture Issues

Middle School Food and Agricultural Literacy Curriculum

Precepts

- J. Mental Growth
- J1. Think critically

National Standards

- CS.09. Compare and contrast issues affecting the AFNR industry.
- NL-ENG.K-12.4 – Communication Skills
- NS.5-8.6 – Science in Personal and Social Perspectives
- NT.K-12.2 – Social, Ethical, and Human Issues

Student Learning Objectives

- As a result of this **unit** the student will...
- Evaluate current agriculture issues.
- As a result of this **lesson** the student will...
- Identify current issues related to the agriculture industry.

Content Outline

- I. **Agriculture is defined as:**
 - A. All activities involved with the global production of food, fiber, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal services.

Interest Approach

Have sticky notes available to distribute (five per student) while students are visualizing the scenario and identifying five issues a typical middle school student faces. Students will write down each issue on a sticky note, compare and prioritize that list with a partner; finally, students will form into a group of four with another neighboring student pair and provide commentary on those top five issues in one minute.

Rewind your brain to passing period. You are walking down the hall, heading to your next class. As you go, you hear the conversations of your classmates and teachers about the current issues that are going on in their lives. Think about what you hear.

Pause.

Time

Instruction time for this lesson: 45 minutes.

Resources

National FFA Organization. (2009). LifeKnowledge Online. Retrieved July 9, 2009, from <http://agedlearning.org>
National FFA Organization. (2003). LifeKnowledge Precepts and Signs of Success.

Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

Sticky notes – five per student
Local, regional, state, and national newspapers – as many as you can provide
Overhead projector
MS.AI.1.1.TM.A – one per teacher
Scissors – one pair per student or one pair per two students
Scotch tape
Whiteboard or flat surface
MS.AI.1.1.ASSESS.A – one per student

Key Terms

The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in **bold italics**:

Agriculture

Identify to yourselves five issues you hear.

Pause to allow student reflection. While students are thinking, place five sticky notes on each student's desk.

Let's keep what we've heard locked in our brains as we open our eyes.

Pause.

There are topics and issues floating all around us. On your desks are five sticky notes. Now, let's unlock our brains and pour out the five issues we've identified. Write one issue on each sticky note.

Pause to give students time to write one issue on each sticky note.

Let's compare and prioritize the issues we wrote down. When you hear **PRIORITIZE**, you will have one minute to find a partner, to compare lists, and to use both lists to prioritize the top five issues. Place those top five in order from top to bottom on one desk. What questions are there? **PRIORITIZE!**

Pause for one minute.



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Time is up! Wow! Our brains are just pouring out good work today!

Let's turn this into a time when everyone's voices are heard. First, let's identify and group up with a neighboring pair – we should have groups of four.

Pause for students to group up.

When you hear ROLL IT, each pair will take one minute to provide their opinions, starting from least important to the most important issue, about the items on their list. When that minute is up, the other pair will share their opinions about their list. One minute isn't very long, so plan accordingly. What questions do you have? ROLL IT!

Monitor students to ensure conversation is not offensive. Notify when each pair's minute has expired.

We won't air our opinions with the whole group, but this exercise was used to help us understand that from the lunch table to the hallway, our lives are full of important issues. They penetrate our conversations and even sometimes affect our actions. There are also important issues in **agriculture** that affect every step of the production chain. Today we will identify some of the current issues in the **agriculture** industry.

Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

Objective 1. Identify current issues related to the **agriculture** industry.

Our last activity provided us with an opportunity to identify issues in our lives, but what are **agriculture** issues? To help us on our journey today, let's review the definition of **agriculture**. How can **agriculture** be defined? Allow time for students to respond. Then display **MS.AI.1.1.TM.A**.

I. **Agriculture is defined as:**

- A. All activities involved with the global production of food, fiber, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal services.

Using our definition of **agriculture**, it is now time to identify our **agriculture** issues for the day. When I distribute newspapers to everyone, look through

the information and cut out all the articles that have an **agriculture** issue in them. You will have seven minutes to find as many articles as you can. Be prepared to share what the **agriculture** issue is. What questions are there? Provide students with local, regional, state, and even national newspapers if available. Monitor students' work to make sure they understand what to look for.

We are on the right track in identifying **agriculture** issues. What surprised you about the articles concerning **agriculture** issues that you found?

Provide time for students to respond.

Often times we might hear an issue but not realize that it has a connection to **agriculture**. Because **agriculture** is all around us and a part of our everyday lives, many issues have a connection to **agriculture** that we might not think of.

Divide a writing surface into three sections labeled Food, Fiber, and Natural Resources. Have pieces of tape available for easy access.

You did such a great job of identifying **agriculture** issues in the news that we are going to kick things up a notch. On the board, you should notice three phrases that should be very familiar to you. Where have you seen these words before?

Students' response should be "the definition of **agriculture**."

Correct! Earlier today we defined **agriculture** and used the words food, fiber, and natural resources. Individually, look at the articles you collected and mentally decide which of the three categories these articles fall into. This might be rather challenging, so make sure you have your thinking caps on!

Allow approximately 30 seconds for students to look over their articles. Do not answer any questions about where articles might fit; instead encourage them to think and decide on their own.

Select three articles. When I say ISSUE, when I say what? ISSUE! You will walk to the board and using the tape provided; secure your issues under the appropriate title. You will have only 30 seconds to complete this task, so you must go with your first instinct. When you are finished, return to your seats and wait for further instructions. What questions are there? ISSUE!



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Great job! Are there any issues that we might want to rearrange?

As a class, go through the issues and move them if needed. Discuss that some issues might belong in more than one category, and that is okay.

We have done a fantastic job today of beginning our journey into a better understanding of **agriculture** issues. Let's keep this energy and enthusiasm going through our entire unit!

Review/Summary

Utilize the Newton e-Moment® to gather questions about the upcoming unit. This activity has students thinking about and writing three questions that begin with "Why" concerning the information they recently learned. Remind students that the purpose is to deepen their understanding of the information and test others' ability to explain their understanding. Next, students pose their question to the class and the students try to answer the questions. Refrain from answering the questions or providing clues. This is an opportunity for you to gauge what students know. If the questions cannot be answered by the class, have the student place the question in the correct column on the writing surface.

We have only begun our journey into the fascinating topic of **agriculture** issues.

We identified current **agriculture** issues in the news and categorized them into food, fiber, and natural resources issues.

When you hear WONDER, the task is to write on a sheet of paper one "why" question for each of the **agriculture** issues/categories listed on the board. For example, someone might ask, "Why are there so many restrictions on the farmers?" or "Why are there so many hungry people in the world despite advancements in technology?" We will have 90 seconds to do this, and then we will share these questions with the class. What questions are there about the task?

Pause for students to ask questions.

WONDER!

Pause for 90 seconds.

Time is up! Review the questions and choose the best question to ask the class. Pause. We will go around the room and give each person a chance to ask the question in rapid fire. If anyone can provide an answer to the question, give the answer immediately after the question is asked. Then the next person will ask a question. If an answer isn't provided, place your question in the category to which it belongs on the board. We will do this until everyone has participated or when class is dismissed.

Begin rapid fire question and answer. Monitor the time to provide closure.

Let's continue to ask these important "why" questions concerning issues in **agriculture**. Asking these questions will promote our learning and an awareness of issues that affect not only each of us, but the entire world.



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Application

Extended classroom activity:

Have students use other media sources available at home to identify an **agriculture** issue. An example might be an article from an Internet site or a magazine. Students should bring the article to class and be prepared to identify what category of **agriculture** the article addresses.

FFA activity:

Have students visit ffa.org or review a copy of New Horizons to identify current issues in the FFA. Examples might be change in national convention site or election of new state or national officers.

SAE activity:

Of the articles students collected, identify which topics connect to their SAE area. If students do not have an SAE, use an older student as an example and have them identify which articles pertain to them.

Evaluation

MS.AI.1.1.ASSESS.A

Answers to Evaluation

1. Answers will vary, students should list three.
2. All activities involved with the global production of food, fiber, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal services.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Food, Fiber, and Natural Resources
5. Newspapers, magazines, Internet, etc.



Agriculture is defined as:

All activities involved with the global production of food, fiber, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal services.



Identifying Agriculture Issues

Name _____

Short answer

Directions: Answer each question with complete sentences.

1. What are three issues that are important to you?

2. What is the definition of agriculture?

3. What are three issues that you found that are agriculture issues?

4. What three categories do agriculture issues sometimes fall into?

5. Where can you find sources of agriculture issues?
