What's Really in Our Bread?

Teaching Materials

Complimentary educational resources for teachers and parents

This free download includes student worksheets, parent communication materials, and at-home extension activities to support inquiry-based learning about food systems, agriculture, and health for ages 8-12.

Complete Companion Guide Available

This free resource contains worksheets and activities only. The full 48-page *Educator & Parent Companion Guide* includes:

- Complete lesson plans with session-by-session procedures
- Teacher background information and scientific resources
- Assessment rubrics and differentiation strategies
- Comprehensive bibliography and community connections
- FAQ for educators and detailed teaching notes

Available for purchase at **www.whatsreallyinourbread.com**

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Your guide to free teaching materials from "What's Really in Our Bread?"

📚 **How to Use These Materials:**

Student Worksheets are ready to print and distribute. They align with the three-session lesson plan and can be completed in class or as homework.

Parent Communication Materials help you inform families about the unit, address concerns, and engage them in learning.

At-Home Activities extend learning beyond the classroom and create meaningful family conversations about food systems.

Need the complete lesson plans? Visit **www.whatsreallyinourbread.com** for the full 48-page Companion Guide with detailed teaching procedures, background information, assessment rubrics, and extensive resources.

Student Worksheets (Ready to Print)

The following worksheets are designed to be printed and distributed to students. They align with the three-session lesson plan and can be completed individually or in pairs.

Student Worksheet — "Bread, Farms & Us" (Ages 8-12)

Name: _____Date: _____ Class: _____

Part A — Quick Comprehension (from today's story)

1. Write 3 steps in the order that wheat becomes bread:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Who were the three children curious about bread? Pick one and write one thing they did to learn more:

Child: _____ Action: _____

3. Circle the best answer:

a. Farmers use chemicals to: (help crops grow / make food taste sweet / clean bread)

b. Washing produce will remove: (visible dirt / all chemical residues / food nutrients)

Part B — Vocabulary Match (draw a line)

Match each word to its meaning:

1. Desiccant — (a) a person who bakes bread

2. Herbicide — (b) something that dries plants to make harvesting easier

3. Microbiome — (c) a chemical used to kill weeds

4. Residue — (d) tiny living things (like bacteria) inside you or soil

5. Glyphosate — (e) traces of something left on food or in soil

(Teacher note: Answers: 1-b, 2-c, 3-d, 4-e, 5-c; glyphosate is an herbicide)

Pronunciations (say them aloud):

- Desiccant (DEH-sih-kant)
- Herbicide (HER-bih-side)
- Microbiome (MY-kroh-bye-ome)
- Residue (REH-zih-doo)
- Glyphosate (GLY-fo-sate)

Part C — Produce Wash Experiment Log

Pair/Group: _____ Fruit type: _____

1. Describe the fruit BEFORE washing (color, spots, smell):

_____

_____

2. Washing method used (circle one): Running water / Water + gentle scrub / Baking-soda rinse

3. What did you see after washing? (visible dirt gone? shine? anything else?)

_____

_____

4. What can washing do? What can it NOT do? Write one idea for each:

Washing can: _____

Washing may NOT: _____

5. Draw or paste two small photos or sketches:

Part D — Scavenger Hunt (Take-home or in-class)

Find 3 breads or grain products at home or in the store and list the brand and what country of origin or label it shows (look at the package):

1. Brand: _____ Origin/Label:
_____

2. Brand: _____Origin/Label:
_____

3. Brand: _____ Origin/Label:
_____

Bring one package or a photo to class and be ready to share one thing you noticed about labels.

Part E — Mini Research Poster Planner (group work)

Topic or farm/ingredient you researched: _____

1. One sentence summary of what you learned:

_____

_____

2. One picture or drawing idea for your poster:

_____

3. One small action our class or family could do to help (pick one):

☐ Start a small school sprouting station

☐ Choose one organic item at the store weekly

☐ Ask the cafeteria to list where bread ingredients come from

☐ Other: _____

Who will do each job on your poster? (titles: researcher, artist, presenter)

Researcher: _____

Artist: _____

Presenter: _____

Part F — My Food Action Pledge (short)

I, _____, will try one thing this week to help make my food healthier:

_____

_____

(Signature) _____

Section 4: Parent Communication Materials

This section provides ready-to-use materials for communicating with parents about the 'What's Really in Our Bread?' unit. These materials help build understanding and support while addressing common concerns.

Sample Parent Letter

Copy and customize this letter to send home before beginning the unit

Dear Families,

Our class will soon begin an exciting inquiry-based unit called 'Bread, Farms & Us,' based on the children's book What's Really in Our Bread? This short unit (2-4 class sessions) explores where our food comes from and the journey from farm to table.

What We'll Learn:

• The steps wheat takes from field to bread

• How modern farming works and the role of agricultural chemicals

• Ways we can make informed food choices

• How to think critically about the food system

Activities Include:

• Reading and discussing the story together

• A simple produce-washing experiment (observational only—no tasting!)

• Creating a research poster about local food choices

• Optional: growing wheat or barley sprouts in the classroom

Important Notes:

✓ This is an inquiry-based unit designed to spark curiosity, not create alarm

✓ No chemicals will be used or handled in any activities

✓ We present balanced, age-appropriate, science-based information

✓ Students will learn practical actions they and their families can take

We believe this unit will help students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper appreciation for the complex systems that bring food to our tables. If you have questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact me.

At-Home Extension (Optional):

Your child will bring home a 'Scavenger Hunt' worksheet asking them to examine 3 grain products at home and notice labels, origins, and certifications. This is a fun way to extend learning beyond the classroom!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Grade/Subject]

_____

FAQ for Parents

Use these answers to respond to common parent questions and concerns:

Q: Why are you teaching young children about pesticides? Isn't this scary?

A: We're teaching about the food system in an age-appropriate, empowering way. The focus is on curiosity, critical thinking, and practical actions—not fear. Students learn that people are working to understand and improve our food system, and that small choices can make a difference. The activities are hands-on, engaging, and designed to spark wonder rather than worry.

Q: Are you telling children not to eat certain foods?

A: No. We emphasize that all foods can be part of a healthy diet. The unit teaches students to think about where food comes from and to understand labels and choices. We discuss practical steps like washing produce, choosing variety, and understanding organic vs. conventional—but never say certain foods are 'bad' or should be avoided entirely.

Q: Is this curriculum biased against farmers or agriculture?

A: Absolutely not. The book and lessons honor the hard work of farmers and present modern agriculture in context. We discuss how farmers make difficult decisions, face economic pressures, and are working to improve practices. Students learn that there are no simple answers and that many stakeholders are trying to balance productivity, economics, and environmental/health concerns.

Q: Will there be any chemicals in the classroom?

A: No. All activities are observational only. The produce-washing experiment uses only water, fruit, and optional baking soda (a common household item). We do not handle, display, or use any herbicides, pesticides, or other agricultural chemicals.

Q: What if my child asks questions I can't answer?

A: That's wonderful! Curiosity is the goal. You can explore together by reading food labels, visiting a farmers market, or looking up information together. The companion guide includes resources for families. It's okay to say 'I don't know—let's find out together.'

Q: Our family can't afford organic food. Will my child feel bad?

A: The unit emphasizes that many actions don't cost anything (washing produce thoroughly, choosing variety, asking questions) and that organic is just one option among many. We discuss economic realities and never shame or judge food choices. Students learn that everyone can take small, meaningful steps regardless of budget.

Q: What's the scientific basis for this unit?

A: The companion guide includes extensive background information with citations to peer-reviewed research, regulatory documents, and current scientific debates. We present multiple perspectives and acknowledge where evidence is strong, emerging, or uncertain. Parents are welcome to review these materials at any time.

At-Home Extension Activities

Share these activities with families who want to extend learning at home:

Grow Your Own Sprouts

Materials: Mason jar, cheesecloth or mesh, wheat or mung bean seeds, water

Instructions:

1. Rinse seeds and place in jar with water. Soak overnight.

2. Drain water, cover jar with cheesecloth secured with rubber band.

3. Rinse and drain twice daily for 3-5 days.

4. Watch seeds sprout! Discuss how plants grow and what they need.

5. Optional: Eat the sprouts in a salad (adult supervision required).

Label Detective

Activity: Go on a 'label hunt' at the grocery store or in your pantry.

Look for:

• Country of origin

• Organic certification seals

• 'Non-GMO Project Verified' labels

• Ingredient lists (how many ingredients can you recognize?)

• Nutrition facts

Discussion questions:

• What surprised you?

• Which products had the shortest ingredient lists?

• Did you find foods from other countries? How did they get here?

Bake Bread Together

Activity: Make simple bread from scratch to understand the transformation from wheat to food.

Simple No-Knead Bread Recipe:

• 3 cups flour

• 1/4 teaspoon instant yeast

• 1 1/2 teaspoons salt

• 1 1/2 cups water

Mix ingredients, cover, let rise 12-18 hours. Shape, let rise 2 hours. Bake at 450°F for 30 minutes.

While baking, discuss:

• What is the flour made from?

• Where did those ingredients come from?

• How is homemade bread different from store-bought?

Map Your Food

Activity: Track where your food comes from for one week.

- Keep a food journal
- Note country/state of origin when possible
- Mark locations on a map
- Calculate approximate distances food traveled
- Discuss: What did you learn? Were you surprised by anything?

Visit a Farmers Market or Farm

Activity: Connect with local food producers.

Questions to ask farmers:

- What do you grow?
- How do you deal with weeds and pests?
- What's the hardest part of farming?
- How long have you been farming?

Many farmers love talking to curious kids! This helps students see farming as real work done by real people.