

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Hungry in America: New Food Insecurity Numbers Are A Wake Up Call, 11/24/2009

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/july-dec09/hunger_11-24.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.]

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. **How does the economy affect people's ability to afford food?**
2. **Is there a hunger problem in the United States? How would you know?**
3. **What is famine? What is the difference between hunger and famine?**

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. **How many Americans were food insecure in 2008?**

ANSWER

A new report released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirms that almost 50 million Americans had a hard time putting food on the table in 2008.

2. **What is food insecurity?**

ANSWER

Food insecurity is a condition in which people lack basic food intake to provide them with the energy and nutrients for fully productive lives.

3. **Why are more families less food secure in this economy?**

ANSWER

In the United States one of the largest factors of food insecurity is unemployment.

4. **Why are the food insecurity numbers probably even worse than the U.S. Department of Agriculture report suggests?**

ANSWER

At the beginning of the 2008, unemployment was at 4.9 percent, by the end of the year it was almost 8 percent; now unemployment stands at a double digit, 10.2 percent.

5. Where can families turn to get nutritious food?

ANSWER

All members of the family can turn to food stamps or other government aid, or getting food from food pantries and soup kitchens if they lack secure food supplies.

6. True or False: Families facing food insecurity are all unemployed.

ANSWER

False. The report shows that most of the families facing "food insecurity" contain at least one adult with a full-time job. The highest hit are single-parent families: more than one in three single mothers reported that they struggled to feed their children.

7. What are some of the ramifications of food insecurity?

ANSWER

Food insecurity can affect social skills and behavior, reading performance, mathematical skills, and weight gain. Physical hunger and worrying about money problems can distract students from their work, cause depression and anger, recent studies show.

8. What is the Child Nutrition Act?

ANSWER

The Child Nutrition Act is the recently expired Act, which lays out the rules for school breakfasts and lunches.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Does it surprise you to hear that so many Americans are food insecure? Why or why not?

2. Recent reports on the rise of obesity suggest that more people around the world are obese than malnourished. Why do you think that is?

3. Think of ways to make the distribution of food more equitable. How could this be done in your own community?

4. Is food a fundamental right? Why or why not?

5. The abundance of types of food has grown while the individual prices of food have dropped in the last few decades, do some research and find out how food production has changed in your own community. Are you surprised by anything in particular?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.