



SPARK AND ENGAGE

start with a stance

Identify opposite sides of the classroom as “agree” and “disagree” sides; simple posters can also be put up in advance to identify each side.

Select from statements such as the following – provided on the **Why learn about food and farm challenges? Spark Questions** handout – and share those selected orally or display them on the board, one at a time. As each statement is displayed, have students move to the side of the classroom that represents their opinion. Students who are undecided can stand between the two sides.

- ◆ Agriculture is a legacy industry. (Discuss the meaning of the term “legacy.”)
- ◆ We need to feed nine billion people by 2050.
- ◆ Food security isn’t a production issue, it is a distribution problem. (Tell students they will explore the concept of food security in more depth. For now, discuss food security as the availability of and access to food.)
- ◆ We need to invest in the industries of the future, not the past.

Ask students to volunteer why they agree or disagree. Encourage students to consider the extent to which they think agriculture and food are important to learn more about. Work with students to draw out connections between agriculture today and what agriculture “looked like” in the past. What do they think is similar today to what agriculture was like in the past? What do they think the most impactful differences are?

Alternatively, online apps such as **Google Forms** can be used to set up a simple digital survey or a **Jamboard** to collect students’ reasons for their stance.

Ask students to discuss and predict the role that they think agriculture had in Canada’s history. Record ideas on the board.

the issue of food security, past and present

Food security is not a concept typically associated with the history of Canada. However, food security has existed throughout time. Provide students with an opportunity to build a basic understanding of the problems posed when people are food insecure. Students can also be asked to share ideas about periods in Canadian history when they think food security might have been an issue.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “**food security** is the condition in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”



Customize this project process by creating your own **HyperDocs**, using the links from this guide and selecting those activities you think are most appropriate for your students.

Adapt this activity to a **horseshoe debate** format. Share one statement at a time and have students arrange themselves around a horseshoe shaped spectrum with five points that range from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. As each statement is shared, have students stand at the point of the spectrum that reflects their opinion. As students are asked to explain their opinion, all have the option to change their position. Find a video that describes this process at www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z_gEwJKAbA.



Be sensitive to different contexts that may trigger students or cause discomfort when discussing the issue of food insecurity.

Other definitions identify “culturally acceptable” as part of the criteria for food security.

1 in 8 households in Canada is food insecure, amounting to over 3 million Canadians, and including nearly 1 million children. This means that these Canadians are living in homes that struggle to put healthy, nutritious food on the table.

Have students work with a partner or small group to brainstorm words, phrases, images, symbols that could be associated with food security and insecurity; and use these to create a word splash on the board or on a poster. Ask students to consider why food insecurity exists.

Statistics on food insecurity in Canada are from PROOF, an interdisciplinary research program investigating household food insecurity in Canada. Find their latest statistics on their website at <https://proof.utoronto.ca/more-canadians-are-food-insecure-than-ever-before-and-the-problem-is-only-getting-worse/>.

> CONNECT TO PRIOR LEARNING

Ask students to explore what they think agriculture involves – place, activities, practices, issues, values and beliefs. Discuss and create a definition of agriculture on the board before students start brainstorming. **Agriculture** refers to the practices involved in growing crops and feeding and raising livestock for food and other products. Encourage students to make connections between agriculture and the food they eat.

> CONNECT TO EXPERIENCES

Encourage students to share stories about connections to agricultural places, events and activities that they have experienced. Identify and discuss the characteristics of agricultural communities that students live in or have visited. Set up a **Jamboard** or other digital bulletin board for students to post word or image snapshots of their experiences connected to agriculture.

connect to prior knowledge

Share the essential understandings that provide a focus for the three **Spark Questions** learning resources. As you share and discuss these with students, use evidence-focused questions such as the following to encourage their thinking about what they already know and how they know it:

- What terms are you familiar with in this statement? What are the important ideas in the statement?
- What do you envision when you think about this statement? What do you know?
- What do you envision, have you imagined or know that makes you say that?





Consider creating a class version of a KWL chart, collecting information on what students know, what they want to know, how they think they will find out, and then, completing what they learned after sharing their projects. Monitor class understandings and provide support in areas that students need.

Ask individual students to use a **KWL chart** to jot down their resulting ideas in the “What I **Know**” and “What I **Want to Know**” columns. Use the “How I will find out” and “What I **Learned**” columns as students investigate and research.



A KWL Chart is provided in the **agriculture HISTORIES Project Tools** booklet and on the **PROJECT GUIDES** webpage at www.projectagriculture.ca/share/project-guides/.

> SCAFFOLD AND DIFFERENTIATE

Use this evidence-focused questioning strategy as a whole class first, teaching students how to examine their understandings and conceptions. Students can then discuss these or other statements in small groups, using these questioning strategies with each other.

Keep a chart or ongoing list of students’ thoughts and ideas in the classroom as a reference to students’ initial thinking and ideas. Invite students to use and add to these lists as they develop their projects.

reflect on connections

Create a **mind map** on the board with the whole class to reflect on connections to what students may have learned about concepts related to – and that connect to – change, agriculture, farming, food, identities, roles, innovation, traditional knowledge and technologies.



A **Mind Map** is provided in the **agriculture HISTORIES Project Tools** booklet and on the **PROJECT GUIDES** webpage at www.projectagriculture.ca/share/project-guides/.

> EXTEND LEARNING

Encourage students to consider what they have previously learned about Indigenous perspectives and beliefs regarding the land and resources. To what extent could these perspectives inform current practices, values and beliefs about agriculture and food, today and in the past?

spark inquiry with an AGRICULTURE cafe

Have students further explore perspectives and concepts related to all or some of the three essential understandings in a **world cafe**, using the **Spark Questions** handouts.

Start student exploration by sharing the **project AGRICULTURE** website on an interactive whiteboard. Go to the **agriculture HISTORIES** topic in the **TOPIC VIEWER** on the **LEARN** webpage of the **project AGRICULTURE** website and click on the “spark” icons to access and explore the **Spark Questions** sources.

Preview the information and questions. Then, provide in digital or print form for students to explore individually.

Several starting points for further inquiry are provided as questions throughout the **Spark Questions** handouts. **Select** from these questions to create a project focus. These questions are found in **INVESTIGATE MORE** sidebars in each handout and include:

- What examples of change and challenges in agriculture can be investigated further?
- How do images of agriculture from the past compare to images today? Why has agriculture changed over time?
- In what ways have perceptions about the food choices we have changed over time?
- What are the “roots” of our food system? Why do we choose to grow and produce the types of foods available today?
- How were Indigenous peoples affected by the spread of agriculture and urbanization?
- What is a challenge you can think of that has impacted the food system because of urbanization?
- How has urbanization, past and present, affected food choices?
- How have land use decisions made in the past affected environmental issues today?
- How should the uses of land in Canada’s past provide insights into ways agricultural land should be protected in the future?
- In what ways have changing technologies resulted in opportunities and challenges for ways of life and the environment?
- How can practices used in the past be applied to farming and food production today?
- How does organic farming have its roots in the past?
- How have innovations in agriculture affected what daily life looked like in the past compared to what it looks like today?



The three essential understandings from the previous activity are shared with students in the **Spark Questions** PDF sources.



The **INVESTIGATE MORE** questions in the **Spark** handouts are intended as starting points for student investigation and research. They can be used to identify areas for inquiry or as a focus for the development of a project question.



Specific curriculum outcomes for each of the three **Spark Questions** handouts, correlated to each, are provided in the **LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCY MAP** on page 29.

Click on each guiding question in the map to go directly to the downloadable source on the website.



Consult *Teamwork Skills: Being an Effective Group Member* from the University of Waterloo at <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/being-part-team/teamwork-skills-being-effective-group-member> for group and teamwork skills that can be shared with students.

- What evidence of traditional and modern food production practices can be seen today? How can traditional food practices be combined with modern agriculture?
- What factors influence changes that agriculture is going through today? How do these compare to factors that changed agriculture in the past?
- What understandings of change and challenges do statistics about farms and farming over time indicate?
- How can changing roles and images in food and farming be connected to current issues and challenges?
- What events have had the most impact on farming and food in Alberta and Canada over time?
- How have changes in communication and technology over time affected images and roles connected with farming and the food system?
- How are the connections today between farmers and the people who depend on their products similar and different from the past?

Tell students that they will be asked to hold group conversations, focused on one of the **Spark Questions** sources. Organize students into groups of three or four at a table, cluster of desks or at a class computer, loaded with a **Google Doc**. Select a leader for each group. The leader will record the major points of the group conversation and be prepared to summarize them.

Share questions such as the following with students as the focus for their group conversations:

- What information and examples can you find in this source to support the essential understanding?
- What additional information do you need to better understand the essential understanding?
- What would you most like to find out more about? Why?

Have groups discuss the questions for an established period of time.

Once the time is up, have the leader stay but the other group members rotate to a different table. Ask the leader to summarize the main points of the conversation they had with their former group for their new group members.

Have each new group select a new group leader. Repeat the process to provide multiple students with the opportunity to lead a group.



SPARK QUESTIONS: LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCY MAP

SPARK AND INQUIRY FOCUS	GRADE 7 SOCIAL STUDIES	
	CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE	PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE
SPARK LEARNING SOURCE Why learn about food and farm challenges? Agriculture and the food system have responded to challenges over time.	7.2 Following Confederation: Canadian Expansions 7.2.3 appreciate the challenges that individuals and communities face when confronted with rapid change (I, CC, LPP) 7.2.5 evaluate the impact of Confederation and of subsequent immigration on Canada from 1867 to the First World War by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - To what extent was agricultural activity a key factor in the population growth of western Canada? (TCC, LPP, ER) 7.2.7 assess, critically, the impact of urbanization and of technology on individual and collective identities in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - What impact has increased urbanization had on rural communities in Canada? (LPP, CC) - What impact did immigration have on Aboriginal peoples and on communities in Canada? (GC, CC, I, TCC)	Skills and Processes for Grade 7 7.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking: - evaluate, critically, ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives - demonstrate the ability to analyze local and current affairs 7.S.4 demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving: - predict outcomes of decision-making and problem-solving scenarios from multiple perspectives 7.S.7 apply the research process: - determine how information serves a variety of purposes and that the accuracy or relevance of information may need verification - formulate new questions as research progresses
SPARK LEARNING SOURCE How has innovation influenced farming and food? Farming and food choices have been affected by changing technologies and practices.	7.2 Following Confederation: Canadian Expansions 7.2.3 appreciate the challenges that individuals and communities face when confronted with rapid change (I, CC, LPP) 7.2.7 assess, critically, the impact of urbanization and of technology on individual and collective identities in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: In what ways did technological advances contribute to the development of Canada (e.g., aviation, farming equipment, radio transmissions, electronics, multimedia)? (ER, PADM)	
SPARK LEARNING SOURCE How has food and farming changed over time? Changes like urbanization and the growth of communities have influenced the way food is produced.	7.2 Following Confederation: Canadian Expansions 7.2.3 appreciate the challenges that individuals and communities face when confronted with rapid change (I, CC, LPP) 7.2.5 evaluate the impact of Confederation and of subsequent immigration on Canada from 1867 to the First World War by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - To what extent was agricultural activity a key factor in the population growth of western Canada? (TCC, LPP, ER) 7.2.6 assess, critically, the impacts of social and political changes on individual and collective identities in Canada since 1918 by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - What are the social and economic effects of the changing roles and images of women in Canadian society (i.e., right to vote, working conditions, changing family structures)? (ER, I)	