

ACTIVITY PLAN



Video

Meat or Veggies? The Impact of Diet on Climate

! NOTE: Please read “How To Use These Materials” for additional support in teaching and adapting this media literacy activity.

Grade Level: High School, College/Adult

Objective Options:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for community health as it relates to personal dietary choices.
- Students will analyze the author’s purpose in providing an explanation, defining the question the author seeks to address.
- Students will analyze the impact of human diet on global climate.
- Students will identify and distinguish conflicting claims.

S Standards Options:

Common Core ELA Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.6
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.8
NextGen Science Standards	ESS3.D: Global Climate Change
	ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems
Health Education Standards - Center For Disease Control	Standard 2
	Standard 8

Vocabulary: climate change, methane, cattle, vegan diet, agriculture, greenhouse gas, livestock, meat

Media Type: documentary film, television program



Fight Climate Change. Eat Less Meat, The Daily Conversation, 2015, 3:55



Ranchers Dispute UN Report That Links Cows to Climate Change, CBS News, 2019, 2:47

Media Document Notes

The first video is produced by The Daily Conversation (TDC). Their Facebook page says that they are “a progressive, independent news and information source bringing you interesting, important stories in a documentary style.” The second video is an excerpt from a CBS News report. The CBS Corporation describes itself as “a mass media company that creates and distributes industry-leading content across a variety of platforms to audiences around the world. “

Preparation and Materials

*All materials can be downloaded from the PLS website <http://www.projectlooksharp.org>

Preparation:

- Download and review the “How to Use Materials” section associated with this activity.

Materials for the Lesson:

- Two video clips

Additional Support:

- From the website, view [Media Decoding Examples](#) demonstrating classroom media analysis.
- Download the [Key Questions for Analysis](#) for supporting questions.
- A link to purchasing [The Teacher’s Guide to Media Literacy](#) is available from the homepage.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Activity Procedures

- Select among possible questions on the next page based on your objectives in teaching to social studies, science, and health content and/or ELA/media literacy skills.
- Use the selected questions to lead students through a constructivist media decoding process of the two video clips. Source information about the media documents is included at the bottom of the next page. Examples of possible student answers are included on the last page.

DECODING QUESTIONS**Possible Questions for Media Document Decoding**

Select among these based on your teaching objectives. Make questions document-based (e.g., According to this image or video...)

ELA

- How do a documentary film and a news report present the topic differently?
- Does the speaker's reasoning support their argument related to diet and climate change? Why or why not?
- Which video is more credible and why?

Science

- According to the video how has human diet impacted climate change? Give evidence from the document for your answer.
- According to the video what are some possible solutions to the problems of methane emissions in livestock production?
- How do population growth coupled with dietary preferences impact climate change?

Media Literacy

- How does your own view of the issue of meat and climate impact your assessment of the credibility of each message?
- How effective are the techniques of persuasion in this video?
- What questions should one ask to assess the credibility of the information in this video?

Health

- What steps does the video maker want you to take to support the health of the planet?
- How does media influence your decisions about diet?
- How do your friends and family influence your decisions about diet?

Follow up Evidence Questions & Comments

- Where do you see that?
- Say more about that
- How do you know that?
- What makes you say that?
- Does anyone have a different idea?

BACKGROUND & SOURCES

"Fight Climate Change. Eat Less Meat." The Daily Conversation. 7 Aug. 2015.

"Ranchers dispute UN report that links cows to climate change." CBS News. 8 Aug. 2019.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS**ELA**

Question: How do a documentary film and a news report present the topic differently?

Possible Answer: The TDC documentary is an example of advocacy journalism that clearly adopts a viewpoint for purposes of furthering a particular point of view. This is made explicit from the title to the last sentence urging viewers “to make necessary changes to our daily lives to truly protect our environment.” The CBS news report is an example of a classic “two sides” story that offers contrasting perspectives (the rancher and the IPCC report) in an effort to be “objective” leaving the viewer to make their own decision whether to believe a United Nations panel or an individual.

Science

Question: According to the video how has human diet impacted climate change? Give evidence from the document for your answer.

Possible Answers: The TDC documentary suggests that meat diets are a primary cause for global warming (“Animal agriculture accounts for half of global emissions”). The CBS news report presents two different perspectives. The reporter suggests that meat diets play a significant role (“cow manure emits methane”) whereas a rancher suggests that “the cattle she raises for beef are part of the solution to climate change, not the problem.”

Media Literacy

Question: How does your own view of the issue of meat and climate impact your assessment of the credibility of each message?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary. This is an opportunity to explore confirmation bias – our tendency to accept evidence that supports our beliefs. For example, if one is a committed vegan or vegetarian we are more likely to approve of the point of view in the TDC documentary and we are more likely to identify the rancher’s perspective as one of self-interest to protect their vocation rather than seeing it as a reasonable conclusion. Conversely if one is a committed meat-eater or has family in the meat or dairy industry we are more likely to dismiss the TDC documentary as propaganda and see the rancher’s perspective as more rational.

Health

Question: What steps does the video maker want you to take to support the health of the planet?

Possible Answers: The TDC documentary suggests that “we can eat a lot less meat and dairy” or become a vegan (statistics of reduced carbon footprint on vegan diet). The CBS news report offers two perspectives on choices for an improved environment. A rancher says “we can make more impactful changes...through recycling or walking to work.” The reporter then quotes the UN Climate Report saying, “eating more plant-based foods and sustainably produced meats can change land use and mitigate climate change.”