LESSON 7

Food System Expo

A celebration of learning and community.

GRADE	TIME	FINAL PRODUCT
Grades 4–5	Three class periods, 45–60 min each	Pair-built Expo station + a class Expo

BIG IDEA

Sharing what we've learned about the food system invites our community to act.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do we share what we've learned to inspire awareness and action in our community?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Show what you know.

In this culminating experience, students bring together what they have learned across the Nourish unit by curating an Expo station. Working in pairs, they choose work from earlier lessons that tells a clear story about food and the food system, design a display, and present it to an audience: their class, other classes, or family and community guests.

The Expo serves as both a celebration of learning and an opportunity for students to practice communicating key concepts through visuals, data, and storytelling.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Four subjects, one lesson.

SCIENCE (NGSS)

What students do

Obtain and combine information from multiple sources to explain how communities can protect Earth's resources through food system choices.

Three-dimensional emphasis. SEP: Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information. CCC: Systems and System Models.

5-ESS3-1

ELA (CCSS)

What students do

Conduct short research projects using multiple sources. Write informative texts using facts, details, and visuals. Present ideas clearly using visual displays and supporting evidence.

W.5.7 W.5.2 SL.5.4

SOCIAL STUDIES (C3)

What students do

Illustrate ways individuals and groups can change food systems for the better. Explain how individual and group actions can address community challenges. Explain how human settlements and movements relate to the use of natural resources.

D2.Civ.14.3-5 D2.Civ.12.3-5 D2.Geo.8.3-5

HEALTH (NHES)

What students do

Communicate ideas that promote healthy food choices and community well-being. Advocate for behaviors and solutions that support healthier people, communities, and environments.

NHES 4 NHES 8

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

What to know before you teach.

Over the course of this unit, students have explored the story of food: how it's produced (Lessons 1, 5), how it's affected by season and place (Lesson 2), what it means to families (Lesson 3), what happens when it's wasted (Lesson 4), how it's grown (Lesson 5), and what data reveals about food in our community (Lesson 6).

The Food System Expo mirrors a real-world showcase, where scientists, community organizations, and advocates share findings to educate and inspire change. A pair might build their whole station around food waste; another around the journey of one food from soil to plate; another around their community's farmers' market. Encourage this focus: curation, not comprehensiveness.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

What you'll print and cue up.

MATERIALS

- ☐ **Nourish short film**: *Be the Change* (Dr. Nadine Burke, ~2 min): Our personal and collective food choices create ripples throughout the food system.
- ☐ **Optional closing film**: *Nourish Means…* (Multiple voices, ~2 min). A range of voices answer the question "What does nourish mean to you?" Strong as the Expo's closer.
- ☐ **Tri-fold presentation boards OR large poster paper**: 1 per pair.
- ☐ Student work from earlier lessons. Pair returns to their portfolio and curates the pieces that tell their chosen story.
- ☐ **Student Expo Planning Page**: printable PDF, 1 per pair.
- ☐ **Audience Response Cards**: printable PDF, 4 per page, cut along dashed lines, ~20–30 cards per Expo.
- ☐ **Teacher Expo Setup Guide**: teacher resource, 1 per teacher.
- ☐ **Student Reflection Page**: printable PDF, 1 per student; completed after the Expo.
- ☐ **Art supplies**: Glue, tape, scissors, color markers, thin black markers for outlining.
- ☐ **Optional**: Photos, packaging labels, printed infographics, real food samples (cut produce, dried beans, seeds) to share.

PREPARATION

- ☐ Decide your Expo format (see the Teacher Expo Setup Guide). Options: gallery walk, open museum, panel talks, or hybrid. Decide audience: own class, other classes, families, or community.
- ☐ Confirm the room or alternate space (cafeteria, hallway, library): and any times when the Expo will need to be set up and taken down.
- ☐ If inviting families or community guests: send invitations a week ahead. (Template in the Setup Guide.)
- ☐ Cue up *Be the Change* for Day 1, and optionally *Nourish Means…* for the Expo close.
- ☐ Print Planning Pages, Audience Response Cards, and Reflection Pages.
- ☐ Review students' folders from earlier lessons; confirm they have access to their prior work.

DAY 1

Plan

45 minutes

1 Watch: *Be the Change*

7 MIN

TEACHER

- Pre-frame: introduce *Be the Change*. Ask students to listen for one ripple they'd like to start.
- Play *Be the Change* (~2 min). Captions on.
- Pair share: what ripple would students want to start in our community?
- Whole-class capture: capture 3–5 words from the share on the board. These become possible Expo themes.
- Bridge: students have made a lot of work across these lessons. Today they choose what to share at the Food System Expo.

STUDENTS

Watch *Be the Change* and listen for one ripple you'd want to start.

Add a word to the class board.

2 Look back at our work

8 MIN

TEACHER

- Have students pull out their portfolios: Food Story Maps (L1), Seasonal Wheels (L2), Family Food Traditions (L3), Food Waste Posters (L4), Farm Design Proposal (L5), Food Data Graphs (L6), and any other Nourish artifacts.
- Ask what surprises them about how much they've learned.
- Direct students to silently page through everything for 5 minutes before talking; give the work time to land.

STUDENTS

Look silently at all your Nourish work for 5 min.

Pick 2–3 pieces you're proud of.

Notice: which pieces feel like part of the same story?

3 Choose a partner + outline your story

15 MIN

TEACHER

- Pair up students (or allow self-pairing). Distribute the Student Expo Planning Page.
- Ask each pair to find ONE story they want to tell: not everything, just one focus (e.g., the journey of food in our city, why food waste matters, what our farms could be).
- Circulate. If a pair is stuck, prompt them to name one thing about food they want people to know.

STUDENTS

Pair up with a partner.

Use the Planning Page to land on ONE story.

Pick the 3–5 pieces of prior work that best tell that story.

4 Visualize your station

15 MIN

TEACHER

- Now ask pairs to sketch what their station will look like: what goes where on the tri-fold or poster.
- Suggest a **"walk-through"** structure: 3–5 stops a visitor would experience in order.
- *Optional:* project examples of strong Expo stations (or a one-pager mock-up).
- End: each pair raises a hand for a 30-second teacher check-in. Approve the plan before Day 2.

STUDENTS

Sketch your station on the back of your Planning Page.

Label your 3–5 stops.

Get teacher sign-off before the next class.

DAY 2

Build

60 minutes

1 Quick recap + check the plan

4 MIN

TEACHER

- Have each pair re-read their Planning Page out loud to each other in 60 seconds.
- Quick whole-class reminder: build for clarity, not perfection; visitors should be able to follow the story in 60 seconds.

STUDENTS

Re-read your plan to your partner.

Confirm your story before starting to build.

2 Build the station

50 MIN

TEACHER

- Distribute boards, art supplies, and prior work.
- Circulate constantly. Coach for clarity (the headline), captions (what visitors are looking at), and visual hierarchy (what's the biggest element).
- Halfway through (25-min mark): pairs swap stations for 90 seconds and give each other one piece of feedback (what's confusing, what they love).

STUDENTS

Lay out your prior work and decide where each piece goes.

Add a title for your station and captions for each piece.

Outline pencil work with thin black marker for visibility.

Swap and give feedback at the 25-min mark.

3 Pack up + preview Day 3

3 MIN

TEACHER

- Have pairs store their boards safely.
- Preview Day 3: polish, then open the Expo.

STUDENTS

Bring any food packaging, photos, or props you'd like to add tomorrow.

DAY 3

Polish + Expo

60 minutes

1 Final touches

12 MIN

TEACHER

- Pairs polish: spelling, neat marker lines, attach any new visuals (packaging, photos, infographics).
- Circulate with fresh eyes: would a visitor who knows nothing get this story?
- Set up Audience Response Card envelopes: one per station, on each table.

STUDENTS

Spell-check, neaten marker lines, add final visuals.

Stand back and look at your station: does the story read?

2 The Expo

35 MIN

TEACHER

- Run the Expo format you chose (see Teacher Expo Setup Guide).
- Each pair decides who stays at the station and who circulates first; they swap halfway through.
- Visitors leave Audience Response Cards at stations as they go.
- If multiple classes or families are visiting, build in transitions and a clear start/end.

STUDENTS

Welcome visitors to your station.

Walk them through your 3–5 stops in about 60 seconds.

Answer questions; ask visitors what they noticed.

When it's your turn to circulate, visit at least 3 other stations and leave a card at each.

3 Read your cards + closing reflection

10 MIN

TEACHER

- Have pairs return to their station and read the Audience Response Cards aloud to each other.
- Optional close: play *Nourish Means…* (~2 min) as a synthesizing moment.
- Distribute the Student Reflection Page. Direct students to start it now and finish for homework or in a follow-up class.

STUDENTS

Read your visitor cards with your partner.

Listen to *Nourish Means…* and notice how others answer the question.

Begin your Student Reflection Page.

ASSESSMENT

What understanding looks like.

Students demonstrate understanding by:

- Curating a clear, accurate, creative Expo station that tells one specific story about the food system.
- Explaining connections across the food system using unit vocabulary.
- Communicating ideas clearly to visitors and responding to questions.
- Engaging respectfully with other teams' work, visiting at least 3 stations and leaving meaningful cards.
- Demonstrating insight, personal growth, and civic awareness through the Reflection Page.

Look-fors: students may show understanding through visual design, written captions, oral explanations, or a combination. The Teacher Setup Guide includes a simple rubric.

DIFFERENTIATION & SCAFFOLDING

Build access in.

PAIR MATCHING

- For pair selection: lean toward pairs that bring complementary strengths (a strong writer + a strong visual artist; a confident speaker + a careful planner).
- If a student struggles with social dynamics, allow individual stations as an alternative; adjust the planning page for one creator instead of two.

FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

- Welcome captions in students' home languages, alongside or instead of English.
- Pair multilingual learners so their partner can support spoken explanations to visitors if needed.
- For the closing film: *Nourish Means…* already features multiple voices and accents; name that as a strength of the film.

FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED MORE TIME OR SUPPORT

- Provide pre-cut headers and section labels for those who benefit from structure.
- Offer audio-record options: students can record a 30-second voice intro to their station on a tablet, played by visitors via QR code.

EXTENSIONS

Five ways to go further.

EXTENSION 01

Community Expo

Open the Expo to families, school staff, and local community partners: a farmer, food bank volunteer, school nutrition lead, or community gardener. Send invitations a week in advance (template in the Teacher Setup Guide). Encourage guests to leave Audience Response Cards alongside student visitors. Builds civic identity and turns the Expo into a community event.

EXTENSION 02

Cross-Grade Teach-Back

Invite a younger grade (K–3) to visit the Expo, with each station prepared to teach younger students about their food-system topic. Students adapt their explanations for a younger audience, a powerful exercise in clarity. For an older grade (Middle or High School visiting), encourage debate-style follow-up questions.

EXTENSION 03

Personal Action Pledge

Each student writes one concrete action they will take in the next four weeks to influence the food system: eat one new fruit or vegetable each week, talk to family about one farming choice, start a small herb garden, donate to a food bank. Track for four weeks with weekly check-ins. Connects the Expo's communication work to new practices.

EXTENSION 04

Service Learning Project

Partner with a local food bank, community garden, school cafeteria, or farm for a hands-on service project that builds on what the class learned. Choose the partner based on which Expo themes emerged most strongly: a food-waste-focused class might serve at a food rescue organization; a farming-focused class might volunteer at a community garden.

EXTENSION 05

Digital Expo

Pairs record a 60-second video walking through their Expo station (tablet or phone). Compile videos into a class playlist and share with families via email, the school website, or a private YouTube channel, extending the Expo to families and community members who couldn't attend in person. A nice way to honor the work after the physical Expo ends.

TEACHER RESOURCE

Teacher Expo Setup Guide.

How to run a Food System Expo that lands well, from setup to invitations to the final reflection. Pick the format that matches your time, space, and energy.

FORMAT OPTIONS

Four ways to structure the Expo. Pick one based on class size, audience, and how exposed you want your students to feel.

Gallery walk

Pairs post their stations around the room. Visitors circulate freely; one pair member stays at the station, the other circulates. Halfway through, they swap.

Best when: lots of stations (12+), single class, moderate energy.

Watch out: visitor traffic can bunch; coach pairs to invite visitors in.

Open museum

All pairs stay at their stations the whole time. Visitors come to them. Less mobility, more focus on each station.

Best when: shy students, multi-class audience, families visiting.

Watch out: pairs miss seeing other stations; build in 10 min for them to walk after the Expo closes.

Panel talks

Three to five pairs give short "spotlight" presentations (3 min each) to the whole audience, then the rest of the class hosts at their stations afterward. The spotlight pairs join their stations after presenting.

Best when: you want a high-stakes performance moment for confident students.

Watch out: select spotlight pairs carefully so not always the same students take the stage.

Hybrid

Most common in practice: 5 min of opening remarks (teacher or one student pair), 30 min open-museum Expo, 5 min closing reflection (whole class).

ROOM SETUP

- Use the perimeter of the room or any flat walls. Tape boards to walls at student eye level, not adult eye level.
- Each station needs about 4 feet (1.2 m) of width. For a 24-student class (12 pairs), you need about 48 feet (15 m) of wall: likely both classroom walls plus a hallway extension.
- Place an envelope per station for Audience Response Cards.
- If using a tri-fold board, stations can also sit on desks pushed against the walls (easier traffic flow).
- Mark a clear START and END point if you want visitors to follow a path; otherwise, allow open circulation.

AUDIENCE OPTIONS

- **Own class only:** simplest. Half present, half visit, then swap.
- **Buddy class (another grade):** younger or older students visit. Younger means teach-back energy; older means thoughtful questions.
- **Multiple classes (whole grade):** schoolwide visibility; needs more cards and a wider space.
- **Families and community guests:** the most impactful for civic identity. Send invitations a week ahead.
- **Community partners:** invite one or two local food-system advocates (farmer, food bank, community gardener). Their presence makes the Expo feel real.

TIMING RECIPES

Three ways to fit the Expo into your schedule:

- **30-minute Expo:** 8 min open museum, halves swap, 12 min open museum, 5 min closing card-read, 5 min reflection.
- **45-minute Expo:** 10 min open museum, halves swap, 18 min open museum, the *Nourish Means…* film, 5 min reflection.

- **60-minute Expo (with families):** 10 min welcome, 15 min open museum, halves swap, 15 min open museum, the *Nourish Means…* film, 10 min reflection, 10 min family mingle.

FAMILY INVITATION TEMPLATE

Copy and adapt the language below. Send it a week before the Expo.

Dear families,

Over the past several weeks, our class has been studying the food system: where our food comes from, who has access to it, and how we can take care of the land and people who grow it. To celebrate what we've learned, we're hosting a Food System Expo on [DATE] from [TIME] in our classroom.

Your child has worked with a partner to build a station that tells one story about food. Stop by, ask questions, leave a feedback card, and let our students show you what they've discovered.

We hope to see you there.

[YOUR NAME] and the Grade [X] Nourish Class

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

LOOK-FOR	WHAT STRONG WORK LOOKS LIKE
Clear story	Visitors can follow the station's story in 60 seconds. One main idea, supported by 3–5 specific pieces of evidence.
Accurate use of vocabulary	Unit terms (for example, food system, trade-off, biodiversity, conventional vs. organic) used correctly in captions and spoken explanations.
Communication	Students introduce their station, walk visitors through stops, and respond thoughtfully to questions.
Engagement with peers	Student visits at least 3 other stations and leaves specific, thoughtful Audience Response Cards.
Reflection depth	Student Reflection Page shows insight beyond "it was fun": names something specific they learned about themselves or their community.

DAY-OF CHECKLIST

- [ ] Tri-fold or poster boards are laid out at stations the night before or during the morning.
- [ ] Audience Response Cards printed, cut, and stacked at the entrance.
- [ ] Envelopes at each station, labeled with the station name.
- [ ] *Be the Change* cued up (Day 1) and *Nourish Means…* cued up (Expo close).
- [ ] Optional: real food samples laid out near the entrance.
- [ ] If families are visiting: name tags, water, and a sign-in sheet.
- [ ] Reflection Pages stacked at the exit; every student gets one as they leave.