

Title: Local Food Economy & Food Access Simulation

Adapted from a lesson plan on <https://thefoodproject.org/curriculum/food-system/>

Participants: This simulation can be done with as few as 10-12 participants if you have extra helpers to serve as shopkeepers and the banker. This simulation can be done with students as young as middle school or with adults.

Materials:

- Signs and tables for 4 stores
- Play money. For 30 participants, you will need at least 30 ten-dollar bills, 30 five-dollar bills, and 120 one-dollar bills. Additional one-dollar bills may be needed to make change.
- Price lists for each store
- Pictures of all items for sale in the stores
- Situation cards
- Poster for each store explaining where their money goes
- Additional paper and markers for making adjustments during the simulation, if needed.

Preparation:

- Pictures of the food items should be printed and cut apart. Lamination is helpful if materials are reused.
- Signs and information sheets printed for each store.
- Review and adapt the situation cards as needed for the planned group. Possible adaptations are listed after the procedure section.
- Review and adapt discussion questions depending on the needs of the group.
- Set up the tables and set out appropriate products, play money, and information at each station. Put up the store name signs.

Basic Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity and set some ground rules. The topics discussed could hit close to home for some participants. This is particularly important for teenage audiences to understand these could be real situations that their peers experience and should not be made light of. Examples might be that it is okay to ask questions and discuss the decisions, but we don't call people names for making that decision.
2. Assign people to serve as shopkeepers and the banker. (You can also serve as the banker if you prefer.) Provide a brief orientation to the shopkeepers and allow them to look over their materials. Prompt them to start thinking about a sales pitch to make to the customers. Shopkeepers can decide what information to display.
 - a. They may want to let shoppers know where their items were grown or made or other qualities. They can stress convenience, quality, or price as appropriate. The purpose is to let shoppers know what is available, get them thinking about reasons to choose things, and to simulate the hype we experience in food advertising.

- b. Depending on the time available and the age of the participants, you may want to meet with the shopkeepers separately to explain more about the pricing and details and give them more time to prepare a sales pitch.
 - c. Alternatively, with younger participants, you may want to prepare sample pitches for each shop.
 3. Introduce the shopping task.
 - a. Tell the players that they are preparing a spaghetti dinner for their family tonight and will need to purchase the ingredients to make it – pasta and sauce.
 - b. They can either buy pre-made spaghetti sauce or make it themselves from tomatoes, peppers, and onions.
 - c. The shopkeepers each have different items to offer that the shoppers may wish to buy. Shoppers should listen carefully as the merchants describe the items they have for sale and consider factors such as price, quality, health, convenience, economic impacts, and environmental impacts as they make their purchases.
 - d. Each shopper will also be provided with a “situation” card that they will need to consider (and sometimes follow the instructions) before they make their purchases.
 - e. Shoppers and shopkeepers can be creative with how they choose to address any challenges they face.
 4. Pass out the situation cards and give everyone time to pay or collect money through the banker if needed. (Situation cards and adaptations are found in Appendix A.)
 5. Give each shopkeeper 1 minute to pitch their products.
 6. Give players 10 minutes to shop. If the group is small, you may not need 10 minutes to complete the shopping.
 7. At the end of 10 minutes, ask players to take a seat with their purchases. Ask each shopkeeper to count their money and be prepared to announce their sales after the discussion.
 8. Discuss the shopping results as a group. If the group is large, grouping participants with the same situation card may be helpful.
 - a. Have participants share about their situation card, describe what they bought, how their situation card affected their decisions, and what factors were important to them in making their decisions.
 - b. Was everyone able to purchase what they wanted to?
 - c. How does this situation make them feel as a consumer?
 - d. Does the simulation seem realistic?
 9. Ask each shopkeeper to count their money and announce their gross sales. (Subtract the money they started with.)
 - a. Ask the shopkeepers what their experience was with selling to the group. Were they successful?
 - b. What strategies could they use to bring in more customers?
 10. Next, have all shoppers line up. Explain that it is payday, and the shopkeepers will pay their employees using the gross sales they collected. Explain that this represents the money that is returned by a business to the local community. Each shopper should pay back the percentage of gross sales listed on the “Where Does the Money Go” sheet and explain why to the group.

- a. Start with the supermarket, then the convenience store, then Suzy's, then Fredo's. Pay each person in line \$10 until the money is gone.
 - b. Discuss how difficult it can be for the local businesses to compete with the chain stores, so some people will have to be laid off and not get paid.
11. Give the shoppers 5-10 more minutes to shop. Do not use the situation cards this time.
12. Debrief the group again on what happened in round 2.
 - a. Did people make different purchases the second time?
 - b. What considerations are important now?
 - c. If they didn't have the limitations on their situation card, was it easier to shop or decide?
 - d. Did the discussion or results from Round 1 impact their decisions?
 - e. How did the unemployed people feel? Is there anyone that won't be able to eat tonight?
 - f. What are the advantages or disadvantages of buying locally and supporting local businesses?
 - g. What impact will it have on families' health if they continue to make the same food decisions?
 - h. What impact will it have on the local businesses if they continue to have the same results? The whole community?
13. Brainstorm a list of things that individuals and the community can do to support local businesses. What about the people that didn't have food to eat? What is our responsibility to them?

****Notes and Possible Adaptations****

- It is common, especially with a teen audience, for at least one person to decide to shoplift as part of the shopping activities. Sometimes it occurs during the second round of shopping when people have been unemployed. It may occur during the first round as well. Be prepared for how you want to address that situation as the facilitator and what discussion questions should be ready for that situation. If it occurs during the first round, you may want to have a plan for levying consequences like what might be incurred in real life.
- Depending on the group and their perspectives and life experiences, how this plays out could be very different, including what shopping decisions they make in the first round. Be prepared to adjust the discussion questions accordingly.
- **Situation Card Adjustments:**
 - Select either the Youth or Adult versions of the situation cards depending on your needs.
 - Situation cards #5 and #6 may need to be adjusted to the size of your space and the audience to have the desired impact.
 - In a small space, consider having them sit and wait to shop for a certain amount of time to mimic the time spent driving or walking.
 - Instead of walking laps in the room, participants could walk in the hall or otherwise outside the space, which mimics that they can't see what shopping is happening elsewhere.
 - In the basic lesson plan, the situation cards are NOT used for the second round of shopping. If you want to focus more on the local food aspect and encourage local food purchasing, that may work well. If you want to drive home the challenges of food access under these different scenarios, having them use their same situation cards again during the second round will show the challenges families face more clearly.
- **Other Adaptations:**
 - **Situation Card Debrief:** If the group is large, having everyone with the same situation card group together to debrief first and then share out may be beneficial.
 - **Community Problem Solving:** If time allows, after the second round of shopping, you could pose a new activity related to the problems caused by the situation cards and unemployment. Encourage a discussion about how to solve the problems. This could also be set up as a larger project for a class of students.
 - What are short-term solutions? (How do we feed hungry people right now?)
 - What are long-term solutions? (How do we ensure everyone has good jobs and nutritious food every day?)

Situation Cards – Youth Audience

<p>Situation #1:</p> <p>Your sister needs to borrow money so that she can have her asthma prescription refilled. Pay the bank \$2.00.</p>	<p>Situation #2:</p> <p>You stayed at school today until 6 p.m. You promised your family that you would have dinner ready by 6:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Situation #3</p> <p>You baby-sat for your neighbor's twin two-year-olds this afternoon. You earn \$5.00 (collect from the bank), but you're exhausted.</p>	<p>Situation #4</p> <p>Your father has recently been diagnosed with heart disease. You want to make him a very healthy spaghetti dinner.</p>

<p>Situation #5</p> <p>Your home is 10 miles from Fredo’s Farm Stand and 15 miles from Suzy’s Spaghetti Shop. If you choose to visit these stores, pay \$1 to the bank in gas and walk 1 lap around the room before you begin shopping. Unfortunately, you are 40 miles from the nearest Supermarket. If you choose to visit the Supermarket, pay the bank for \$3 in gas and walk 3 laps around the room before you begin shopping.</p>	<p>Situation #6</p> <p>Your parent has the only family vehicle with them at work. You must walk to buy groceries to prepare dinner for your family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To shop at the convenience store, walk 2 laps around the room before shopping. • To shop at Fredo’s Farm Stand, walk 5 laps around the room before shopping. • To shop at the supermarket, walk 6 laps around the room before shopping. • To shop at Suzy’s spaghetti shop, walk 10 laps around the room before
<p>Situation #7</p> <p>You have homemade tomato sauce at home from your garden this summer.</p>	<p>Situation #8</p> <p>You haven’t learned to cook beyond running the microwave and the toaster. Your mom texted you that she wouldn’t be home from work until late, asking you to shop and prepare dinner for your family.</p>

Situation Cards – Adult Audience

<p>Situation #1:</p> <p>You need to have your son's asthma prescription refilled. Pay the bank \$2.00.</p>	<p>Situation #2:</p> <p>You stayed at work today until 6 p.m. You promised your family that you would have dinner ready by 6:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Situation #3</p> <p>You were able to work extra hours today. You earn \$5.00 (collect from the bank), but you're exhausted.</p>	<p>Situation #4</p> <p>Your spouse has recently been diagnosed with heart disease. You want to make them a very healthy spaghetti dinner.</p>

<p>Situation #5</p> <p>Your home is 10 miles from Fredo's Farm Stand and 15 miles from Suzy's Spaghetti Shop. If you choose to visit these stores, pay \$1 to the bank in gas and walk 1 lap around the room before you begin shopping. Unfortunately, you are 40 miles from the nearest Supermarket. If you choose to visit the Supermarket, pay the bank for \$3 in gas and walk 3 laps around the room before you begin shopping.</p>	<p>Situation #6</p> <p>Your spouse has the only family vehicle with them at work. You must walk to buy groceries to prepare dinner for your family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To shop at the convenience store, walk 2 laps around the room before shopping.• To shop at Fredo's Farm Stand, walk 5 laps around the room before shopping.• To shop at the supermarket, walk 6 laps around the room before shopping.• To shop at Suzy's spaghetti shop, walk 10 laps around the room before
<p>Situation #7</p> <p>You have homemade tomato sauce at home from your garden this summer.</p>	<p>Situation #8</p> <p>You haven't learned to cook beyond running the microwave and the toaster. Your spouse texted that they wouldn't be home from work until late, asking you to shop and prepare dinner for your family.</p>

Convenience Store

Supermarket

**Suzy's
Spaghetti
Shop**

Fredo's

Farm Stand

Where does the Money go?

Convenience Store

(Pay back 25%)

Pre-processed, packaged food made in
Georgia (-75%)

Hired employees locally (+25%)

Where does the Money go?

Supermarket

(Pay back 25%)

Bought produce from Florida (-25%)

Spaghetti sauce made in Italy (-25%)

Pasta made in Tacoma, WA (-25%)

Hired employees locally (+25%)

Where does the Money go?

Suzy's Spaghetti Shop

(Pay back 75%)

Pasta was made locally (+25%)

Spaghetti sauce was made locally (+25%)

Ingredients organically grown in CA (-25%)

Hired employees locally (+25%)

Where does the Money go?

Fredo's Farm Stand

(Pay back 100%)

Produce organically grown locally (+75%)

Hired employees locally (+25%)

Supermarket Price List

Spaghetti O's - \$1.00 per can (1 serving/can)

Frozen Spaghetti Skillet Meal - \$9.00 (serves 4)

Sauce - \$4.00

Pasta - \$2.00

Tomatoes - \$1.00

Onions - \$1.00

Peppers - \$1.00

Suzy's Spaghetti Shop Price List

Sauce - \$6.00

Pasta - \$3.00

Fredo's Farm Stand Price List

Tomatoes - \$2.00

Onions - \$2.00

Peppers - \$2.00

Convenience Store Price List

Spaghetti O's - \$3.00 per can
(1 serving per can)

Frozen Spaghetti Skillet Meal -
\$11.00
(serves 4)







































