

An International Menu

Objective

Students will use dictionaries to research etymologies and explore the diverse origins of common foods we eat.

Background

English is the language spoken by most of the people in the United States, even though our country is made up of people whose ancestors spoke many different languages. The native people who lived on this continent before Europeans came to settle it spoke many different languages also. The first Europeans to settle on the East Coast spoke English, Dutch and German. Those who settled on the West Coast spoke Spanish. French-speaking traders traveled all through the land, following the waterways. As more land was opened for settlement, English-speaking people found their neighbors were people who spoke Italian, Hungarian, Swedish, Chinese and many other languages.

Of the 1,000 major food crops harvested each year in North America, only Jerusalem artichokes, sunflowers, pecans, blueberries and cranberries are native. Each group of people who came to our shores brought their own foods. The Dutch brought cookies, waffles and coleslaw; the English brought biscuits and cheese. But they also found many new foods in the Americas for which they had no names. For some of the new foods they borrowed names from familiar European foods to which the new foods were similar. The English word “corn” is the name for all kinds of cereal grains—oats, barley, wheat, etc. Even today, corn in British English has a different meaning than it does in American English. All but a few varieties of beans originated in the New World, but English settlers gave them English names, after the varieties they knew in the Old World. Peanuts, which are native to South America, were given their name because they are related to peas but taste like nuts.

The many varieties of chili peppers Columbus found in the New World have no relation to the black pepper, which grows in the Far East. But since pepper was what he was looking for when he set out on his voyage that was the name given to the spicy fruits he took back with him.

Some of the new foods were given names based on their appearance. The pale pink blossom of the cranberry resembles a crane, so settlers named it “cranberry.”

For many of the new foods, European settlers simply used the names the native people had already given them. Squash comes from the Massachuset word “*akootasquash*.” Massachuset was the language spoken by the people living in the area we now know as Massachusetts at the time the English began settling there. Tomatoes are native to an area once occupied by the Nahuatl people in what we now know as Mexico. The word “tomato” comes from the Nahuatl word “*tomatl*.”

The foods Americans eat are a conglomeration of the foods of many

Oklahoma Academic Standards

GRADE 3

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;
W.1,2. Vocabulary: R.1,2,3,5; W.1

GRADE 4

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;
W.1,2. Speaking and Listening:
R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Vocabulary:
R.1,2,3,5; W.1
Social Studies: 1.2D; 2.4,6

GRADE 5

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;
W.1,2. Speaking and Listening:
R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Vocabulary:
R.1,2,3,5; W.1
Social Studies: 1.5C

Materials

dictionaries

world map

Vocabulary

etymology—the origin and historical development of a word as shown by determining its basic elements, earliest known use and changes in form and meaning, tracing its transmission from one language to another, and identifying its cognates in other languages

lands. Many of our favorite foods have French names—soup, hash (from the French “*hasher*,” to chop), casserole, mayonnaise—and Italian names—macaroni, broccoli, cantaloupe, bologna, pizza, and spaghetti. The hamburger, probably the most American of all American foods, is named for a place in Germany. Even ketchup, our favorite condiment, takes its name from a Chinese word for sauce, “*ketsiap*.” *Ketsiap* is a pickled fish sauce, which was adapted from the Chinese by the Malay people and served to English sailors. Americans added the tomatoes.

English Language Arts

1. Divide students into groups of three or four, and provide one or two dictionaries for each group.
 - Students will name foods they know originated in foreign countries and name the country where they think the food originated. List the foods and countries on the chalkboard.
 - Students will look up one or two of the foods on the list in the dictionary.
 - Explain the meaning of the word “etymology,” and show students how to find the etymology of a word at the beginning or end of the dictionary entry.
 - Direct students to the front of the dictionary where abbreviations used in the etymologies are listed. Students will read the abbreviations for you to write on the chalkboard.
2. Read and discuss background material.
 - Students will brainstorm to name other ways besides foods that foreign words enter the English language (place names, new technology, fashion, etc.) List examples on the chalkboard.
3. Hand out student worksheets, and discuss the instructions. Students may take the worksheets home and complete them independently or work in groups, using the dictionaries available in the classroom. NOTE: The answers provided are from *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd College Edition. Answers may vary, depending on dictionaries used.

Social Studies

1. Students will list their favorite foods, look up their origins in the dictionary and locate the country of origin on a world map.
2. Students will bring food from home representing different ethnic groups for a tasting party. Students may also research and dress in the costume of the country from which their ethnic dishes originated.
3. If you have an Asian food store in your area, take your class on a field trip to visit it. Arrange for someone from the store to talk to students about how the different foods are used.

Extra Reading

Albyn, Carole Lisa, *The Multicultural Cookbook for Students*, Oryx, 1993.

Bowen, Gary, *Stranded at Plimoth Plantation*, 1626, Harper Collins, 1994.

Forsyth, Adrian, *How Monkeys Make Chocolate: Foods and Medicines From the Rainforest*, Owl, 1995.

Name _____

An International Menu

Use a dictionary to match the food words with the languages in the center column from which they were taken. Write the correct language in the space provided. NOTE: The answers provided are from *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd College Edition. Answers may vary, depending on dictionaries used.

avocado _____
bagel _____
biscuit _____
bologna _____
broccoli _____
cantaloupe _____
casserole _____
chocolate _____
cookie _____
corn _____
cranberry _____
enchilada _____
hamburger _____
hash _____
ketchup _____
kiwi _____
macaroni _____
mayonnaise _____
noodle _____

African
Twi
Asian
Chinese
Japanese
Persian
Turkish
Australian
Maori
European
Dutch
English
French
German
Greek
Hungarian
Italian
Spanish
Swedish
Yiddish
North American
Algonquin
Massachuset
South American
Aztec
Nahuatl

okra _____
orange _____
pecan _____
paprika _____
pita _____
pizza _____
pretzel _____
quiche _____
sauerkraut _____
sherbet _____
shish kebab _____
smorgasbord _____
soup _____
squash _____
teriyaki _____
tortilla _____
tomato _____
vanilla _____
waffle _____
won ton _____

Look up the words at left in the dictionary to find clues for answering these questions.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| avocado | 1. The name we use for this Native American food means barley, oats, wheat or any kind of cereal grain in England. _____ |
| burrito | 2. This Native American food is also called an "alligator pear." _____ |
| Melba toast | 3. This Native American holiday dish was named for a country in Asia. Many things of exotic origin were given the same name in 16th Century Europe. _____ |
| strudel | 4. The name for this delicious pastry means "whirlpool" in German. _____ |
| turkey | 5. This low-fat snack is named for an Australian singer. _____ |
| corn | 6. The name for this food means "little donkey" in Spanish. _____ |

Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom is a program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Name _____

An International Menu (answers)

Use a dictionary to match the food words with the languages in the center column from which they were taken. Write the correct language in the space provided. NOTE: The answers provided are from *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd College Edition. Answers may vary, depending on dictionaries used.

avocado Nahuatl

bagel Yiddish

biscuit English

bologna Italian

broccoli Italian

cantaloupe Italian

casserole French

chocolate Aztec

cookie Dutch

corn English

cranberry German

enchilada Nahuatl

hamburger German

hash French

ketchup Chinese

kiwi Maori

macaroni Italian

mayonnaise French

noodle German

African

Twi

Asian

Chinese

Japanese

Persian

Turkish

Australian

Maori

European

Dutch

English

French

German

Greek

Hungarian

Italian

Spanish

Swedish

Yiddish

North American

Algonquin

Massachuset

South American

Aztec

Nahuatl

okra Twi

orange Persian

pecan Algonquin

paprika Hungarian

pita Greek

pizza Italian

pretzel German

quiche French

sauerkraut German

sherbet Turkish

shish kebab Turkish

smorgasbord Swedish

soup French

squash Massachuset

teriyaki Japanese

tortilla Spanish

tomato Nahuatl

vanilla Spanish

waffle Dutch

won ton Chinese

Look up the words at left in the dictionary to find clues for answering these questions.

avocado

1. **The name we use for this Native American food means barley, oats, wheat or any kind of cereal grain in England.** corn

burrito

2. **This Native American food is also called an “alligator pear.”** avocado

Melba toast

3. **This Native American holiday dish was named for a country in Asia. Many things of exotic origin were given the same name in 16th Century Europe.** turkey

strudel

4. **The name for this delicious pastry means “whirlpool” in German.** strudel

turkey

5. **This low-fat snack is named for an Australian singer.** Melba toast

corn

6. **The name for this food means “little donkey” in Spanish.** burrito

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