

What are Food Miles?

Non-fiction

Content domain focus:

2b retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction

2d make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text

2f identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

Text summary

The passage is taken from the children's newspaper *First News*. It forms part of a supplement looking at different aspects of food and farming.

Unit summary

The unit offers a significant challenge to the children in terms of its length and the level of questioning. It anticipates the demands that will be made in Year 6 and provides an indication of the progress the children have made since the beginning of Year 5.

The questions focus largely on information retrieval, but at quite a sophisticated level. The children are also asked to stand back from the passage and assess both the intentions of the author and the extent to which she is successful.



Teaching prompts

- You may wish to introduce the concept of food miles by using a basket of everyday foods that have travelled some distance.
- Identify the country of origin, find it on a map and ask the children to work out how far that food will have travelled to arrive at your local shop (assuming it has travelled direct, which the article points out is seldom the case).
- Ask the children if they have heard the term *food miles*. Explain that you will talk about it with them after they have read the passage and answered the questions.

Revisiting the text

- Ask the children if they were persuaded by the article. Would they or their parents be prepared to change their shopping habits or grow their own to reduce food miles?
- Look at each of the questions to ensure all children have a consistent understanding of the points made in the passage.
- Invite the children to do some research at home, and report back on parents' awareness of, and interest in, the arguments around food miles.
- Set up a debate on responsible shopping, with the children representing the views of different interest groups, such as supermarket owners, UK farmers, market stallholders, overseas producers, shoppers, logistics companies. Agree on the key points each would make, and argue the case in front of an audience.

 **Answers**

1. The distance that food has to travel to get to our plates from where it is grown. [2b]
2. Because of the number of journeys food has to make before it gets to our plate. [2b]
- 3.

Steps	People
1	farmer
2	processor
3	distributor
4	retailer
5	shopper

4. a) Sometimes it is better for the environment to grow the food in a warm climate. Buying food from poorer countries can help develop their economy. [2b]
 b) It might not be possible to grow certain foods in our own country at the time of year that we want it./It gives us greater choice of foods to eat. [2d]
5. Responsible shoppers think about how far food has had to travel before they buy it. Ordinary shoppers simply buy what they want when they want it. [2b]
6. a) fossil fuels, like petrol and diesel. [2b]
 b) These give off harmful gases like carbon dioxide which contribute to global warming. [2b]
7. About 25% [2b]
- 8.

	What can we do to help?
1	Eat fruit and vegetables that do not use packaging.
2	Shop at farmers' markets, to buy local seasonal produce.
3	Pick your own from local farms or garden centres.
4	Grow your own fruit and vegetables. [2b]

9. The children should only select one purpose, and argue the case for their choice. Give credit for a reasonable explanation. "Instruct" would not be an appropriate choice. Reasons for other choices could include the following.
 Inform – to let us know how many miles food travels to reach our plate.
 Explain – to describe the impact on the environment of food miles.
 Persuade – to make us think more about choosing food that is locally grown. [2f]
10. She says she is going to "take a closer look" at where our "everyday groceries" are grown. She is only partially successful in this, as few examples are given (tomatoes, bananas and prawns). She focuses more on why we should think more carefully about where we buy and grow our fruit and vegetables. [2f]



Assessment

This is a substantial passage and will present a challenge to some Year 5 readers. It will provide a useful measure of the children's resilience and competence as independent readers of information texts.

The majority of questions ask for information retrieval, but the nature of the text and the questions make this more challenging than simply locating and copying the answers. The questions guide the children to the appropriate section to help them locate the relevant information.

The final two questions require the children to evaluate the text. Bear in mind the level of challenge when marking, and reward children who make a constructive attempt to answer the question.

The children will be well on their way to being secure in their learning at this stage if they can navigate the passage, retrieve the necessary information and express a view in answer to questions 9 and 10.

Next steps

In the light of the children's answers to questions 9 and 10, you may need to revisit the concepts of purpose and audience, and increase opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of writers' attempts to write for a specific purpose and a particular audience.

In the process, the children can become more confident and more adept at expressing an opinion and supporting it with evidence. Ensure answers are modelled so the children can see how such questions should be tackled in future.