

SHOULD WE EAT MORE BUGS?

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF LEARNERS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA PRIOR TO THE LESSON, ACTIVITY TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the Thinkalong module. Learners can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

THE CASE FOR EATING BUGS

Gross Science | June 20, 2017 | Video
3:59 minutes

Gross Science's Anna Rothschild cooks a five-course meal featuring edible insects while discussing the pros and cons of eating bugs.

- A 2013 UN report states that insects are included in the traditional diets of at least 2 billion people. But most westerners in the northern latitudes don't eat bugs and find it to be, well, pretty gross.
- The divide between those who eat bugs and those who don't might be for a few reasons, like accessibility, harvestability, and sustainability. Agricultural economics may have made eating insects less desirable as more, larger types of animal proteins are more affordable and widely available.
- Rothschild says that disgust toward eating bugs is mostly cultural. She points out that lobsters and scorpions look very similar, but have different connotations when they're on your plate.
- The video points out that insects take much less water, land, and resources to raise than a cow, and the feed used to raise bugs are more sustainable than cattle or poultry feed. Raising insects for food is also much more sustainable, cutting down on greenhouse gases from both the livestock and transporting them.

COMPANIES FACE AN UPHILL BATTLE TRYING TO GET AMERICANS TO EAT BUGS

Morning Edition | December 24, 2019 | Audio
3:47 minutes

A new crop of young entrepreneurs are looking to capitalize on the latest food trend: eating bugs. The protein source is showing up on shelves at grocery chains.

- Reporter Darius Rafieyan heads to a holiday market where a vendor was selling chipotle-mango flavored roasted crickets and demonstrated how difficult it is to get skeptical Americans to even try eating insects.
- Laura D'Asaro, owner of a successful insect-based snack company, says it's hard to get people to try them at first, but their chips, which are made with cricket flour, hide the bugs behind classic snack food. Chirps are sold at more than 1500 stores nationwide.
- James Rolin, a cricket farmer, feels that his sustainable, healthy livestock aren't getting the same support from the federal government as other farming industries. Rolin says the lack of support keeps him from getting critical aid like insurance and credit.
- Some legislators say that they hope people aren't forced to eat crickets, and say that taxpayers should be paying for it.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help learners to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

YOUR ANCESTORS PROBABLY ATE INSECTS. SO WHAT'S BUGGING YOU?

NPR | July 16, 2018 | Article

1105 words

The Salt interviews Julie Lesnik, an assistant professor of anthropology, about the history, culture, and science of eating insects.

- In Southern Mexico, chapulines - grasshopper - tacos are a local delicacy. Lesnik says that Mexico consumes more species of insect than any other country.
- Lesnik says there's evidence of human ancestors eating bugs about 1.7 million years ago, including tools used to collect insects. She says most people stopped eating bugs because of environmental availability, especially in Northern America and Europe, where edible insects are harder to find than closer to the equator.
- Western culture drives the world economy, which affects traditions in countries that eat insects as a nutritious part of their diets. In addition, state regulations in the U.S. vary, which makes it harder for grocery stores to put insects on their shelves.
- Lesnik says that she likes the idea of adding insects to our diet as a way to add more variety and security to our food supply chain.

KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your learners and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Perception
- Regulation
- Colonialism

CONTEMPLATE

Learners will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help learners answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form evidence-based responses to the debate question.

Thinkalong is designed to help learners engage with real issues that are relevant to their lives. [Structured discussions](#) allow learners to practice their critical thinking skills through evidence-based debate with their peers. Discussions are designed to take about 30 minutes. Educators are encouraged to modify aspects that work best for their learners.

To encourage civil discourse, please review the [Code of Conduct](#) with your learners.

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