

# SHOULD EVERYONE EAT A PLANT-BASED DIET?

*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.

### **BURGER BRAWL: PLANT PROTEIN VS MEAT**

Serving Up Science | April 20, 2020 | Video  
10:39 minutes

Sheril Kirshenbaum puts plant-based burgers to the (taste) test with a panel of protein-loving athletes and talks about the science of plant-based foods and beef-free burgers.

- By 2050, scientists believe that the world population will be around 9 billion people, which means producing enough food to feed them while also battling the effects of climate change like drought, natural disasters, and higher temperatures.
- Scientists know that meat production is responsible for 30% of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, making it the second largest producer of emissions after the energy industry.
- Americans consume about 214 pounds of meat per person per year.
- Both a 4 oz beef burger and plant-based burger contain 19 grams of protein. The Impossible burger uses heme, an iron molecule from genetically modified yeast, to make the burger taste “meaty.”
- The plant-based burger has slightly less fat and less calories than a beef burger.

### **LOOK OUT, BEEF. PLANT-BASED PATTIES ARE VYING TO WIN OVER MEAT LOVERS**

Marketplace | February 12, 2019 | Audio  
4:24 minutes

While two brands of plant-based burgers battle for the market, many restaurants and stores look to incorporate more plant-based foods into their menus.

- Toasted started serving the Impossible burger in 2017, and it has become popular with meat eaters watching their cholesterol and weight.
- Both Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are marketing their products to meat eaters. Chuck Muth of Beyond Meat says meat eaters are a larger target audience, and that over one-third of consumers are “meat reducers.”
- The Plant Based Foods Association projects U.S. sales of plant-based proteins will reach \$5 billion by next year — nine times more than in 2012, with health and environmentally conscious 20 and 30-somethings driving growth.
- Dietician Julieanna Hever says that while plant-based burgers might be more environmentally conscious, they still contain the compounds in meat that we are trying to avoid if we’re being health conscious.

## THIS DIET IS BETTER FOR THE PLANET. BUT IS IT BETTER FOR YOU, TOO?

NPR's The Salt | January 27, 2019 | Article

1189 words

A report from nutritionists at the EAT-Lancet Commission says we should limit our meat intake to less than 1 ounce of red meat per day, limit poultry and milk, and focus on eating more nuts, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.

- Agriculture is responsible for up to 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions, most of which comes from the production of red meat. About 1/3 of all grain produced in the world is used as animal feed, and according to the World Resources Institute, producing beef uses 20 times the land as producing beans.
- In response to the report, the Animal Agricultural Alliance concluded that meat and dairy provide “unmatched nutrition for healthy bodies, brains, and bones.” Some promoters of omnivorous diets, like Paleo and keto, share anecdotes of followers losing weight and gaining energy from meat-centric diets.
- Walter Willet, lead author of the EAT-Lancet report, says their recommendations are in line with one of the healthiest diets in the world – the traditional Mediterranean diet. The report also states that if people around the world shifted to their recommendations, it could prevent an estimated 11 million premature deaths per year.

### 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.

- Environmentally conscious
- Meat reducers
- Agriculture

### 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.

*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.*