

# SHOULD FOOD-RELATED BUSINESSES BE RESPONSIBLE FOR REDUCING FOOD WASTE?

*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.

### HOW AMERICANS CAN CHANGE THEIR MINDSET ABOUT WASTING FOOD

PBS NewsHour | November 8, 2019 | Video [\[Transcript\]](#)  
6:40 minutes

Consumer culture, including shopping, cooking, and household disposal, accounts for the largest amount of food waste in the U.S.

- Of the food wasted each year, grocery stores contribute 16% and restaurants contribute 18%, while individual households contribute 43%.
- Celebrity chefs are banding together to teach Americans how to waste less in the kitchen through better food storage and waste-free recipes.
- Some countries are launching nationwide campaigns to change consumer attitudes, but Americans still tend to accept the idea of throwing away food.
- While it is difficult for government policies to change culture, several initiatives have been successful, so reducing food waste may need to become a priority for the federal government.

### TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE, FDA URGES 'BEST IF USED BY' DATE LABELS

Source | Month XX, XXXX | Audio [\[Transcript\]](#)  
3:12 minutes

The Food and Drug Administration has urged the food industry to voluntarily standardize food labeling in order to reduce waste.

- Because consumers often confused quality with safety when they see 'sell by' or 'use before' labels on packaged food, the phrase 'best if used by' seems to send the clearest message.
- Confusion over competing labels accounts for 20% of consumer food waste, or about \$161 billion worth of food.
- There is no federal requirement to label food other than infant formula, which has a "use by" date. The "use by" label is also recommended for perishable products like meat, poultry, and eggs.
- The federal government does not mandate food labels but is encouraging them, with the goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030.

## GROCERY STORES GET MOSTLY MEDIOCRE SCORES ON THEIR FOOD WASTE EFFORTS

NPR's The Salt | April 16, 2018 | Article

1011 words

The Center for Biological Diversity and The “Ugly” Fruit and Veg Campaign released a report on supermarket food waste.

- The report asked stores to provide information about how they are preventing good waste and where their discarded food goes. Stores with the highest grades engaged in donation, composting, and clear food labeling practices. They also found ways to sell more of the food they would have otherwise thrown away.
- One of the best things grocery stores can do is report on their food waste so entrepreneurs can research and innovate products and technologies that can help reduce waste.
- Even more important than finding alternatives to disposing food is to prevent food waste in the first place before it reaches stores or consumers.

### 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.

- Consumer
- Composting
- Perishable
- Hierarchy

### 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.*