

# My Life as a Fruit or Vegetable

## Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an opportunity to enhance writing skills while simultaneously learning about the production and distribution of California fresh produce.

## Time

### *Teacher Preparation*

Twenty minutes

### *Activity*

Four 50-minute sessions, plus time at home

## Materials

### *For the class:*

- Commodity reports from *California Crops: From the Farm to the Table*
- Fresh produce resources—books, magazines, articles, and encyclopedias
- Writing paper
- Pens or pencils
- Blank paper for illustrations
- Construction paper or tag board

### *For the teacher:*

- Butcher or chart paper

## Background Information

Cross-curricular writing is an integral part of every student's language arts education. When opportunities for writing in social studies, science, physical education and math increase, the development of the whole student is expanded. A study of the vast produce industry in California can occur as students write fictional stories about the production and distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables. The writing process will include brainstorming, writing rough drafts, peer editing, illustrating, and publishing final copies of student work.

## Procedure

1. **Introduction.** Explain to the students that the goal of this activity is for each student to write a fictional, creative story about life as a fruit or vegetable. Each story should outline the life of one fruit or vegetable from the farm to the table.
2. **Brainstorming.** As a class, generate a list of fruits and vegetables. Also, brainstorm a list of questions that students will need to answer as they write their story about the production and development of a specific fresh produce item. Questions that students answer in their stories may include:



- How am I planted?
- Where am I grown and why?
- How am I grown?
- What do I look like growing on the plant?
- How am I harvested?
- How am I transported?
- What good things (nutrients) can I offer someone?
- What potential problems could I cause, if any?
- How long do I last?
- How am I stored?
- What kinds of things do people eat me in/with?
- How am I prepared/cooked?

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## Content Standards

### Grade 4

#### Reading/Language Arts

Reading • 2.2, 2.5

Writing • 1.0, 1.1, 1.10, 2.1

### Grade 5

#### Reading/Language Arts

Reading • 2.1

Writing • 2.0, 2.1

### Grade 6

#### Reading/Language Arts

Writing • 1.0, 1.1, 2.1

3. **Selecting a theme.** Ask students to select one fruit or vegetable that will be the main character or theme of their stories. Each student should write about a different fruit or vegetable. Avoid duplicate produce items.
4. **Writing a rough draft.** Using resources compiled by you and your students, the commodity reports from *California Crops: From the Farm to the Table*, and the list of questions brainstormed by the class, have each student write a story about the life of the fruit or vegetable. The story should be written in the first person narrative, with the fruit or vegetable telling the story.

5. **Peer editing.** Have the students edit each other's work. Explain to students that this is an important step in the writing process and should be taken very seriously. (Students could be assessed on the editing as well as the writing part of the lesson.) Assign each student a classmate's rough draft.



Tell students to edit for the following:

- Proper punctuation
  - Content
  - Spelling
  - Proper sequence (from farm to table)
  - Accuracy of facts
6. **Rewriting a final version.** Have students write final versions of their stories. Ideally, the final versions will include illustrations of each phase of the fruit or vegetable's growth, development, and distribution. Encourage students to illustrate as much as possible. Advise students to include a title page whose back also includes a publisher, copyright, etc. Other requirements should be discussed before the final writing phase.
  7. **Sharing.** Have students share their stories with classmates, family, friends, and anyone else who might be interested.

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## Extensions

- Have students make a stick or bag puppet of their fruit or vegetable and share their story through the puppet.
- Place the published collection of stories on display in the school library or produce section of the local market.
- Have students make a farm-to-table flow chart for their fruit or vegetable.
- Have the students create unique hard covers for their books. Perhaps they could be in the shape of the fruit or vegetable, or a product made from the produce item.
- Have the students read their stories to primary students.

