




THE EDIBLE
SCHOOLYARD
PROJECT



ARTICLES AND RESOURCES FOR
FURTHER EXTENSION



Summary: This document contains a list of articles that explore additional issues and topics related to organic that are not explored elsewhere in this curriculum. These resources can serve as a starting point for building more extension lessons, or as a reading list for teachers seeking to expand their subject knowledge. For each resource listed, we have provided guiding questions that can serve as the starting point for a lesson. Here are a few instructional approaches for textual analysis that can be used with these resources:

- Assign the entire reading or [jigsaw](#) the reading so that students have smaller portions to read but still learn about the entire text.
- Pull out key ideas and short quotes for students to read and consider, then lead an open discussion in response to those quotes.
- Have students use a [THINK, PAIR, SHARE](#) format to process and discuss the reading.
- Read the article aloud and have students take notes as they listen. It might be helpful to stop frequently as you read to write down keywords, phrases, or ideas on chart paper. Take your time through the reading and ask your students their thoughts along the way.
- During the beginning of a garden class, read an excerpt and then pose a question that you want students to think and discuss as they work. While students are working in the garden, pose the question again to prompt informal discussion. Take the last ten minutes of class to gather student thoughts.
- Instruct students to find a quiet place to sit and encourage them to observe their surroundings before and after they read. This helps them engage with their surroundings in a different way and can also support their engagement with the text.



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- You may want to excerpt some of these articles, rather than assign the entire piece. Use your knowledge of your students' comfort with reading to decide.
- Many of these articles include controversial or challenging ideas and content. The purpose of including them is to prompt students to practice critical analysis and discussion. For example, the purpose of including a piece on the environmental impact of consuming meat is not to advocate or advance a meat-free diet, but rather to have students understand the complexity and consequences of consuming meat and reflect on their own practices.
- The opinions expressed in the articles listed below are for education purposes only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Edible Schoolyard Project.
- This resource was developed for Edible Schoolyard Project's *Understanding Organic* curriculum and is part of the appendices of the curriculum.

Article List by Topic

This table lists articles by topic. See below for short description, guiding questions, and full reference information for each article.

	Article Title	Topic(s)
1	‘Organic’ food labels create perception of healthier fare	How labeling impacts consumer conceptions of organic
2	Labor and Workers in the Food System	Labor issues in the food system
3	Can Hydroponic Farming Be Organic?	Organic certification and agro-technology
4	Your Diet is Cooking the Planet	Food waste, diet, and climate change
5	The Activists Working to Remake the Food System	Food justice and food access
6	The Bad News About the Organic Industry	Organic certification, organic regulations, and industrial farming
7	Do We Really Need Industrial Agriculture to Feed the World?	Industrial agriculture and food production
8	3 Big Myths about Modern Agriculture	Industrial agriculture and food production



ARTICLES AND RESOURCES FOR FURTHER EXTENSION

1. **'Organic' food labels create perception of healthier fare** [article]: This short summary of a Cornell study discusses the ways that organic foods are often perceived as healthier, lower calorie, and lower fat than non-organic foods.

Guiding Questions:

- Is organic misunderstood by consumers?
- Why do consumers think organic means fewer calories?
- What does this study illustrate about the power of labeling in general? Can you think of other examples of when and how this power comes into play?

Reference: 'Organic' food labels create perception of healthier fare. (2011, April 26th) *Cornell Chronicle*. Retrieved from <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2011/04/organic-food-label-imparts-health-halo-study-finds>

2. **Labor and Workers in the Food System** [article]: This detailed article summarizes historical labor abuses on farms and connects them to exploitative labor practices in today's food system. The article then invites readers to consider how they might support food system workers through conscious purchasing, volunteering, and donating.

Guiding Questions:

- What are some of the hazards that farmworkers face?
- What pressures might force a farmworker to continue working despite low wages, dangerous conditions, wage theft, and harassment?
- In organic and sustainable farming systems, how are workers treated?
- Why do you think many consumers and marketers prioritize environmental sustainability over fair labor practices?
- How can consumers support farm workers? What can you do within your circle of connections?

Reference: Labor and Workers in the Food System (n.d). *FoodPrint*. Retrieved from <https://foodprint.org/issues/labor-workers-in-the-food-system/>

3. **[Can Hydroponic Farming Be Organic?](#)** [article]: This article from *Modern Farmer* explores the debate over whether hydroponic (non-soil based) farming can be labelled as organic.

Guiding Questions:

- Can hydroponics be considered organic?
- What are the arguments for and against hydroponics being considered organic?
- Do you think the definition of organic should expand to include new sustainable technologies? Explain your answer.

Reference: Nosowitz, D. (2017, May 04). *Can Hydroponic Farming Be Organic? The Battle Over The Future Of Organic Is Getting Heated*. Modern Farmer. Retrieved from <https://modernfarmer.com/2017/05/is-hydro-organic-farming-organic/>

4. **[Your Diet is Cooking the Planet](#)** [article]: This article from *The Atlantic* describes how limiting food waste and reducing meat consumption are easy personal choices to combat climate change. It also examines how eating a climate-optimized diet doesn't always line up with other ethical considerations, like animal welfare.

Guiding Questions:

- How do diets and food choices impact the climate and climate change?
- Is organic food always the best option for the environment?
- How can consumers balance different ethical priorities when shopping for food?
- Of the ethical priorities discussed in this article, which one(s) is the most important to you? Why?

Reference: Lowrey, A. (2021, April 6th). *Your Diet is Cooking the Planet: But two simple changes can help*. The Atlantic. April 6th, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2021/04/rules-eating-fight-climate-change/618515/>

5. **[The Activists Working to Remake the Food System](#)** [article]: This piece from the *New York Times Style Magazine* highlights progressive leaders and activists who are working to build a more just food system, while also calling in the elitism and narrow scope of reforms sought by the traditional “food movement.”

Guiding Questions:

- What changes need to be made to the food system? How would you prioritize them?
- Who is included in the organic and sustainable food movement and who is excluded?

Reference: Mishan, L. (2021, Feb 19th). *The Activists Working to Remake the Food System* The New York Times Style Magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/19/t-magazine/food-security-activists.html>

6. [The Bad News About the Organic Industry](#) [article]: This article from *Modern Farmer* discusses the challenges and costs for small farmers to get organic certification. It also details frustrations with rules that permit large, industrialized agribusinesses to thrive within Organics. Finally, it summarizes alternative labels and their criteria including Fairtrade, Certified Humane, and American Grassfed among others.

Guiding Questions:

- Is industrialized organic farming true to the principles of organic?
- Are organic certification costs and processes prohibitive to small scale organic farmers?
- What alternative labels to organic exist, and what do they cover?

Reference: Barth, B. (2015, October 15th) *The Bad News About the Organic Industry*. Modern Farmer. Retrieved from <https://modernfarmer.com/2015/10/the-bad-news-about-organic-industry/>

7. [Do We Really Need Industrial Agriculture to Feed the World?](#) [video]: One common “critique” of organic agriculture is that it couldn’t produce enough food to feed the world. This 6-minute video from Anne Lappé & Food Mythbusters explores and counters that argument.

Guiding Questions:

- Is industrial agriculture needed to feed the growing population?
- What causes hunger?
- Is hunger a supply problem or a distribution issue?

Reference: Lappé, A. (2012, October 24th). *Do we really need industrial agriculture to feed the world?* Real Food Media Project. [video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uem2ceZMxYk>

8. [3 Big Myths about Modern Agriculture](#): This article from *Scientific American* debunks three commonly held beliefs about organic and sustainable agriculture. The author challenges the notion that large non-organic farms are necessary to feed the world.

Guiding Questions:

- Is industrial agriculture needed to feed the growing population?
- What kinds of farms produce most of the world’s food currently?
- According to the author, what is most important to building resilient agriculture systems?

References: Montgomery, R. D. (2017, April 5). 3 Big Myths about Modern Agriculture. *Scientific American*. Retrieved from <http://scientificamerican.com/article/3-big-myths-about-modern-agriculture1/>

Reference:

Jigsaw: Developing Community and Disseminating Knowledge. Facing History and Ourselves. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/jigsaw-developing-community-and-disseminating-knowledge>

Think, Pair, Share. Facing History and Ourselves. (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/think-pair-share>

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