

The Travelling Tomato

Age/Grade Range

- 8-13
- modifications available for ages 5-8

Group Size

- maximum: 30

Time

- Set-up: 5-10 minutes
- Activity: 15-20 minutes

Materials

- Two red tomato cut-outs (see resource sheet)
- One green tomato cut out (see resource sheet)
- Part 1 and 2 Role Cards (see resource sheet)

Activity Directions

1. Get the youth to sit in a long line or a couple of rows. Pass-out the first three role cards of 'Part One' to the three youth at the start of the line. Let them know this is the beginning of the tomato journey. Give the last three role cards to the three youth at the end of the line. Let them know this is the end of the tomato journey. All youth in the middle of the lines will be transporters.
2. The youth with the 'Mexican Farmer' role card gets the green tomato and reads their script.
3. Then the 'Mexican Farmer' will pass the tomato to the holder of card #2, the 'Boss.' The 'Boss' reads their script, and then they will pass the tomato to the holder of card #3, the 'Truck Driver.'
4. This 'Truck Driver' gets the tomato and reads their script, then begins passing the green tomato down the line. Make it known every time the tomato passes to each 'Transporter'; they must say that the tomato has travelled 100 kilometres more, adding as they go (i.e.100km, pass tomato, 200km, pass tomato, 300km etc.).
5. Keep passing the green tomato down the line until it reaches the 'Warehouse Owner.' This youth reads their script, and then the facilitator exchanges the green tomato with a red one. Then the 'Warehouse Owner' passes red tomato to 'Grocery Store Owner.'



NWT SCIENCE FOCUS

Topic

- Local Food Production

Objective

- Examine how our food travels great distances from the earth's ground to the retail store
- Explore the problems associated with importing food from far away
- Understand how our personal choices have a global and environmental impact



6. The 'Grocery Store Owner' reads their script and then passes it the "Consumer," who reads their script. Explain this is the end of the journey for this tomato.
7. Then ask two volunteers to come and sit in front of the other tomato line. Give out the Part Two Role Cards.
8. The 'Local Organic Farmer' begins with a red tomato. They read their script and then pass the tomato to the 'Consumer.'
9. The 'Consumer' reads their script. Explain this is the end of the journey for this tomato.

Questions/Points of Discussion

- If the students are not familiar with how far away Mexico is, show them on a large map
- Ask the class which of the two production systems is healthier for the environment?
- Ask the class if they've been to a local farmer's market?
- Explain that if they were to buy local organic produce, it would only travel shorter distances than the food in the grocery store and that there are fewer steps between the food producer and consumer.

Modifications for Ages 5-8

This activity is a quick, simple demonstration of how far food can travel before it reaches our community.

Part One: First, the facilitator can choose two youth: one to be a farmer from Mexico, and one to be a consumer in your community. The farmer will start with a green tomato, and begin passing it to a student beside them, who will continue passing the tomato until everyone has held it, and it reaches the consumer. At this point, the teacher trades the green tomato for a red one. Each time the tomato is passed, it represents 100km of travel.

Part Two: Repeat the exercise with two new students who act as a local farmer and a consumer. They are the only students who have to be involved in this round. The farmer begins with a red tomato, and with an explanation from the facilitator, they pass it to the local consumer.

