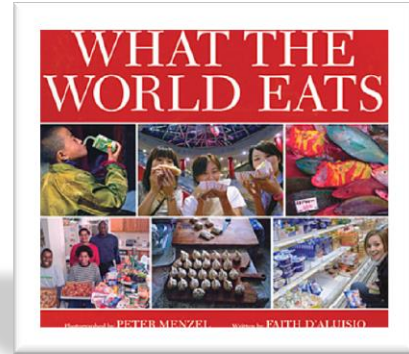


Title: What the World Eats

Authors: Faith D'Aluisio and Peter Menzel

Grade Level: 7th Grade



SUMMARY

What the World Eats is a journey through the delicious array of food enjoyed by families in countries around the world. It is an eye-opening look at what individual families eat on a regular basis in various nations. Each country featured includes family recipes, grocery lists with costs, and portraits of the families surrounded by a week's worth of groceries. Families will relate to the shared experiences of cooking and eating together and will have a chance to see the similarities and differences between cultures. This book is a great read for seventh graders independently to use the charts and graphs to build research skills as well as to learn about new foods and cultures. The multicultural aspects of this book will encourage readers to learn more about the cuisine and traditions of the cultures included. It also offers great opportunities to talk about social and economic differences.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WHILE READING

VOCABULARY

It's important to make sure that your child has an understanding of key words in the book. Talking about words while reading is a great way for your child to learn new words. In this book, you might talk about these words:

- statistical (pg. 11)
- humanitarian (pg. 26)
- population density (pg. 31)
- life expectancy (pg. 100)
- literacy (pg. 130)
- fertility (pg. 13)

You might use a question like:

In the book, what does the word fertility mean? How does the chart of page 13 help you understand the word?

KEY IDEAS and THEMES

In addition to words, it's important to talk about key ideas and themes and how they develop over the course of the book. Here are some examples to get you started:

- 1) The food we eat can say a lot about us. How do some of meals enjoyed by the families featured in the book reflect cultural aspects about their lives?
- 2) Why do you think the author includes so many countries? What do you think is the overall message she is trying to send her readers?



- 3) What are some of the biggest differences in the costs of the food purchased by the families featured in the book? How do these differences compare with what your family typically spends on their meals? Are there any clues in the book that might explain some of these differences?
- 4) Which countries appear to consume the most processed food? Which countries appear to consume more home grown or home-raised food? Identify if each country in the book is likely to import food from other countries or export food to other countries. For example, Americans might import apples from New Zealand.
- 5) What are some of the geographic features of the countries featured in the book? How might these features play a role in the food people eat there? For example, page 14 talks about how Australia's outback or tropical landscapes affect the food supply.
- 6) Compare the charts that appear on pages 54 and 55 listing the number of McDonald's restaurants and the overweight and obesity rates in various countries. What are some of the trends that you see? Does anything surprise you? Go back to the weekly grocery lists for some of the countries listed. Based on the information from the charts, what are some of the specific connections you can make between diet and obesity in each country you researched?
- 7) Hunger is a major issue in much of the world. Find examples in the book that show the impact hunger and poverty have on the lives of some of the families featured in the book. Can you draw any conclusions as to why these conditions continue to persist in certain parts of the world?
- 8) So many of the important moments in life are centered around food. What are some examples from the book that show how food and family go hand in hand?

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

1. *What the World Eats* includes family recipes throughout the book specific to the traditional culture and heritage. Choose a few of these recipes that appeal to you, particularly ones that might allow you and your family to expand your palate. Try preparing a few of these new meals to share together. Record differences you observe from the preparation and flavors of these new meals. Note the cost of the ingredients compared to the cost the family pays for their similar produce and ingredients in their own country.
2. In today's modern world, it is important to be informed on what types of food and ingredients we put into our bodies. 1 in 3 children in the United States are overweight or obese. Healthy eating and living means making informed choices. On page 152 of *What the World Eats*, further reading, films, and websites options are included to learn more about the products we eat and the dangers of processed food. Some good options listed include the book *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Scholsser, or the film documentary *Super-Size Me*. Using these or other resources listed on page 152, gather research to develop a healthy eating plan for one week for your family.