



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# Grade 8: Module 4: Unit 3: Overview



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**Unit 3: Position Paper: Which of Michael Pollan's Four Food Chains Would You Choose to Feed the United States?**

In this unit, students use their research and their position speech from Unit 2 to write a position paper to answer the question: Which of Michael Pollan's four food chains would you choose to feed the United States? The paper must include a claim to answer the question, two reasons for making that claim, and evidence to support

each of the reasons. There must also be a counterclaim and response. Students analyze a model position paper to guide them in the writing process and plan their essay one paragraph at a time. For the performance task at the end of the unit, students create a visual representation of their position paper.

**Guiding Questions and Big Ideas**

- **Which of Michael Pollan's four food chains would best feed the United States?**
- **What are the consequences of each of the food chains?**
- **Which stakeholders are affected by the consequences of each food chain?**
- *When taking a position on an issue, you need to research the consequences and stakeholders affected by each option.*
- *When putting forward an argument, you need to provide relevant and sufficient evidence to support your claims.*



<b>Mid-Unit 3 Assessment</b>	<b>Draft Position Paper: Which of Michael Pollan's four food chains would best feed the United States?</b> This assessment centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS W.8.1, W.8.1a, W.8.1b, and W.8.1e. Students draft a position paper to answer the question: Which of Michael Pollan's four food chain would you choose to feed the United States? Their position paper should contain a claim, two reasons for making that claim, and evidence supporting each of the reasons. It should also include a counterclaim and a response to that counterclaim. Students use their position speech from the End of Unit 2 Assessment as a basis for their position paper.
<b>End of Unit 3 Assessment</b>	<b>Final Position Paper: Which of Michael Pollan's four food chains would you choose to feed the United States?</b> This assessment centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS RI.8.1, W.8.1, W.8.1c, W.8.1d, and W.8.9. Students write a final draft of their position paper to answer the question: Which of Michael Pollan's four food chains would you choose to feed the United States?
<b>Final Performance Task</b>	<b>Visual Representation of Position Paper</b> This performance task gives students a chance to share their best reading, writing, and thinking about the question: "Which of Michael Pollan's food supply chains would best feed the United States?" Students will use a powerful excerpt of their position paper, visual components, and text features to create a poster that shows their claim as well as the evidence they used to support their claim. These posters will be displayed around the classroom, with students having the opportunity to do a Gallery Walk of one another's work. This task addresses NYSP12 ELA Standards RI.8.1, W.8.1, W.8.9, and W.8.9b.



### Content Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards as students read *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, an informational text about food sustainability. However, the module intentionally incorporates Social Studies practices and themes to support potential interdisciplinary connections to this compelling content. These intentional connections are described below.

**Big ideas and guiding questions are informed by the New York State Common Core K–8 Social Studies Framework:**

**Unifying Themes (pages 6–7)**

- Theme 4: Geography, Humans, and the Environment: The relationship between human populations and the physical world (people, places, and environments); impact of human activities on the environment; interactions between regions, locations, places, people, and environments.
- Theme 9: Science, Technology, and Innovation: Applications of science and innovations in transportation, communication, military technology, navigation, agriculture, and industrialization.

**Social Studies Practices: Geographic Reasoning, Grades 5–8**

- Descriptor 2: Describe the relationships between people and environments and the connections between people and places (page 58).
- Descriptor 3: Identify, analyze, and evaluate the relationship between the environment and human activities, how the physical environment is modified by human activities, and how human activities are also influenced by Earth's physical features and processes.
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**Social Studies Practices: Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence, Grades 5–8**

- Descriptor 1: Define and frame questions about events and the world in which we live and use evidence to answer these questions.
- Descriptor 2: Identify, describe, and evaluate evidence about events from diverse sources (including written documents, works of art, photographs, charts and graphs, artifacts, oral traditions, and other primary and secondary sources).
- Descriptor 4: Describe and analyze arguments of others.
- Descriptor 6: Recognize an argument and identify evidence that supports the argument; examine arguments related to a specific social studies topic from multiple perspectives; deconstruct arguments, recognizing the perspective of the argument and identifying evidence used to support that perspective.

### Central Texts

1. Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Young Readers Edition (New York: The Penguin Group, 2009), ISBN: 978-0-8037-3500-2.



**This unit is approximately 1 week or 6 sessions of instruction.**

Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 1</b>	Analyzing a Model Position Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.8.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can find the gist of the model position paper.</li> <li>I can determine the main ideas of a model position paper.</li> <li>I can analyze the structure of a model literary essay.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gist annotations on model position paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualities of a Strong Position Paper</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 2</b>	Planning Body Paragraphs of Position Paper and Beginning Mid-Unit 3 Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.8.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can organize my evidence for each body paragraph into a Quote Sandwich.</li> <li>I can use my Quote Sandwiches to draft the body paragraphs of my position paper.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quote Sandwich organizers for Body Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualities of a Strong Position Paper</li> <li>Correct Citations</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 3</b>	Mid-Unit Assessment: Draft of Position Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.8.1)</li> <li>I can introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. (W.8.1a)</li> <li>I can support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. (W.8.1b)</li> <li>I can provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. (W.8.1e)</li> <li>I can use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. (W.8.1c)</li> <li>I can establish and maintain a formal style. (W.8.1d)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can draft the introductory and concluding paragraphs of my position paper.</li> <li>I can use words, phrases, and clauses to show the relationship between the ideas in my position paper.</li> <li>I can maintain a formal style in my position paper.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Unit 3 Assessment: Draft Position Paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapting a Speech</li> <li>Qualities of a Strong Position Paper</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 4</b>	Introducing the Performance Task Prompt and Beginning a Visual Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.8.4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce a visual representation of my position paper.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance task: visual representations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective Visual Representation</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 5</b>	End of Unit Assessment: Final Position Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.8.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write the final draft of my position paper.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End of Unit 3 Assessment: Final Draft of Position Paper</li> </ul>	
<b>Lesson 6</b>	Final Performance Task: Sharing Visual Representations of Position Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.8.4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can share my visual representation of my position paper with my class.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance task: visual representations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gallery Walk protocol</li> </ul>



**Optional: Experts, Fieldwork, and Service**

**Experts:**

- Invite in local farmers to discuss their farming methods with students, as well as how the issues that Michael Pollan discusses affect their food production and their livelihoods.
- Invite in representatives from grocery stores, including organic and health food stores, to share with students how the issues that Michael Pollan discusses affect their stores and consumers.
- Invite in hunters who hunt to feed their families to share their perspective on hunting with students.

**Fieldwork:**

- Arrange for a visit to a local grocery store to look at the ingredients in different foods and where the produce comes from.
- Arrange for a visit to a food processing plant to look at what happens to food in a factory.
- Arrange for a visit to farms, for example a local sustainable farm and an industrial farm, to see how food is produced and to compare the different ways things are done.

**Optional: Extensions**

- Grow a class garden of basic vegetables and herbs and discuss the different ways to grow food—with or without fertilizers and chemicals. If you have the space and time, students could grow two gardens: one with and one without fertilizers and chemicals to compare how those things change how food grows.