

# NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



## Grade Level

6-8

## Subject

Science &  
Social Studies

## Lesson Title

What Exactly is Food  
Sovereignty?

**Activity Description:** The word *sovereignty* holds a deeper meaning for Native Nations but the question of what that truly looks like still remains. Even so, many tribes are returning to a focus on *food sovereignty* especially as crisis events continue to challenge survival. In this activity, students explore the definition of *food sovereignty* and learn what some tribes around the United States are doing to return to *food sovereignty*. This activity encourages young people to involve their families and community in creating awareness of food sovereignty.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- WiFi access (recommended)
- Print or digital version of [The 6 Food Sovereignty Principles](#)
- Print or digital version of [Tribal Sovereignty article from Since Time Immemorial Curriculum](#)
- Print or digital version of [The Importance of Food Sovereignty](#) from the National Indian Council on Aging
- YouTube vide of [Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project](#)

## STEPS

During this activity you will engage with several articles or videos to learn about food sovereignty which is a people's right to sustain themselves with quality and culturally appropriate food that they produce through healthy, eco-friendly, and cultural methods. Many indigenous peoples across the world already practice or are moving back to food sovereignty especially since dependence on manufactured or processed foods have created extreme health issues. As you learn more, think of ways that this could be used to impact your own community.

### Activity Steps:

1. First, understand more about tribal sovereignty by reading this [article from Since Time Immemorial Curriculum](#).
  - a. How has this article helped you understand tribal sovereignty? Do you feel that your tribe acts according to tribal sovereignty? Why or why not?
2. Now, read the article "[The 6 Food Sovereignty Principles](#)" from Grassroots International
  - a. How does food sovereignty keep Native nations connected to the land?
  - b. How is food sovereignty considered a right of a people?
3. Now that you better understand food sovereignty read this article "[The Importance of Food Sovereignty](#)" from the National Indian Council of Aging (NICOA) on why it is critical that tribes in the U.S. embrace food sovereignty
  - a. How is food sovereignty directly connected to the health and lifespans of a community?
4. Finally, watch this YouTube video on the [Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project \(optional\)](#)
  - a. What can you do at home to practice food sovereignty? Consider writing a letter to your tribal council or community government urging them to think about food sovereignty projects in your community.
5. To practice food sovereignty at home, consider growing your own food. You can start from home with potatoes that you probably have in your kitchen right now. Check the "Helpful Tips" section for more information.
6. Ask Permission: Many groups use hashtags (#) to open up social media conversations on sites like Facebook or Twitter. Search for #foodsovereignty and see the worldwide work and conversations taking place now.

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## HELPFUL TIPS

**Parents and caregivers:** Food sovereignty may be a new concept to some children or communities. It has become a very critical aspect of community change worldwide. Here are a few ways to involve yourself in this activity with your child:

- Ask your child to share what he or she has learned about food sovereignty. For more community examples, visit this [Tribal Food Sovereignty page](#) together to watch more examples of food sovereignty practiced in North America.
- Encourage your child to think of ways your family or community could begin to work toward food sovereignty such as planting your own food, building a community garden, or connecting with tribal agricultural programs. Consider using the same [#foodsovereignty](#) to join in the global conversation.
- To help your family work toward food sovereignty consider starting a garden. This [webpage from Kids Do Gardening "How to Grow Potatoes in Containers"](#) gives simple step by step instructions on growing potatoes using things that you probably have at home. Try doing this as a family to take pride in becoming food sovereign.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

**Families and educators:** For more food sovereignty resources that can be used in the community or classroom, visit these sites:

- Review this list of books, programs, and other resources from [Tribal College: Journal of American Indian Higher Ed](#). This list also includes websites and books about food sovereignty.
- For classroom lessons on food sovereignty access this [Food for Thought and Action curriculum](#) from Grassroots International.

### Activity Resources:

- "Tribal Sovereignty: Washington State's *Since Time Immemorial* Curriculum" <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/indianed/tribal-sovereignty/elementary/waelementary/waelementaryunit1/level1-materials/1onsovereigntyarticle.pdf>
- "The 6 Food Sovereignty Principles" from *Grassroots International* <http://grassrootsonline.org/sites/default/files/The-6-Food-Sovereignty-Principles.pdf>
- "The Importance of Food Sovereignty" from the *National Indian Council of Aging* <https://www.nicoa.org/the-importance-of-food-sovereignty/>
- "Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project" YouTube by *First Nations Development Institute* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDiSLxHoo5E>

### Additional Resources:

- "Tribal Food Sovereignty" by *Well for Culture* <https://www.wellforculture.com/tribal-food-sovereignty>
- "How to Grow Potatoes in Containers" *Kids Do Gardening* <https://www.kidsdogardening.com/how-to-grow-potatoes-in-containers/>
- "Food Sovereignty Resource Guide" by the *Tribal College: Journal of American Indian Higher Ed* <https://tribalcollegejournal.org/22-3-food-sovereignty-resource-guide/>
- "Food for Thought and Action" curriculum from *Grassroots International* <https://grassrootsonline.org/sites/default/files/Food-for-Thought-and-Action-Overview.pdf>