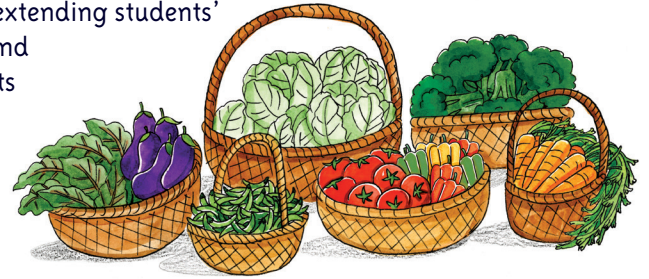


Readers respond in multiple ways including: making connections to themselves, their communities, and their literacy experiences; pursuing their curiosity through discussion, inquiry, and self-expression; and changing their attitudes and behaviors. This guide provides suggestions and resources for supporting and extending students' authentic reading responses. Select activities and resources that best meet the needs and interests of your students.



READ AND DISCUSS

Read *Michelle's Garden* aloud and discuss the book with students. What information or ideas stood out? What questions do they still have? Collect students' questions and ideas on chart paper or online platform like Flipgrid, and/or invite students to record their thinking in their notebooks. Where can students go to answer their questions or learn more? Generate a list of general resources students might use for inquiry such as websites, other books, school library databases, and people in your community. Students can add specific resources under these categories later. Students' questions and a list of accessible resources provide a foundation for deeper inquiry and focused discussion.

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

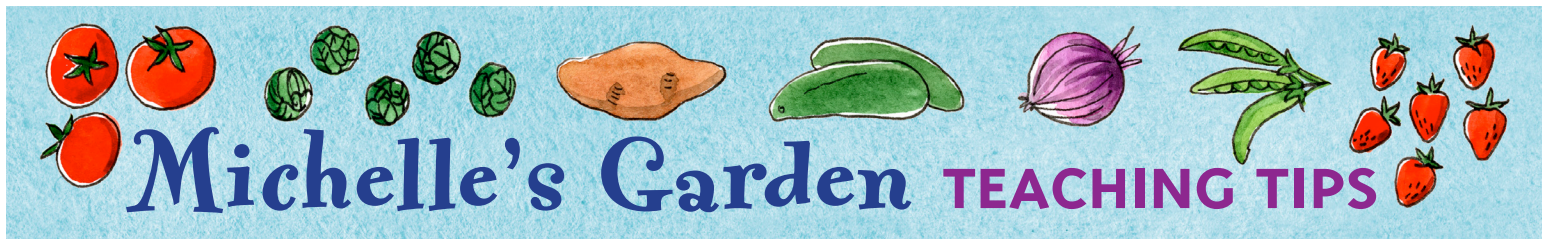
1. One way that First Lady Michelle Obama improved the nutritious food options for her family was to increase the fruits and vegetables they ate. Invite students to list their favorite fruits and vegetables (or any that interest them). Where is this food grown? What nutrition does it provide? How do people from various communities, such as different geographic regions or cultural backgrounds, prepare and eat it? Select three or four guiding questions like these for students to research and invite them to include interesting details of their own. Using their research, students can record short commercials or create advertisements promoting their fruit or vegetable to the school community.

2. Invite students to share family memories and traditions about food. Have they grown food with their families? Hunted or fished? How does food fit into their family traditions and experiences? How does food connect them with other family members? Share one or two food memories of your own. Invite students to brainstorm a few ideas in their notebooks, then select one food memory to write about in more detail. Students can develop and share this personal essay as time and needs allow. Model and set expectations for inclusivity and acceptance of all families and food experiences—recognizing that many young people can feel uncomfortable sharing opinions, preferences, or experiences that reveal differences. Encourage interest and respect for each other.

3. First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Let's Move Program to address the rise in childhood obesity and provide families with nutrition information and support. Explore the website with students and challenge them to try some suggestions for developing a healthier lifestyle with their families. How can making small changes in our behavior improve our health? Share resources with families and invite their suggestions. Emphasize health and not body shape or weight. Do not foster or condone comparison or competition between students. Let's Move: <https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

"There are countless reasons for young people to start a garden in their school, community, or home: to feel the power of growing their own food with their own hands; to witness the simple glory of a plant maturing from seed to flower; to work in harmony with the forces of nature as our forebears have done for centuries; to learn firsthand a wide range of basic academic skills and concepts in science, math, language arts, and social studies; to experience the satisfaction of working cooperatively with others to make the world more beautiful."
—*Digging Deeper*, 1998



4. Reread *Michelle's Garden: How the First Lady Planted Seeds of Change* with students and discuss the community issues that Mrs. Obama hoped the White House Kitchen Garden Initiative and Let's Move Program would address. How did she work with others to identify and solve these needs? How did she include young people in working toward solutions? What food and health issues do we have in our community? How can we work with others to address these needs?

5. Invite community members who work in food cultivation such as gardeners and farmers to talk with students about growing fruits and vegetables in your community. Contact your local cooperative extension service for gardening and landscaping information and resources in your area, including educational programs and connections with local experts. Contact local colleges and universities about any educational programming or outreach they may offer.

6. Invite organizers or volunteers from your local food bank, food cooperatives, or community gardens to talk with students about food insecurity and food deserts in your community. Look for opportunities for your school community to support existing local efforts such as community gardens, food drives, and information campaigns. Research community food needs and find organizations in your local area through Feeding America: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/>. Locate community gardens and resources through the American Community Gardening Association: <https://www.communitygarden.org/>.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

7. Plant a garden of your own. You can start with a few plants on your classroom windowsill or work with families to plan a community garden. Kids Gardening is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing children's interactions with nature and their communities through gardening. The organization's website (kidsgardening.org) includes growing guides, lesson plans, suggestions for creating community gardens, and youth gardening programs.

8. Create a mosaic or write a song for your garden! Explore ideas for creative expression at the Cornell Dig Art! Program (gardening.cals.cornell.edu/lessons/curricula/dig-art-cultivating-creativity-in-the-garden/), which offers extensive lesson plans and resources for visual and performing arts projects and nature studies.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about First Lady Michelle Obama. White House Biography of Michelle Obama: whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/first-families/michelle-obama/

Learn more about the White House Kitchen Garden Initiative. White House Kitchen Garden website: <https://www.nps.gov/whho/planyourvisit/white-house-kitchen-garden.htm>

Watch White House gardeners describe and harvest winter crops. Harvest White House Kitchen Garden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YS-JOIVM-cRY>

Study the benefits of community gardens and explore additional resources. Community Gardens CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/community.htm>

Discover more gardening ideas. National Garden Bureau, Easy Kids Gardening Activities: <https://ngb.org/2020/03/25/kids-gardening-activities/>



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