

Name:

Date:

Food & Health: Who Influences Us?

Directions: Read the scenario and answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.

Scenario 1

Ronny, a 13 year old, loves to play sports, video games, and hang out with his family. Every Sunday, he and his brothers visit their grandparents for dinner. In the mornings, when the weather is nice, Ronnie's grandpa takes his grandsons to the ocean to fish for salmon or collect mussels. On his grandparents' property, Ronnie's grandpa likes to take Ronnie and his brothers around the yard on his tractor. First, they visit the blackberry bushes, where the boys pick berries for dessert. Second, they visit the Black Oak tree, where the boys trim the branches of the tree to help the tree produce acorns for the fall. Ronnie's grandmother makes acorn flour every year to turn into acorn bread using the family's traditional recipe from their Native culture. Next, they walk through the field below the house, collecting wild mint for tea. Ronnie's grandpa explains that mint can be used for medicine and can help with headaches, nausea, and energy. Ronnie's grandpa carefully tends to all the plants in his yard to ensure enough food for his wife to cook! When he does a good job taking care of his yard, all of his plants thrive and his family has lots of food to eat.

Questions:

1. Does this teen have any role models that influence the way they eat?
 - a. If so, what kind of lessons does the role model teach?
 - b. If not, how do you think the absence of a role model impacts the teen's relationship with food?
2. Does this teen eat mostly processed or whole foods? What are some examples?
3. Does this teen eat any traditional foods, or foods that are traditional to their family?
4. Would you describe the foods eaten in the scenario as healthy or unhealthy? Explain.
5. What types of economic considerations impact this teen's ability to make healthy choices?
6. Are any of the following parts of this teen's life impacted positively by their food choices?
 - a. Physical health
 - b. Family connection
 - c. Emotional/mental health
 - d. Cultural connection
 - e. Environmental connection

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Scenario 2

Stephanie is a 15 year old who lives in the city. Her mom works long hours and so Stephanie is often tasked with grocery shopping, cooking, and feeding herself. After school, Stephanie usually walks to the closest corner store to grab something easy for dinner. She doesn't quite know how to use the stove yet, so Stephanie buys frozen, pre-prepared meals that she can microwave: a frozen macaroni and cheese, a frozen pizza, and frozen burritos. The ingredients on the frozen meals come from all over the world! Corn from Iowa, carrots from California, tomatoes from Mexico! The meals were made in separate factories all over the country- in Colorado, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. They were delivered in three separate big rig trucks. Stephanie has no idea when the food was actually made in the factory, she just knows it tastes good! After eating, Stephanie often feels tired, sluggish, and uncomfortably full. The only thing that helps Stephanie with her energy is eating sugar, like ice cream or soda. She needs energy in order to stay awake to finish her homework.

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Scenario 3

Tom is a 14 year old who cares about eating healthy and is anxious about climate change. He follows lots of Native and non-Native influencers on social media that talk about ways to eat healthier and support one's environment through Indigenous and local foods. When he and his mom go to the grocery store every week, he tries to make suggestions to his mom about what the family should eat, and from where they should get their food. In the produce (fruit and veggie) section, he suggests that the family stock up on lots of green vegetables that are produced in the state where his family lives. When Tom sees that the mangoes he wants are imported from the Philippines, he wonders if sending mangoes across the world on a large barge boat is good for the environment. Maybe there is a local alternative? When they get to the snack aisle, Tom looks for the brand of chips that grows their corn and produces their chips close to his town. The food that is grown and produced locally is fresher, and takes less traveling to get to the store. When Tom eats lots of local fruits and vegetables, he feels light, energized, and focused. He also feels proud that he is helping his local food growers and that he is influencing his family to be healthier.

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Scenario 4

Delilah is a 12 year old who just entered middle school. She is nervous about making friends and wants to fit in. She quickly finds a group of friends that eats lunch together every day in the cafeteria. Although Delilah is starving by the time lunch comes around, she notices that most of her new friends eat only a bag of chips for lunch, and nothing else. Delilah has money to buy lunch from the school cafeteria, but decides not to since she doesn't want to seem weird in front of her friends. After lunch each day, Delilah is sluggish and cannot concentrate on her schoolwork. She becomes anxious about her grades, but doesn't have enough energy to get any work done. Her teacher pushes her to try harder, but she is cranky and refuses. By the time school gets out, she is so hungry and tired, that she runs to the nearest store to buy an ice cream and microwavable ramen with her friends before going home. When Delilah's mom serves her a freshly prepared dinner, Delilah eats very little, since she is full from her after-school snack. Her parents are frustrated that Delilah isn't eating their family's favorite traditional foods.

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