



Activity 5: A Modern Pea Farmer

Time: 30–60 minutes (if bonus activities are completed)

Objectives: Students will understand more about modern farming. They will also recall details from the text in order to practice descriptive and/or letter-writing skills.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.A

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2

Materials:

- Lined paper
- Pencils/pens
- Copies of “A Pea Farmer’s Story”
- Optional: Colored paper, markers, crayons and other craft materials
- Copy of the letter template if needed

Directions:

Briefly discuss farming in the past and present. Ask students what they think a farmer might have looked like in the past. You might have them talk to a partner, answer out loud or journal their answers. Show historical pictures of farmers provided on page 16. Then ask students what they think a farmer might look like today. Again, students could discuss with a partner, answer out loud or journal. Then show pictures of modern farmers on page 17. Discuss how modern farm technology has helped improve agriculture. Review the information in Part 1 about Modern Pea Farming.

Read “A Pea Farmer’s Story.” You can read the story out loud or make copies and ask students to take turns read-

ing a paragraph at a time. Briefly discuss the work of a farmer who raises crops for food. Review the story and answer the following questions together.

1. Where is Tom Harper’s farm located? (*Dorchester, Maryland*)
2. Why does Tom like farming? (*He likes working with his family; he gets to plant seeds and watch them grow*)
3. Why does Tom like peas? (*Peas are the first crop his family would plant*)
4. Is farming easy work? Why or why not? (*No, because the days can be very long, there are government regulations, and mother nature can be unpredictable*)
5. What is a good way to learn about farming? (*Find a farmer to teach you, or make a garden*)

ACTIVITY 5: Pea Farmer Essays (grades 3–4)

Directions: Complete this activity after reading “A Pea Farmer’s Story.” Prompt students to think about a favorite family food. This food should be something that is special to them, that others may not know. For example, it could be something for a birthday celebration or a special dish that is only made at Thanksgiving. Ask students to share one of their family’s favorite foods by writing about it in four to five sentences. If time allows, ask for volunteers to share their essays with the class.

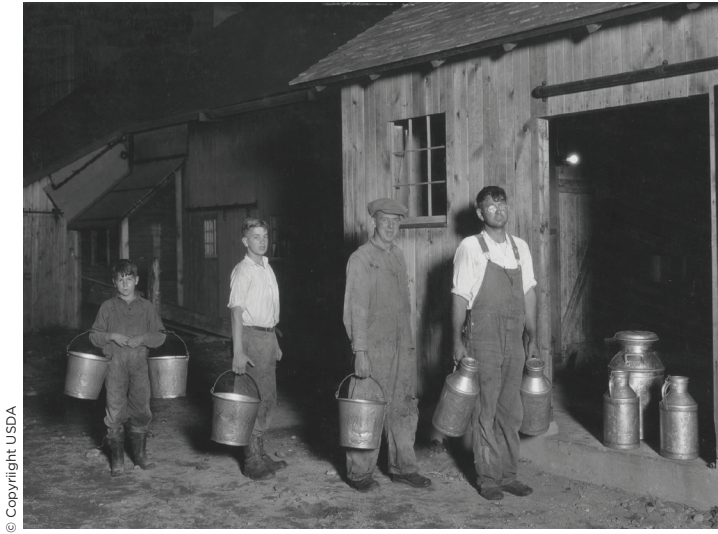
OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Tell a farmer or rancher “Thanks!”

Directions: After reading “A Pea Farmer’s Story,” discuss ways to thank people who help us. If we cannot thank someone in person, we can write a thank you letter. Briefly discuss the parts of a letter, including the heading, greeting, body, closing and signature. (A blank letter form is included for student use.) Remind students that they should use their school address for the heading, today’s date, the name of the farmer (if known) and ONLY their first name in the signature. (This is for privacy reasons.) They may also want to add a drawing at the bottom of the letter.

Younger students may prefer to draw a thank-you picture or card. The letters may then be sent to a farmer in your area. They may also be sent to the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, which will forward the letters to real farmers! Send the letters and pictures to:

American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture
600 Maryland Avenue SW,
Suite 1000W
Washington, DC 20024

Worksheet Activity 5: Historical Pictures of Agriculture



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Worksheet Activity 4: Today's Agriculture



Worksheet Activity 5: A Pea Farmer's Story

Spring's warm breeze slowly pushes out the harshness of winter as Tom Harper walks the short distance from his home to his office. Tom's office is special. There are no walls, no desks and no stacks of paper. Instead, there are seeds, tractors and irrigation systems. Tom Harper is a farmer.

Tom Harper's farm, A.N. Harper and Son in Dorchester, Maryland, is a fourth-generation farm. This means that Tom's great-great-grandparents started the farm. "Farming has been in my blood ever since I was born," Tom said. On his farm, Tom gets to continue to work with this family, and he thinks that is the best part about farming. His wife helps with a greenhouse business, and his son helps him in the fields. "I have been able to be with my father on the farm. He is 84 years old and still working on the farm every day. It is a great experience to be with your family all your life." Tom also loves being able to plant a seed and watch it grow. "This is hard work sometimes, but it is very rewarding. You can watch something you plant grow from scratch, and in a few weeks it will turn into something someone can eat."

It's early April, and the last freeze of winter has come and gone. This means one thing: It's time to plant peas. "First we till the ground and plant spring peas. Then they will grow for about six weeks. After we harvest the peas, we will put in another vegetable or small grain. This allows us to have two crops in one growing season."

Peas hold a special place in Tom's heart. "Peas were the first crop we would plant. My grandmother would look forward to when the peas were ready because in the winter we ate canned peas. Fresh peas right out of the shell are really good, and she would look forward to enjoying them. We would all get together and shell fresh peas by hand. Then she would make the most delicious peas and dumplings! That was the highlight of the season—taking the very first vegetable of the year and being able to enjoy it with my family."

While Tom does love being a farmer, it is hard work. Tom's day starts at 7:00 a.m. and some days doesn't end until 12:30 a.m. the next day. "Farming is not your typical 9-to-5 deal at all," Tom says. Other challenges farmers face are government regulations and good old mother nature. "Crops need water, and if it doesn't rain, we still have to water them every few days," Tom says.

Do you want to be a farmer? Tom thinks working hard in school is important. However, Tom's grandfather always said, "Experience is the best teacher, but the tuition is high." Tom means getting hands-on experience, while hard work, is the best way to learn about farming. To learn more about farming, find someone who can teach you like his father taught him. You can try gardening to start! Tom says, "Any kids who plant their own garden, watch it grow and harvest it themselves will feel the real satisfaction of farming."

Finally, Tom added that his grandfather would always say: "A farmer is usually outstanding in his field, and if you look for him, that is usually where he is." That's where Tom is, standing in his field working hard with his family to grow some of the vegetables we love to eat with our families.

Worksheet Activity 5: A Friendly Letter Template

Date

Address

Salutation

Closing

Signature