



Handout 6.10: Dish Research Card and Comparison

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Print pages 1 to 4 for every student. Page 5 is the research packet reading option for classes without devices. Page 6 is the grade 8 stretch card.

Our class agreement on food talk

Read it before you write anything.

1. **Curious, not disgusted.** “I have not tried that” is a sentence. “That is gross” is not.
2. **Ask, do not assume.** If you want to know why a food is made a certain way, ask the question instead of guessing the answer.
3. **No ranking.** No best cuisine, no worst, no “weird.” Different climates and different crops made different food. That is the whole explanation.
4. **Nobody has to be the expert on their own background.** You may share a family dish if you want to, and you may say nothing, and neither one gets a follow-up question.

Part 1. The five factors that shape a cuisine

Factor	What it means	One example from today
Climate		
Crops		
Trade		
Migration		
Religion		

Which factor do you think matters most? _____ Why?



Part 2. Pick your form and your three cultures

Circle one form. Your group takes all three dishes inside it, one per person.

Form	Culture 1	Culture 2	Culture 3	Fourth option
Filled dough	Empanada (Latin America and Spain)	Pierogi (Poland)	Samosa (South Asia)	Jiaozi (China) or ravioli (Italy)
Rice and beans plate	Rice and peas (Jamaica)	Gallo pinto (Costa Rica and Nicaragua)	Red beans and rice (Louisiana)	Hoppin' john (the Carolinas)
Flatbread	Pita (eastern Mediterranean)	Roti or chapati (South Asia)	Tortilla (Mexico and Central America)	Injera (Ethiopia and Eritrea) or lavash (Armenia and Turkey)

My form: _____ My dish: _____

Part 3. My research card

Fill in all five boxes. You need two sources and one of them must be a library source or a reference source, not a search result summary.

Box	My answer
1. Region and country or countries	
2. Main ingredients (four or five)	
3. Cooking method (from the Lesson 6.6 list: bake, roast, broil, toast, sauté, boil, simmer, steam, poach)	
4. Why here? Name a crop, a climate, a trade route, a migration, or a religious practice that explains why this dish exists in this place. “Because it is their tradition” does not answer this.	
5. One thing that will surprise the class	

My two sources

#	Source title	Author or publisher	Type (book, encyclopedia, museum, university, news, other)
1			
2			

My ninety-second presentation, in order

1. My dish is _____ from _____.
2. The main ingredients are _____.
3. It is cooked by _____.
4. It exists there because _____.
5. The thing that surprised me is _____.

Part 4. The comparison

Fill this in as you hear the other two dishes in your form.

	Dish 1: _____	Dish 2: _____	Dish 3: _____
Region			
Main ingredients			
Cooking method			
What makes it different from the other two			

What is the same across all three?





What is different?





Why is it different? Name at least two of the five factors.

Factor 1: _____ How it explains a difference: _____



Factor 2: _____ How it explains a difference: _____



The last line

One thing I would try: _____

One question I still have: _____

Exit card, Day 1

The factor that explains my dish best is _____ because _____



If we are not tasting: the extension task

Pick a **fourth** everyday form that shows up in at least three cultures. Name the form and the three versions. You may not use one of the three on the list above.

My fourth form: _____

Culture	The name of the dish there	One ingredient that makes it local
1.		
2.		
3.		

One sentence on why this form shows up everywhere:



Page 5: Research packet reading option

For classes without devices. Print two short paragraphs and one photo per dish from a library source. Below is what each paragraph needs to contain so students can complete the card.

Each printed paragraph must give	Because the card asks for
The country or region, and whether the dish travels beyond it	Box 1
Four or five main ingredients by name	Box 2
How it is cooked, in words a student can match to the nine methods	Box 3
One fact about the local crop, the climate, a trade route, a migration, or a religious practice	Box 4
The source title, author or publisher, and date, printed at the bottom of the page	The two source lines

[Sal: your school librarian can pull these in twenty minutes and will probably enjoy being asked. A print encyclopedia food entry, a university extension page, or a museum exhibit page all work. Print the source line at the bottom of every sheet so the citation task is real and not a guess.]

Page 6: Grade 8 stretch card

Three sources, one of them printed. Then answer this.

Pick one ingredient in your dish. Trace it back to where the **plant** actually came from, and explain how it got to your dish's region.

Question	My answer
The ingredient	
Where the plant originally came from	
How it got to my dish's region (trade, colonization, migration, or deliberate planting)	
About when	
My source for this	

The hard question: based on what you found, is there such a thing as a pure traditional cuisine? Answer in three or four sentences, using your ingredient as the evidence.









Teacher key

Part 1, the five factors:

Factor	What it means	Example
Climate	Heat, cold, rainfall, and growing season decide what can be grown and how food has to be preserved	Rice needs standing water and heat, so rice cultures sit in monsoon and river regions. Cold northern regions preserve with salt, smoke, and fermentation
Crops	Whatever grows well nearby becomes the staple, and the staple shapes every meal	Corn in Mesoamerica, wheat in the Fertile Crescent and Europe, rice in Asia, potatoes in the Andes, teff in Ethiopia, cassava in West Africa
Trade	Ingredients moved along routes and rewrote whole cuisines, often recently	Chilies came from the Americas to Asia and Africa after 1500. Tomatoes came from the Americas to Italy. Black pepper moved from India to Europe. Sugar moved everywhere
Migration	People carry recipes and adapt them to what the new place sells	Red beans and rice in Louisiana carries West African and Caribbean cooking into a Gulf Coast pantry. Pizza in New York is not pizza in Naples
Religion	Permitted and forbidden foods, fasting days, and feast dishes shape the everyday menu	Halal and kosher rules on meat and slaughter; Lent and Ramadan fasting; vegetarian practice in Hindu and Jain and Buddhist traditions; feast breads across many faiths

Part 2 and 3, what a correct card looks like for each dish, at the level students can reach:

Dish	Region	Main ingredients	Method	Why here
Empanada	Latin America	Wheat or corn	Baked or fried	Spanish wheat

	and Spain	flour, fat, meat or cheese or vegetables, onion, spices		pastry carried to the Americas, filled with whatever was local; a sealed hand pie travels to a field, which matters for farm and mine work
Pierogi	Poland and neighboring countries	Wheat flour, egg, potato, cheese, cabbage, mushrooms, onion	Boiled, sometimes then sautéed	Cool climate crops: potatoes, cabbage, mushrooms, and dairy. Boiling needs only water and a pot, not an oven, which most homes did not have
Samosa	South Asia, and earlier Central Asia and the Middle East	Wheat flour, potato, peas, onion, cumin, coriander, chili	Fried, sometimes baked	Traveled along trade routes from Central Asia; filled with local potatoes (themselves an import from the Americas) and local spices; a fried hand pie keeps and travels
Rice and peas	Jamaica	Rice, kidney beans or pigeon peas, coconut milk, thyme, scallion, allspice	Simmered	Rice and beans together make a complete protein and both store well; coconut and allspice are local; the pairing came with West African cooking

Gallo pinto	Costa Rica and Nicaragua	Rice, black beans, onion, sweet pepper, cilantro	Simmered then sautéed	Same complete protein logic; black beans and rice are the two cheapest staples grown and traded locally, and yesterday's beans become today's breakfast
Red beans and rice	Louisiana, United States	Red kidney beans, rice, onion, celery, bell pepper, sausage, bay	Simmered	West African and Caribbean cooking carried by migration into a Gulf pantry; traditionally cooked Mondays because it simmers unattended on wash day
Pita	Eastern Mediterranean	Wheat flour, water, yeast, salt	Baked at very high heat	Wheat region; high-heat baking makes the steam pocket that gives pita its pocket
Roti or chapati	South Asia	Whole wheat flour, water, salt	Cooked on a dry hot griddle (a dry heat method)	Wheat in the north of the region; a griddle needs no oven and very little fuel, which matters where fuel is expensive
Tortilla	Mexico and Central America	Corn treated with lime (nixtamal) or	Cooked on a dry hot griddle	Corn is the region's staple; the lime

		wheat flour, water, salt		treatment makes the corn's niacin available, which is a real nutritional reason and a great "surprise the class" fact
Injera	Ethiopia and Eritrea	Teff flour, water, wild yeast, fermented for days	Cooked on a large flat griddle	Teff grows in the highlands where wheat struggles; fermentation adds flavor and keeps the batter usable, and the bread doubles as the plate and the utensil
Jiaozi	China	Wheat flour, water, pork or vegetables, cabbage, ginger, scallion	Boiled, steamed, or pan fried	Northern wheat region; boiled and steamed dumplings need no oven, and they are the New Year dish because their shape resembles old money
Ravioli	Italy	Wheat flour, egg, cheese or meat or greens	Boiled	Durum and soft wheat region; a filled pasta stretches a small amount of expensive filling across a cheap starch
Hoppin' john	the Carolinas	Black-eyed peas, rice, pork, onion	Simmered	Black-eyed peas came from West Africa; rice cultivation

				in the Low Country was built on West African knowledge and labor
Lavash	Armenia and Turkey	Wheat flour, water, salt	Baked against the wall of a hot clay oven	Wheat region; a very thin bread bakes in a minute on almost no fuel and stores dry for weeks

Box 4 is the box to check. “Because it is their tradition” answers nothing. The redirect is one question: what grew there, who moved there, or what got traded there?

Part 4, the answer for each form:

- **Filled dough:** all three are dough sealed around filling and cooked, which makes a portable, self-contained meal that does not need a plate. What differs is the dough (wheat, wheat, wheat, but rolled thick or thin), the filling (whatever is cheap and local), and the method (fried, boiled, fried). Factors: crops and climate explain the filling, and fuel and equipment explain the method.
- **Rice and beans:** all three pair a grain with a legume, which together make a complete protein, both store dry for months, and both are cheap. What differs is the bean, the seasoning, and the fat (coconut milk, sofrito, pork). Factors: crops, trade, and migration.
- **Flatbread:** all three are flour, water, and salt cooked fast on high heat with little or no leavening, which means little fuel and no oven needed. What differs is the grain (wheat, wheat, corn, teff) and the surface (oven, griddle, clay wall). Factors: crops and climate, plus what fuel costs.

The two errors to watch for:

1. “Because it is their culture” in box 4. See above.
2. Writing about a dish as if it were frozen in time. Push with the tomato and chili facts: both of those plants arrived in their famous cuisines in the last five hundred years.

Scoring: the research card and the comparison page are daily work, complete, partial, or missing, with the source line required. The comparison must name two of the five factors. Objective 3 is assessed here and again on the Cooking Methods Check, item 12, and on the Unit 6 test.