

SAMPLE UNIT PLAN
Keeping Kosher
Developed by Channah Appel

Documents:

Kosher meat

Letter, from Chicago agreeing to meet requests for supervision of meat, 1963

Letter, to kosher butchers union president about plumbas, 1963

Letter, from Hebrew National about kosher tags on meat, 1971

Letter, from Cleveland Kashrut board about tags and stamps on meat, 1963

Memorandum, to kosher butchers to retain kosher meat tags, 1956

Memorandum, with list of members of kashrut board, 1963

Minutes, about markings on meat, 1956

“Kosher style”

Coupon, for Warsaw kosher style meats, 1960

Law, on kashrut, Ohio General Code, 1935

Letter, handwritten, reporting kosher style meat, from the district attorney’s office, 1960

Letter, defining kosher style, 1963

Letter, to Shaker Restaurant about advertising “kosher corned beef”, 1963

Letter, about Jewish Federation serving kosher food at its events

Newspaper article, from *Cleveland Press* about legally kosher, 1965

Sign, kosher meat cutters union

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

Time Allocation: 5 sessions

A. OBJECTIVES

The students will

1. Identify how a community Kosher Board ensures the supply of kosher meat.
2. Evaluate the concept of “kosher style”.
3. Research and understand why the Jewish Federation of Cleveland got involved in kashrut supervision.
4. Compare kashrut supervision issues in Cleveland in the 1950s to those of today using a recent controversy as a contemporary example.

B. EXAMINING THE DOCUMENTS(S): QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why is supervision of kashrut necessary?
2. How is “kosher style” problematic for those who observe kashrut?
3. Why does the Jewish Federation get involved in kashrut supervision, when most of the members are not observant of kashrut?
4. What are the similarities between issues that affected enforcing kashrut in the 1950s and today?

C. SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Have students compile a list of issues involved in the effective supervision of kosher meat through the following exercise.
 - a. Teacher will walk in with a slab of defrosted meat labeled as kosher. Ask the students: “How do I know that this is kosher? How could I know before plastic was invented? How do I know that this sticker wasn’t placed on afterwards?”
 - b. Record student responses.
2. Pass out the first set of documents with response forms (see below). Students may work alone or in pairs, each completing the form for one item. Have students present their findings to class members. List terms that students will need in order to read the documents: Kashrut Board, memorandum, Federation, *mashgiah*, *schochet*, *plumbas*.
3. Divide the class into groups to read articles about kosher style products. Examine menus from a current delicatessen for use of the term kosher style. Conduct a debate on the issue of whether the term kosher style is misleading advertising or just nostalgia marketing to potential Jewish customers.

4. Collect kosher meat labels at home and bring to class. Compare the information listed on the labels for kashrut, nutrition, and health against the current law regulating kashrut in the state.

5. Read the letter about serving a kosher dinner at a Jewish Federation event. Identify the individuals mentioned in the letter and the firm on whose letterhead the letter is written. Have each student prepare a poster summarizing the pros and cons of government and/or Federation involvement in the supervision of kashrut. The poster should indicate a position on the issue, based on what students have learned by exploring the documents in the unit.

D. EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Invite a kosher butcher (*shochet*) to discuss his work and how kashrut inspection helps or hinders his occupation.

2. Visit the kosher dining room and kitchen at the Jewish Federation. Interview the manager about what kosher products are used. Ask a Federation executive staff member to speak with the students about why the Federation has a kosher dining room and serves only kosher food at its events.

3. Advanced students may read *Kosher Nation: Why More and More of America's Food Answers to a Higher Authority*, by Sue Fishkoff, about the intricacies of inspecting kosher products in a global society.

Kashrut History Research Project

Student name

Title of document

Type of document

People mentioned/jobs/positions in community

Problem/Purpose of document

Comments