

Title: The Story of Sugarcane

Grade: 4th - 8th grade	Date of Delivery:
Unit: Story of your food	Time: 45 min

Unit overview and background information:

This series of lessons investigates the histories of a collection of foods and crops fundamental to the American South. Each lesson will focus on the people instrumental in historically growing or preparing this food, and the impact that they and their cuisine has had on our modern culture. Using images, videos, and prior knowledge, students will be asked to consider the skills, rights, and experiences of these people. Through these lessons, we aim to deepen our students' relationships with these foods and for them to better realize that the story of these foods is intertwined with their own.

The Urban Assembly SEL Competencies

- Students demonstrate an awareness of cultural issues and a respect for human dignity and differences. (3C)

Learning to Give Social Justice Standards:

- Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics. (JU.3-5.15)
- Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way. (DI.6-8.8)

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will examine their own power by building empathy, respect, understanding, and connection for the lived experiences of enslaved people on sugarcane plantations.
- Students will develop historical and cultural knowledge of bissap by following a recipe and utilizing garden ingredients to make a snack for their peers.

Key Preparation/Materials:

- Historical images of sugarcane
 - Sources of the images
 - [Image 1](#)
 - [Image 2](#)
 - [Image 3](#)
 - [Image 4](#)
- Sugarcane stalk & leaf for demonstration



- Small whiteboards & dry erase markers for each student
- 2 large whiteboards with dry erase markers
- Recipe: [Bissap](#)
- Sugarcane press, pitcher, compost bucket
- Prepared bissap (made by the previous class)
- Cups, pitcher, 1 stove & pot, spoon, wire strainer, ladle
- Dried roselle hibiscus, lime, ginger, sugarcane juice, ice
- Poster paper w phrase “We are powerful” written in the middle, markers

Lesson Flow

Driving Question: What makes someone powerful?

Introduction (Engagement/Hook): (7min)

Round Robin (This is a cooperative learning structure that gives each student a similar amount of time to share, starting with one student and continuing to all students, in order of the way they are seated.)

What is a superpower you wish you had?

Once all students have shared, point out that not all of the powers you mentioned were about being physically strong, and that should be considered in our lesson today.

Round Robin

What do you think power is?

As students respond, record all answers on a large whiteboard.

Re-read the group’s responses. Ask for any additions.

Thank everyone for sharing. We will come back to this list a little later in class. We need to get going on preparing some bissap, a drink made from roselle hibiscus, sugarcane and ginger root. This drink traditionally comes from West Africa and is now also very common in the Caribbean. After we make our bissap we will spend some time discussing the people who brought the tradition of making it from West Africa to this side of the world. They were a very powerful people and for hundreds of years they grew sugarcane here in Louisiana. Does anyone know who that was?

Body - Exploration: (30min)

Make Bissap - break into 2 groups (15min)

Follow the recipe to prepare bissap. You will see that making bissap takes time, so what you make now will be enjoyed by the class that comes after you. The class that came before you prepared bissap for you to enjoy.

Group 1 - We will harvest & process hibiscus flowers and boil them with ginger root.

Group 2 - Crush sugarcane for juice to sweeten the bissap for our class today.

The Story of Sugar (15min)



Explain that today we are going to enjoy some sugarcane in our bissap, but not without reflecting on the story that brought this sweet treat to this land. It is a story that involves powerful people, but also a lot of struggle. Does anyone know which group of people grew cane, harvested cane, and made sugar for hundreds of years, and probably on this very land below our feet?

Share out [Enslaved peoples]

Have students move to their quads at their tables. Each student should have a small whiteboard and a dry erase marker. Pass out picture sets to each table.

Take a moment to examine images. If you are standing at number 1, hold image 1. Number 2, image 2, etc.

Take 30 seconds to look at the image and the people. As you look, think of 1 word to describe the people. Write it on your whiteboard.

After 30sec you will pass the images and do the same with the next.

All of these images depict enslaved people, or indentured servants, working on sugarcane plantations much like the ones existed in Louisiana. Share out what you noticed.

Record answers on a large whiteboard

Compare the lists from the 2 large whiteboards - words about the people in the images vs the words describing power. Circle words similar from each list.

All group discussion

Were enslaved people powerful? How?

Closing: (8min)

Strain, ice down (if needed) and serve the bissap made by the previous class

Our bissap is similar to one prepared for generation by enslaved people, West Africans, and populations in the Caribbean. All of these people have faced struggles and all have power. How are you powerful?

Ask them to each contribute to the “We are powerful” poster. They should write one way they are powerful. The poster will be displayed on our bulletin board.

Bissap

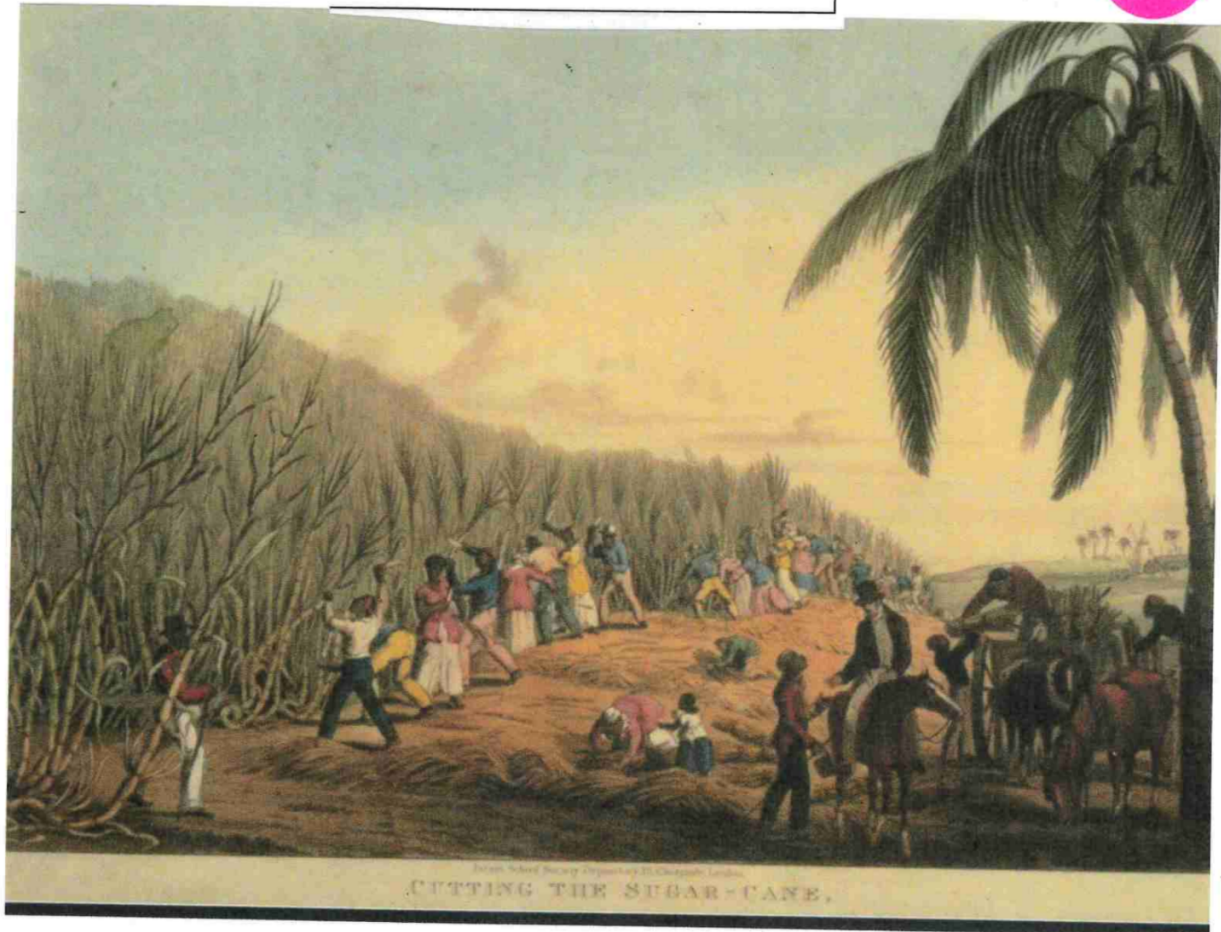
6-8 servings



- 2 cups of Bissap (sorrel or roselle hibiscus or flor de jamaica)
 - 1/2 of a cup of sugar (to taste)
 - 6 – 8 cups water
 - 2 tablespoons of grated ginger (as you like)
1. Rinse the leaves in cold water to get rid of dirt.
 2. Bring water to a gentle simmer in a large pot.
 3. Put in the Bissap dried flower and ginger and allow the water to come to a strong boil. Reduce heat, and boil gently for 30 minutes.
 4. Turn off the heat and pour the juice through a sieve into a large bowl
 5. Add sugar cane juice.
 6. Chill the juice in the refrigerator or serve over ice.

Recipe adapted from demandafrica.com, by Edible Schoolyard New Orleans

HARVESTING SUGAR CANE



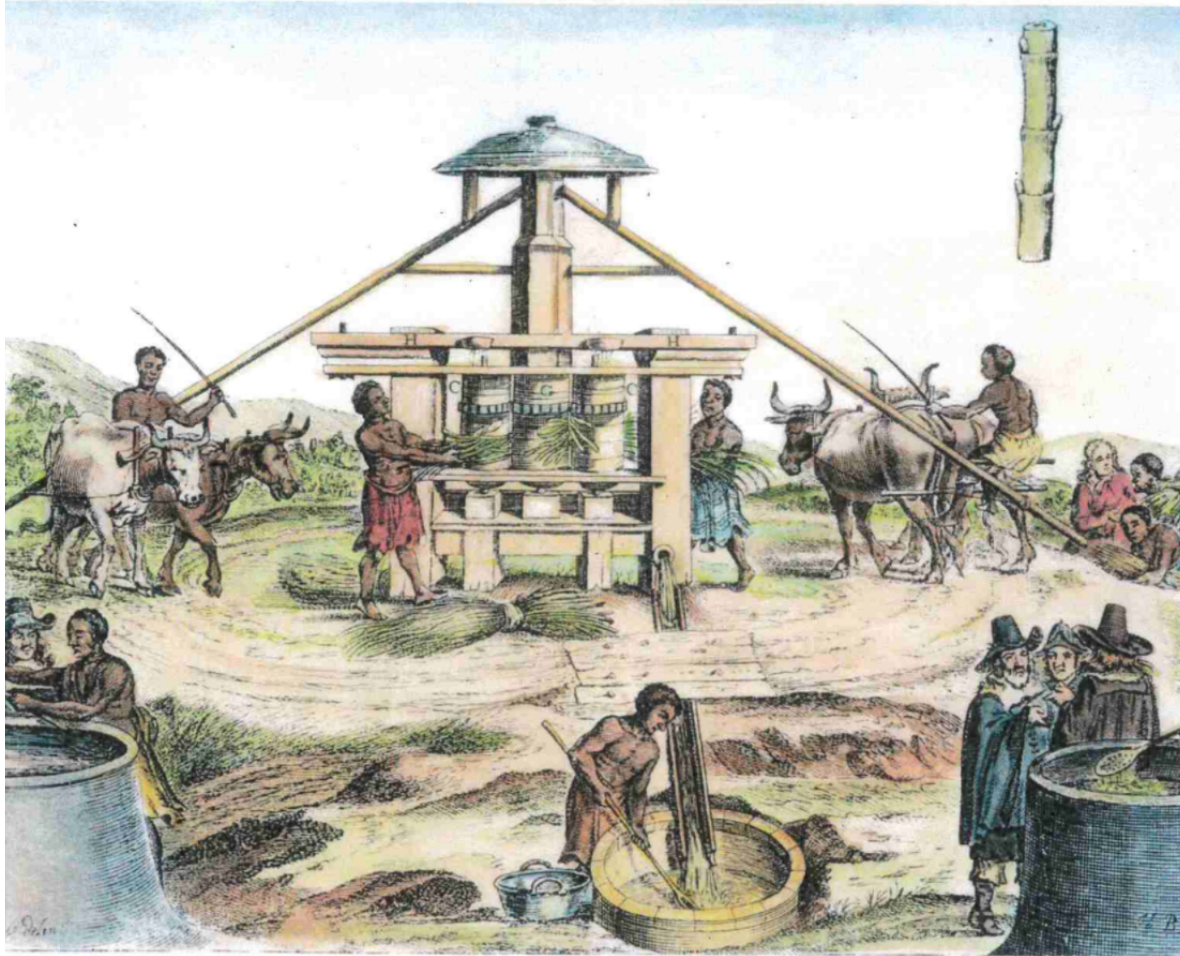
HARVESTING SUGAR CANE

2



CRUSHING SUGAR CANE

3





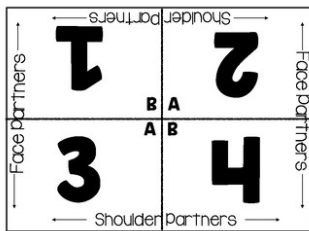
TRANSPORTING CANE
TO THE MILL

4

Kagan - Cooperative Learning Strategies

Kagan is a set of instructional strategies designed to: promote cooperation and communication in the classroom, boost students' confidence, build community, and retain their interest in classroom interaction. These structures create systems so that **all** students actively participate, and they utilize the four principles of PIES.

- (P) positive interdependence**
- (I) individual accountability**
- (E) equal participation**
- (S) simultaneous interaction.**



In all Kagan structures, students are clearly told what their role is and how long they will have to think and share. Having “table mats” helps make this possible for many structures, but you can also verbally name who holds each position. After they work together, they close out each structure with a “gambit” to celebrate one another’s thinking and partnership.

Example, in partners: The person closest to the pond is partner A, and the person closest to the collards is partner B. Person B is going first. You will have one minute per person. Go! (structure takes place) Gambit: Give your partner a high five and say, “Thanks for being a great partner!”; Or, the person wearing the most colors goes first...

Today’s Shared Lessons Include the Following Structures:

Timed Pair Share

1. Teacher presents the topic for discussion or question.
2. In pairs, students share their answer with a partner for a predetermined time while the partner listens. Then partners switch roles.
3. Teacher monitors the time, giving a cue to when to swap from partner A to partner B.

Round Robin

1. Teacher poses a question or a problem with more than one answer.
2. Students take turns answering the questions one at a time, in circle order, starting with the assigned person.

Additional Cooperative Structures:

Spectrum Questions

1. Teacher poses a question or a problem that has more than one answer, and offers 2 opposing responses (i.e. Yes or No).
2. Teachers indicate which side of the space represents a “Yes” answer and a “No” space.



3. Students respond to the prompt by placing themselves along the spectrum line between the two answers. Responses anywhere between the two opposing answers are permitted and encouraged.
4. Students follow the Timed Pair Share structure to share their responses.