READING · PART 7

Food Miles: A Journey on Your Plate

Five fruits & vegetables tell the story of how they reached a London supermarket.

NAME: _____

📖 You are going to read five short accounts (A–E) by different fruits and vegetables. For questions 1–10, choose from the speakers **A–E**. The speakers may be chosen **more than once**.

A Banana *from Ecuador*

Hi there! I'm a banana, and I began my life on a tall green plant in Ecuador, right on the equator. The sun there is warm all year, which is exactly what I need. I was cut down while I was still green and hard — if they'd waited until I turned yellow, I'd never have survived the trip. They packed me into a refrigerated ship and I crossed the Atlantic Ocean over twelve long days, kept cool the whole way. By the time I reached the UK, I'd travelled almost 9,000 kilometres. I won't lie — it's a huge distance — but ships are actually a fairly clean way to travel, so my carbon footprint isn't as terrible as you might think. The funny thing? I ripened during the journey, so I arrived perfectly yellow.

B Strawberry *from Spain*

I'm a strawberry, and honestly, I'm a bit delicate. I was grown in southern Spain inside an enormous plastic greenhouse, because I bruise easily and hate the cold. Unlike my friend the banana, I can't take a slow boat — I'd go mouldy long before I arrived! So I was packed in plastic, loaded onto a lorry, and driven north across France and through the Channel Tunnel. The whole trip took just two days, which sounds fast, but all that road travel burns a lot of fuel for such a tiny fruit. If you really want to help the planet, wait until summer and buy me when I'm grown closer to home. I taste better that way too, I promise.

C Apple *from New Zealand*

G'day! I'm an apple, and I've come about as far as it's possible to come — all the way from New Zealand, roughly 18,000 kilometres away. You might wonder why Britain imports apples when it grows plenty of its own. The answer is the seasons: when it's winter in the UK, it's summer in New Zealand, so I'm fresh and crisp exactly when local apples have run out. I travelled by ship, which took several weeks, and I was kept in a special chilled store to stay firm. Some people say I shouldn't be sold so far from home, but a British apple kept in cold storage for six months can actually use more energy than my long sea voyage. It's complicated, isn't it?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

D **Carrot** *from the UK*

Hello — I'm a carrot, and I'm proud to say I barely travelled at all. I grew in a muddy field in Norfolk, less than 200 kilometres from the shop where you'll find me. I was pulled from the ground, gently washed, and driven a short distance by lorry. That's it! Because my journey was so short, my food miles are tiny compared with most of the others here. People call me a "local" food, and I think that's something to be proud of. The only catch is that I'm seasonal — you'll find me easily in autumn and winter, but in spring there aren't many of me about.

E **Green Beans** *from Kenya*

Jambo! I'm a green bean, and I flew here — yes, flew! I was grown on a small farm in Kenya, where many families depend on selling vegetables like me to Europe. Because I spoil so quickly, I can't travel slowly by sea, so I was rushed onto an aeroplane and flown over 6,000 kilometres to the UK in under a day. Flying is by far the most polluting way for food to travel, so my carbon footprint is sadly the biggest of the group, even though I didn't go the furthest. Still, it's worth remembering that the farmers who grew me really rely on customers far away. Every choice on your plate has more than one side to it.

? Which fruit or vegetable (A–E)…

1	travelled the longest distance of all?	_____
2	has the highest carbon footprint despite not travelling the furthest?	_____
3	was harvested before it was ripe?	_____
4	moved the shortest distance?	_____
5	points out that local food can sometimes use a lot of energy too?	_____
6	mentions that people in its home country depend on selling it?	_____
7	is only available at certain times of the year?	_____
8	crossed the sea but still claims a reasonably clean journey?	_____
9	reminds us that food choices are not simple? (two answers)	_____ _____
10	was transported entirely by road?	_____

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