

Historical Food Terms – Flash Cards

This activity introduces how **etymology**, the history of words over time, is relevant in history and social studies. Exploring the story behind a word can illustrate changes in daily life, social behavior, and technology over time. Historians often examine how the meaning of a word changes in written documents over time to assess change over time.

Several free, online etymological or historical dictionaries are available, but the best resource is the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Its creation began in 1857 and the initial volumes were published from 1884 to 1928. The Oxford English Dictionary is a historical dictionary containing all the core words and meanings in English over more than 1,000 years, from Old English to the present day, and including obsolete and historical terms.

Asking students to memorize archaic food terms is not recommended. Instead, use the following flash cards as an introductory activity or activity during a lesson to capture student interest.

These cards can be photocopied and used in classroom activities two different ways:

1. Back-to-back

- Pairs or teams of students play a game similar to the game show *The \$100,000 Pyramid*. One student sees the definition and give hints to another student who can only see the word. The student seeing only the word tries to guess what the word means.
- If photocopied back-to-back – BE SURE to double check that the correct definition is on the back of each card before using in the classroom. It is REALLY easy to mix up the pages when photocopying.

2. One side of the page only (NOT back-to-back)

- Students individually, or in pairs or teams, can play a sort game – trying to match the definition to the term.

For more ideas for teaching social history and daily life themes in the classroom:

[*Investigating Family, Food, and Housing Themes in Social Studies*](#) by Cynthia W. Resor

This book asks students to critically examine their own culture by contrasting it with the daily lives of average people in the past. What people ate, where people lived, and the functions of families are examined and contrasted to subjective, cultural ideals prescribing what families, food, and housing ought to have been. The relationship between housing, food, and family and social class, status, and gender are emphasized. Each chapter includes essential questions to focus student inquiry; historical overviews focused on changes in family, food, and housing from the pre-industrial era, through its transformation during the Industrial Revolution and into the twentieth century; learning activities; and primary source documents and images. This unique approach to teaching history and social studies supports thematic instruction, culturally responsive teaching, place-based education, and literacy in the elementary, middle, or secondary classrooms

teachingwiththemes.com

- [Comparing modern nutrition and exercise to the pre-industrial era](#)
- [Mincemeat: Teaching History and Geography with a Holiday Food](#)

gill

**mince
or mincemeat**

pudding

syllabub

collar

forcemeat

frizzle

gruel

gobbets

heavy bread that was steamed or boiled. The batter could be placed in a fabric bag and tied over a pot of boiling water. The pudding would steam for several hours and did not require a lot of attention from the cook, other than making sure the water continued to boil. Since the batter was generally high in fat (butter or lard), the leftovers would keep for several days.

Mincemeat was generally prepared when hogs or cows were slaughtered late in the fall when the weather cooled. Small bits of meat and fat that were left over from the slaughter of a hog or cow were cooked, mixed with various fruits available at the time or dried fruits, spices, and large amounts of some type of sweetener (sugar or molasses), brandy, and sometimes vinegar. Sugar, brandy and vinegar helped to preserve the mixture.

A unit of measure equal to approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, or a teacup

Stuffing - Chopped and ground meat, usually seasoned and bulked with bread crumbs, oatmeal, and eggs, and used as a filling; or, simply that meat has been forced through a grinder.

Roll up a piece of meat, usually with a forcemeat inside, and tie it with string before cooking.

A drink that combined fresh milk and sweet apple cider. Sweet apple cider was essentially fresh apple juice. Collar The milk, straight from the cow, would have had a high cream content; the “froth” was whipped cream.

Small pieces of meat similar to stew meat size.

A thin porridge, often made with oatmeal, and given to children and invalids.

To cook in fat until crisp and curled at edges

griskin

hodge podge

merrythought

**Indian meal or
Indian ground**

**petty toes/
trotters**

pottage

rasher

shoat

larder

the wishbone of a chicken

Stew

A pork chop

A thick soup, stew or porridge

Pig feet

Corn meal

A room or large closet where
food is kept

Young pig

A thin piece of meat usually
referring to bacon

squab

truss

chitterlings

cambric tea

sweetmeats

clabber

comfit

saleratus

oleo

The edible entrails of pork or beef, cleaned, boiled, and, especially in the South, deep-fat fried

To put a piece of meat or fowl on a spit for roasting

Young pigeons no more than 30 to 40 days old

Soured milk

candy

Mixture of milk, sugar, tea, and hot water

margarine,
a butter substitute

baking soda

Dried fruit, root, or seed preserved with sugar

Gill - A unit of measure equal to approximately ½ cup, or a teacup

Mince or mincemeat - Mincemeat was generally prepared when hogs or cows were slaughtered late in the fall when the weather cooled. Small bits of meat and fat that were left over from the slaughter of a hog or cow were cooked, mixed with various fruits available at the time or dried fruits, spices, and large amounts of some type of sweetener (sugar or molasses), brandy, and sometimes vinegar. Sugar, brandy and vinegar helped to preserve the mixture.

Pudding - heavy bread that was steamed or boiled. The batter could be placed in a fabric bag and tied over a pot of boiling water. The pudding would steam for several hours and did not require a lot of attention from the cook, other than making sure the water continued to boil. Since the batter was generally high in fat (butter or lard), the leftovers would keep for several days.

Syllabub - a drink that combined fresh milk and sweet apple cider. Sweet apple cider was essentially fresh apple juice. Collar The milk, straight from the cow, would have had a high cream content; the “froth” was whipped cream.

Collar - Roll up a piece of meat, usually with a forcemeat inside, and tie it with string before cooking.

Forcemeat - Stuffing - Chopped and ground meat, usually seasoned and bulked with bread crumbs, oatmeal, and eggs, and used as a filling; or, simply that meat has been forced through a grinder.

frizzle - To cook in fat until crisp and curled at edges

gruel - A thin porridge, often made with oatmeal, and given to children and invalids.

Gobbets- Small pieces of meat similar to stew meat size.

Griskin - A pork chop.

Hodge Podge - Stew

Merrythought - the wishbone of a chicken

Indian meal or Indian ground - Corn meal.

Petty Toes/ Trotters - Pigs feet.

Pottage - A thick soup, stew or porridge.

Rasher - A thin piece of meat usually referring to bacon.

Shoat - Young pig.

larder - A room or large closet where food is kept.

Squab - Young pigeons no more than 30 to 40 days old.

Truss - To put a piece of meat or fowl on a spit for roasting.

chitterlings- The edible entrails of pork or beef, cleaned, boiled, and, especially in the south, deep-fat fried.

cambric tea - Mixture of milk, sugar, tea, and hot water.

emptins - A type of liquid yeast obtained from the remains of the brewing hard cider or beer.

Clabber - Soured milk

comfit - Dried fruit, root, or seed preserved with sugar.

saleratus - baking soda

oleo - margarine , butter substitute

sweetmeats - Candy

Source: “History is Served: 18th century recipes for the 21st-century kitchen” Colonial Williamsburg Historic Foodways - <http://recipes.history.org/glossary/>