
The Fight Against Food Trucks

Video Length: 6:08

Lesson Description:

Are food trucks being unfairly targeted by local rules often written by brick-and-mortar competition? This lesson explores the growing conflict between food trucks and traditional restaurants, showing how city regulations can limit competition, stifle entrepreneurship, and reduce consumer choice. Students will examine real-world examples and consider the fairness of government favoritism in business.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- list the different types of regulations that impact food trucks as discussed in the video.
- summarize the motivations behind cities' decisions to impose restrictions on food trucks.
- compare the effects of protectionist regulations on both food trucks and traditional brick-and-mortar restaurants.
- defend a position on whether government policies should favor traditional restaurants over food trucks, using arguments and evidence presented in the video.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Bottleneckers: Individuals or groups who use government regulations to limit competition and protect their own business interests.

Collude: To secretly work together with others to do something illegal or dishonest, often to gain an unfair advantage.

Entrepreneur: A person who starts and operates a new business, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.

Protectionism: A policy of protecting industries from competition by imposing regulations, taxes, or other barriers.

Regulation: A rule or directive made and maintained by an authority to control or govern conduct, often used to manage business practices.

Preview Activity:

Use Think, Pair, Share to have students answer and discuss these preview questions: What do you know about how food trucks operate compared to traditional restaurants? Why might some businesses want to limit competition from other similar businesses? What role do you think government regulations play in helping or hurting businesses?

OR

Distribute copies of the K-W-L worksheet to the class. Have students fill in the K and W sections. After showing the video, have students complete the L section and answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

Viewing Guide:

We recommend that teachers show the video twice: first to allow students to view the video and focus on the issues presented, and second to allow them time to complete the viewing guide. After they complete the viewing guide, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs to share and verify answers.

Answers to Viewing Guide

1. economy
2. protect
3. favor
4. competitors
5. influence
6. collude

The Fight Against Food Trucks

Viewing Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

Directions: As you watch the video, fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. Dick Carpenter of the Institute for Justice studied food trucks and concluded they're an important part of the _____ because they provide a first rung for people starting out.
2. Parking limits it because politicians want to _____ existing restaurants.
3. Why would the government _____ one business over another?
4. They want to keep _____ as far away as possible.
5. The Restaurant Association has so much _____ over those who are elected officials.
6. These bottleneckers say they're protecting us, but mostly they _____ with government to protect themselves.

Take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer these questions.

Why might some restaurant owners want strict rules on food trucks? _____

Is it fair that government regulations favor one type of business over another?

Explain. _____

Discussion and Analysis

1. What are some types of food trucks mentioned in the video?
2. Who are the people featured in the video, and what businesses do they run?
3. What reasons do cities give for imposing regulations on food trucks?
4. How do food trucks provide opportunities for new entrepreneurs?
5. What is the difference between starting a food truck and a brick-and-mortar restaurant?
6. Why might some restaurant owners want stricter rules on food trucks?
7. How do the restrictions on food trucks impact where they can operate?
8. How are customer choices affected when food truck operations are limited?
9. What arguments do food truck operators use to fight against these regulations?
10. Why do some people believe that government protection of traditional restaurants is unfair?
11. In what ways might restricting food trucks affect local economies and job creation?
12. If food trucks may only park 200 ft away from a brick-and-mortar restaurant, should the same rule (i.e. can only open 200 ft away from established restaurants) apply to new brick-and-mortar restaurants? Why or why not?
13. What are the potential consequences of removing all regulations on food trucks?
14. How could you compare the motivations of food truck operators and brick-and-mortar restaurant owners?
15. Do you think food trucks and restaurants can coexist without government intervention? Why or why not?
16. What criteria would you use to decide if a regulation is fair or unfair to different types of businesses?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

Liberty! Liberty!

You can't be 300 feet next to a restaurant that offers the same product.

I'm going to be prejudicial towards those kind of businesses because that keeps my neighborhood.

Why would the government favor a business over another?

The Restaurant Association has so much influence over those who are elected officials.

These bottleneckers say they're protecting us, but mostly they collude with government to protect themselves.

To try to push us back and down and prevent us from doing business is unfair.

Quotes for Discussion:

This is basically our company on wheels. We're all entrepreneurs and small businesses. We just want to provide consumers with more opportunities to have different types of food.
– Eddie Cisneros

They treat us almost like second-class citizens; we're going to make your life impossible, so hopefully you'll be out of business in a year.
– Manny Hernandez

We want to regulate for safety, regulate for quality, but if we're overregulating it, we're going to see people moving out of the market.
– Alderman John Arena
45th Ward, Chicago

It didn't make sense to me that a health violation was \$250, and a food truck violation was \$2,000 for parking (less than) 200 feet from a brick-and-mortar restaurant.
– Amy Le

One of the dirty little secrets about licensing laws is that consumers rarely, if ever, want them. It's existing industry insiders who lobby for these laws. And they do it because it's a way of protecting their turf, and keeping competitors out.

– Erika Harford

Assistant Director IJ Clinic on Entrepreneurship

Activities:

1. Have students complete the K-W-L chart in class or for homework. (Recall that the K and W sections are to be completed before watching the video and the L section after watching the video.)
2. Have students complete the political cartoon activity in class or for homework.
3. Have students complete the PMI chart in class or for homework.
4. Have students complete and submit the Exit Ticket as they leave class.

5. Have students complete the crossword puzzle in class or for homework. For differentiation purposes, the puzzle with the word box should be easier for students as it offers the answer options. The puzzle without the word box requires students to find the word from their own knowledge. An answer key is provided that serves both puzzles.
6. Individually, students research local regulations on food trucks in their own city or town and write a one-page report detailing any restrictions or rules they find. They should include how these rules might impact food truck operators and local businesses.
7. Divide the class into two groups. One group will argue in favor of strict regulations on food trucks to protect traditional restaurants, while the other group will argue for fewer regulations to promote competition and entrepreneurship. Each side will present their arguments to the class, followed by a rebuttal session.
8. Have students write a persuasive essay in which they take a stance on whether food trucks should be regulated more strictly or given more freedom. They should use evidence from the video and their own research to support their arguments.
9. In small groups, students will role-play a city council meeting debating food truck regulations. Assign roles such as food truck owners, restaurant owners, city officials, and concerned citizens. Each group will present their perspectives and suggest compromises.
10. Have students create a survey to ask peers and community members their opinions on food trucks versus traditional restaurants. They will collect responses and analyze the data to find trends and present their findings to the class.
11. Organize a group discussion where students share their thoughts on how government regulations affect small businesses. Encourage them to bring in examples from their own experiences or other industries to compare with the food truck scenario.
12. Assign students to conduct an interview with a local food truck owner or restaurant owner. They should ask about the challenges of running their business and how local regulations affect them. Students will then share their findings with the class. Interviews can be done in person, via phone, email, video calls, or other means.
13. In small groups, students will create a business plan for a food truck. They should include a strategy for dealing with potential regulations, marketing ideas, and a plan for growth. Each group will present their plan to the class.
14. Students will create an infographic showing the impact of food truck regulations on different stakeholders, such as food truck owners, traditional restaurant owners, consumers, and the local economy.
15. As a class project, students will organize a food truck day at school or in the community. They will invite local food truck operators to participate and plan activities that raise awareness about the challenges and benefits of food trucks.

16. For a closer look at food truck regulations in Chicago, have students watch and discuss *Food Truck Roadblock* (12:10) from izzit.org.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMQgCnkU3EM>

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

The Fight Against Food Trucks K-W-L Chart

Directions: Complete the **K** and **W** sections prior to watching the video. After you have seen the video, complete the **L** section and answer the questions below the K-W-L chart.

K	W	L
What I know about food trucks and regulations...	What I want to know about food trucks and regulations...	What I've learned about food trucks and regulations...

Why might some people think that government protection of traditional restaurants over food trucks is unfair? _____

Do you think food trucks and brick-and-mortar restaurants can coexist without government intervention? Why or why not?

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

The Fight Against Food Trucks PMI Chart

P = Plus: What might be some positive effects of heavy regulation of food trucks?

M = Minus: What might be some negative effects of heavy regulation of food trucks?

I = Interesting: What is interesting about heavy regulation of food trucks?

+ Pluses +	- Minuses -	I

If a regulation prohibits food trucks from parking too close to a brick-and-mortar restaurant, should there also be restrictions on how close another restaurant can be? Why or why not? _____

Who often benefits from strict regulation of food trucks? _____

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

The Fight Against Food Trucks



10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

A crossword puzzle grid with 10 numbered starting points for words. The grid consists of empty squares for letters, with numbers indicating the start of words in both horizontal and vertical directions. The numbers are: 1 (vertical, top), 2 (horizontal, middle), 3 (horizontal, right), 4 (horizontal, middle), 5 (horizontal, middle), 6 (horizontal, middle), 7 (horizontal, middle), 8 (horizontal, bottom), 9 (horizontal, bottom), and 10 (horizontal, bottom).

Across

2. Someone who starts their own business.
3. _____ truck - A mobile business that serves meals on the go.
4. Policy that favors traditional businesses over newcomers like food trucks.
5. Individuals or groups who block competition for personal gain.
7. Both food trucks and traditional restaurants must pay these.
8. A major issue for food trucks due to city restrictions.
9. Secretly work together for dishonest purposes.

Down

1. What food trucks and traditional restaurants are both involved in.
3. What food truck operators argue is missing in the regulations.
5. Traditional restaurants are often referred to as "_____ and mortar."
6. Rule made by the government that control business operations.
10. To try to influence politicians for certain regulations.

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

The Fight Against Food Trucks

Word List:

- Bottlenecks
- Brick
- Collude
- Competition
- Entrepreneur
- Fairness
- Food truck
- Lobby
- Parking
- Protectionism
- Regulation
- Taxes

A crossword puzzle grid with 10 numbered starting points for words. The grid consists of white squares for letters and black squares for empty space. The numbered squares are:

- 1: Down, top square.
- 2: Across, 10 squares long, starting from the 4th square of the grid.
- 3: Across, 4 squares long, starting from the 5th square of the grid.
- 4: Across, 10 squares long, starting from the 1st square of the grid.
- 5: Across, 10 squares long, starting from the 2nd square of the grid.
- 6: Down, 10 squares long, starting from the 10th square of the grid.
- 7: Across, 4 squares long, starting from the 3rd square of the grid.
- 8: Across, 6 squares long, starting from the 1st square of the grid.
- 9: Across, 4 squares long, starting from the 6th square of the grid.
- 10: Down, 4 squares long, starting from the 7th square of the grid.



Across

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Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

The Fight Against Food Trucks Answer Key

Word List:

- Bottlenecks
- Brick
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- Entrepreneur
- Fairness
- Food truck
- Lobby
- Parking
- Protectionism
- Regulation
- Taxes

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										o														
										m														
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2E			n	t	r	e	p	r	e	n	e	u	r											
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										t	3F	o	o	d										
										i	a													
4P			r	o	t	e	c	t	i	o	n	i	s	m										
										n	r													
										n														
5B			o	t	t	l	e	n	e	c	k	e	6R	s										
										r														
										s														
7T			a	x	e	s																		
										i														
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										u														
8P			a	r	k	i	n	g																
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9C			o	l	10L	u	d	e																
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Name _____

Date _____

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Teacher _____

The Fight Against Food Trucks Political Cartoon Activity

Directions: Use the political cartoon to answer the questions.



What does the wall being built around the food truck represent and how does it relate to the regulations discussed in the video? _____

How does the cartoonist depict the relationship between traditional restaurant owners and food trucks? _____

Why might a brick-and-mortar restaurant owner want to "block" food trucks and how is this shown both in the cartoon and in the video? _____

In what ways does this cartoon suggest that food trucks face unfair challenges and how does this align with the arguments made by food truck operators in the video? _____

Name

Admit One

Should the government favor one business over another? Why or why not?

Admit One

EXIT TICKET

Name

Admit One

Should the government favor one business over another? Why or why not?

Admit One

EXIT TICKET

Name

Admit One

Should the government favor one business over another? Why or why not?

Admit One

EXIT TICKET