*The Fabulous Fannie Farmer: Kitchen Scientist and America’s Cook*

Emma Bland Smith

Calkins Creek-2024

**Word Workout**

**Book Synopsis:** Fannie Farmer (1857-1915) grew up helping in the kitchen, and she loved cooking. A bout with polio prevented her from attending college. However, this did not stop her from attending the Boston Cooking School where she excelled, eventually becoming the school’s director. She considered cooking a serious business that involved consistency, budgeting, and nutrition. Her passion for precise measurements and step-by-step recipes resulted in her rewriting the Boston Cooking School’s cookbook which became a best seller. **Fannie Farmer, America’s most famous cooking teacher, discovers that precise measurements are a recipe for cooking success in this STEAM picture book that includes two of her classic recipes.**

When Fannie Farmer learned to cook in the late 1800s, recipes could be pretty silly. They might call for “a goodly amount of salt” or “a lump of butter” or “a suspicion of nutmeg.” Girls were supposed to use their “feminine instincts” in the kitchen (or maybe just guess). Despite this problem, Fannie loved cooking, so when polio prevented her from going to college, she became a teacher at the Boston Cooking School. Unlike her mother or earlier cookbook writers, Fannie didn’t believe in feminine instincts. To her, cooking was a science. She’d noticed that precise measurements and specific instructions ensured that cakes rose instead of flopped and doughnuts fried instead of burned. Students liked Fannie’s approach so much that she wrote a cookbook. Despite skepticism from publishers, Fannie’s book was a recipe for success.

Written with humor and brought to life with charming illustrations, this book explores the origins of Fannie Farmer’s quintessentially American cookbook. A cookbook that was beloved because it allowed anyone to make tasty things, with no guessing, no luck—and certainly no feminine  instincts—required.

SEE LESS

## **ABOUT THE FABULOUS FANNIE FARMER**

**Fannie Farmer, America’s most famous cooking teacher, discovers that precise measurements are a recipe for cooking success in this STEAM picture book that includes two of her classic recipes.**

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The extensive back matter includes a timeline, author’s notes and a bibliography.

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**Lesson Description:** Today’s lesson is brought to you by the letter “F”! Get your students involved in a “Word Workout” while they review the economic concepts found in the book, *The Fabulous Fannie Farmer.*

**Grade Level:** K-3

**Time Required:** 20-25 minutes

**Concepts:** Human Capital, Productive Resources

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Participate in a teacher-directed oral dramatic activity.
2. Apply the concepts of human capital and productive resources as they relate to the book *The Fabulous Fannie Farmer*.

**Materials:**

* *The Fabulous Fannie Farmer: Kitchen Scientist and America’s Cook* by Emma Bland Smith
* Visual- *The Fabulous Fannie Farmer*: A Word Workout
* Assessment – Fannie Farmer Author & Cook: Productive Resources (one for each student or student pairs)
* Writing Tools

**Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics**

* STANDARD 1: SCARCITY
* STANDARD 2: DECISION MAKING
* STANDARD 14: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**Procedure:**

1. Prepare the Visual- *The Fabulous Fannie Farmer*: A Word Workout prior to the lesson.
2. Introduce the lesson by showing the students the front cover of the book *The Fabulous Fannie Farmer: Kitchen Scientist and America’s Cook*, to the students.
3. Ask the students what they see on the cover that might give a hint about what the book is about. [possible responses: It’s about a girl who likes to cook. There are recipes in the book. The girl might like to measure ingredients because of the measuring cups.]
4. Ask the students what productive resources are shown on the cover. Define productive resources as: “The natural, human, and capital resources used to make goods and services.” [possible responses: Fannie is a human resource. The cooking pot, measuring cups, and spoon are capital resources. The vegetables are natural resources.]
5. Inform the students that this is a story that takes place during Fannie Farmer’s life, from 1857-1915 and that it is based on facts.
6. Read the book to the class if time allows. This takes about seven minutes.
7. Ask the students what Fannie Farmer did to make her life successful. How did she invest in her human capital? Define Human Capital as: “The knowledge and skills that people obtain through education, experience, and training.” [Possible responses: She went to cooking school. She created recipes that used measuring tools. She wrote a cookbook. She traveled and learned new things.]
8. Tell the students that they will now participate in an interactive review of the book that will require them to follow directions and be good listeners.
9. Begin the activity by asking the students to say the consonant sound at the beginning of these words **Food**, **Future,** and **Free**. Tell the students that you are going to review the story they’ve just heard and that they are to listen for words that begin with the consonant sound **“F.”**
10. Instruct the students that every time they hear the consonant sound “F” at the beginning of a word they are to stand up if they are seated or sit down if they are standing. When they hear the phrase “THE END” they are to pretend they are stirring cake batter in bowl, sit down and clap their hands to show appreciation for everyone’s participation.
11. Display the visual.
12. Read the dramatic poem to the students, dramatically stressing the words beginning with “F’s.”
13. Be prepared for bright and excited students who will be energized for the rest of the class period.

**assessment:**

1. Prepare the assessment sheet prior to class.
2. Distribute the assessment sheet and writing tools upon completion of the word workout activity. Students may work independently or in pairs.
3. Read the directions on the top of the sheet to the students. Review the definitions for productive resources with the students.
* **Capital Resources** are manmade resources such tools, buildings, and vehicles used in production.
* **Natural Resources** are gifts of nature.
* **Human Resources** are people who work.
1. Allocate five minutes for the students to complete the assessment.
2. Check for understanding. An answer key is included.

Visual-

**The Fabulous fannie farmer**

**A Word Workout**

In the kitchen of her youth, **F**annie **f**ound her **f**lair.

Mastering the art of cooking with **f**astidious care.

Polio **f**inished her high school studies, but unstoppable was she.

Her path was **f**ound at age thirty-one and she earned a cooking school degree.

**F**rom a **f**antastic student striving, to assistant, then principal grand.

**F**annie **f**orged ahead, her expertise in great demand.

She revised the Boston School Cookbook with hard workand care,

**F**illed with **f**lawless **f**ormulas - recipes easy to prepare.

Her publisher doubted a **f**amiliar cookbook would be a **f**ull success.

But over three hundred thousand copies were sold, her profits did impress.

Next, she **f**ounded her own cooking school, spreading culinary **f**inesse.

Traveling **f**rom coast to coast, her lectures did impress.

Writing a weekly magazine article **f**ollowed her love-for-**f**ood mission.

She also taught at Harvard and shared advice on good nutrition.

With measurements exact and each recipe well-planned.

**F**annie **F**armer’s legacy lives on, a culinary brand.

**THE END**

**Fannie Farmer Author and Cook**

**Productive Resources Assessment**

Many resources were used to make the recipes that Fannie Farmer included in her famous cookbook. Show that you know about productive resources by following these directions:

* CIRCLE the pictures of **natural resources**.
* Draw a SQUARE around **human resources**.
* UNDERLINE pictures of **capital resources**.

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**Answer Key**

**Fannie Farmer Author and Cook**

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