

# Building Balanced Meals

## Lesson Description

In this lesson, students practice using the 5 food groups to plan a simple balanced meal or snack with several interactive activities. Students begin to understand how much of the plate each group should occupy at mealtime.

- Time required: 60 minutes
- Location of lesson: Classroom

## Learning Objectives

- Plan a simple, balanced meal or snack containing all 5 food groups.
- Understand how each food group supports health.
- Learn the relative proportions of each food group to include in a meal (how much of the plate each group should occupy).

## Attitude and Behavior Goals

- Eat a balanced diet by making healthy choices from each of the 5 food groups.

## Materials and Preparation

- Crayons; at least 5 different colors for each student
-  **Native Food Cards** photocopied, cut-out and laminated (if possible); at least 1 card per student
-  **Color in MyPlate**
- Prepared vegetable snack of the week – 1 for each student
- Water to drink during the Class Warm-up – water dispenser in the classroom and 1 cup or a water bottle for each student

## Class Warm-up: Champion Cheer and Veggie Taste Test (5-10 minutes)

- Give each student a cup of water or ensure that they have a filled water bottle in front of them.
- Give each student the prepared veggie snack of the day.
- Lead the students in enthusiastically reciting the  **Champion Cheer**.
- At the end of the cheer, drink water and eat the veggie snack together.
- Have students complete their  **Taste Test Observations** about the vegetable snack of the week.

### Review of Last Lesson (2-3 minutes)

- Review the evaluation questions from last week’s lesson. Evaluation questions from all lessons are listed at the end of the workbook .

### Class Discussion (5-10 minutes)

*We’ve learned about each of the 5 food groups and what they do for our bodies. Review all food groups in the MyPlate lesson and what they do for our bodies.*

*Now we are going to continue practicing how to sort foods into each group and how to build balanced meals. What is a balanced meal? Can anyone think of a meal that has more than 1 food group in it? Why is it important to eat a balanced meal?*

### Activities (35-40 minutes)

-  **“Let’s Build a Meal!”- Adapted From Life Lab Curriculum: Power Plate AND USDA Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum (20-25 minutes):** Students use food cards to practice classifying foods into food groups and grouping them into a balanced meal.
  1. Place food group signs around the room.
  2. Shuffle  **Native Food Cards** and hand them out to students.
  3. Together, classify each food within a food group.
  4. Have students walk to the food group their card belongs to.
  5. Start with simple foods that belong to only one group, like apples or meat, and then work with more complex foods, like a slice of pizza with cheese, vegetables and meat on top.
    - a. Some foods can belong to 2 groups such as blue corn (a vegetable and a grain).
  6. Using the cards they were given, have them walk around the room and sort themselves into ingredients for 1 balanced meal (e.g., apple, zucchini, brown rice, chicken and yogurt).
  7. Once they’ve grouped themselves, have them brainstorm a meal that would include those 5 things (e.g. sliced apples and zucchini on a salad, chicken and brown rice yogurt for desert).
  8. Have each group share their information with the class.
-  **“Color in My Plate” (10-15 minutes):** Students color in the sections of the **MyPlate** to become familiar with how much of the plate should be occupied by each food group.
  1. Refer students to their workbook page  **Color in My Plate.**
  2. Have them label each section with the food group name and then color each section a different color.
  3. If time allows, encourage them to draw examples of their favorite foods representing each food group in the corresponding section.

**Evaluation Questions (5 minutes)**

1. *What is a balanced meal?* (Answer: a meal that contains a food from each of the 5 food groups)
2. *What food group does bread belong to?* (Answer: grains)
3. *What food group do beans belong to?* (Answer: protein)
4. *How much of the plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables?* (Answer: half)
5. *True or false? Cheese and crackers is a balanced meal.* (False: cheese and crackers represent only 2 food groups. To make it balanced, you would need to add a fruit, a vegetable and a protein)
6. *How much water should you drink every day?* (Answer: at least 6 cups of water a day)
7. *How many fruits and vegetables should you eat every day?* (Answer: at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day)
8. *Does gardening connect you to your culture and help you learn new words in your language?* (Answer: yes)

**Preparation for Future Lessons – Reminder for the Instructor**

- Review the materials and preparation needed for the next lesson.
- Remember that an Elder guest instructor is needed for these Fall lessons: Lesson 2 (What is a Plant?), Lesson 4 (Seed Exploration), Lesson 6 (Preserving the Harvest), and Lesson 10 (Companion Planting and Traditional Cooking).

**Notes**

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