

**Critical Thinking & Health:
TV Commercials and Nutrition**

**First Grade
Lessons**

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LESSON PLAN

Lesson 1: The Food Groups

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will identify the five food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy, meats & beans) as well as recognizing oils and foods high in fat, and sugar.
- Students will sort examples of foods into different food groups and will recognize that some foods contain things that fit into more than one food group.
- Students will summarize the importance of eating more foods from some food groups (grains, vegetables, fruits) and only a little from other food groups (especially fat and sugar).
- Students will describe a health benefit from each food group.

Vocabulary:

Food Group, Grains, Vegetables, Fruit, Dairy, Meats & Beans, Oil, Fat, Sugar, Calcium, Vitamins, Energy, Protein

Materials Needed:

- Teachers Guide for leading analysis and discussion
- A new *MyPyramid for Kids* poster (available at <http://www.mypyramid.gov>)
- Examples of foods and beverages from different food groups, which could be actual foods, plastic manipulatives, pictures from magazines, or empty food and beverage containers. Make sure to include:
 - Cereals (including low sugar and high sugar brands)
 - Bread, pasta, rice (including some whole grains)
 - Fruit, juice, fruit snacks, and fruit drinks
 - Vegetables
 - Milk, cheese, yogurt
 - Meat, chicken, fish, beans, nuts, eggs
 - Healthy oils (olive oil, canola oil)
 - Processed foods that contain high amounts of fat and/or sugar
- Pictures representing the healthy benefits of different types of foods (from magazines, web resources, or drawings (see Resources at the end of this kit)
 - Energy
 - Healthy teeth
 - Healthy bones
 - Being able to fight infection
 - Being able to see well
 - Growing and building muscles

continued...

Materials Needed (continued):

- Large squares of construction paper representing the different food groups (in different sizes that reflect how much food we should eat from each group). If possible use different colors that match the New Food Pyramid food groups:
 - Large Squares (2' x 3'):
 - Grains (Orange)
 - Vegetables (Green)
 - Fruits (Red)
 - Medium Squares (1' x 2'):
 - Dairy (Blue)
 - Meats, Beans, Eggs, Nuts (Purple) ** [see NOTE below]
 - Very Small Squares (6" x 6"):
 - Healthy Oils (Yellow)
 - Sugar & Unhealthy Fats (Beige) ** [see NOTE below]

Time:

35 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present *Introduction to the Lesson* to the class, leading initial discussion.
2. Place the squares of paper representing different food groups on the floor. Discuss different types of foods and food groups, while placing examples on the correct papers.
3. Using the examples of real or plastic foods and food containers, have students place those foods into the right food groups. When they are unsure, talk with them about how they could decide. If children put a food into the wrong group, explain where it should really go and talk about why it was confusing.
4. Discuss the foods that fit into more than one group (which includes many foods advertised on television, like hamburgers, Kraft Macaroni & Cheese or sugared cereals).
5. Show and discuss the new *MyPyramid for Kids* to find where each of these food groups are located. Explain why sugar and unhealthy fats don't appear on the pyramid, reinforcing the idea that those foods should be eaten rarely or in very small amounts.
6. Discuss the healthy benefits of each of the five food groups. Have students find pictures (from those provided) that match each of those benefits, and have them paste those pictures on the appropriate colored paper representing each food group.
7. Explain that foods high in fat and sugar might have added vitamins, but they are still less healthy than foods that contain vitamins naturally.

NOTES:

- While the Meats & Beans (i.e., protein) category is one food group that is on the *MyPyramid for Kids*, and may be used for the food sorting activity, it is a category that can be confusing for children because it contains so many different types of foods (chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, tofu) and it doesn't have a single word name like the other categories. It's also not used in any of the other lessons in this kit. You may want to treat it as information that children are exposed to but are not expected to fully understand at this age.
- Sugar and fats (other than healthy oils) don't appear as a category on the new Food Pyramid, but instead are referenced in a note at the bottom. You could decide not to have a sheet of paper representing Sugar and Unhealthy Fat when doing the food sorting task, but that may be confusing to children. Since many of the subsequent lessons are about foods that have high amounts of sugar, we recommend having a category for it, but with a very small square to represent foods that should be seldom eaten.

TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson 1: The Food Groups

1. Introduce the lesson.

Lesson Introduction

Before starting the lesson, make sure you have the food examples, food group papers, pictures representing health benefits, and other materials you need (see Materials List in the Lesson Plan). Have a picture or poster of the new food pyramid (*MyPyramid for Kids*) on the wall where children can see it.

Today we're going to talk about different food groups. Can anyone tell me the name of a food group? [[If they name individual foods, explain what food group that food would belong in.] **What other food groups are there?**

Lead the students through a discussion about different kinds of food and beverages, clarifying what the different groups of foods are and asking children to speculate about what kinds of foods might fall into each group. Point out the picture or poster of *MyPyramid for Kids*, and talk about the different food groups that are included.

2. Lay out the food group squares on the floor, and put out the box of sample plastic or real foods and food containers. Select one food representing each of the food group squares, asking children to identify it and decide which food group it belongs in.
3. Point out the different sizes of the food group squares, and discuss "healthy" and "unhealthy" foods and drinks using the *Discussion Questions & Answers Teacher Guide* and the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster.
4. Have the students work with the other examples of foods and food containers to place each one in the food group where it fits best. Discuss examples of foods that may fit into more than one food group, helping students think through their decisions.
5. Using the *Discussion Questions & Answers Teacher Guide*, discuss foods that might be confusing because of their names or the way they are shown in advertising.
6. Discuss the healthy benefits of each of the five food groups using the *Discussion Questions & Answers Teacher Guide*. Have students find pictures representing those benefits and put them on the matching colored food group papers.
7. Explain that foods high in fat and sugar sometimes have added vitamins and minerals, but because of the high amounts of fat and added sugar, they still aren't very healthy.

SPECIAL NOTE

In talking about different foods, it's important not to make value judgments about different kinds of foods (describe them as "good" or "bad") since the children's parents may buy and eat those foods at home. Instead, focus on accuracy (e.g., what is really fruit?), facts (e.g., how much sugar is in that?), and consequences of eating – or not eating – certain kinds of foods.

Discussion Questions & Answers

ASK:

- 1) Who has seen a food pyramid like this one before? This is called *MyPyramid for Kids*. What kinds of food groups does it show?
- 2) These different colored pieces of paper are the same colors you see in *MyPyramid for Kids*. Can you match each colored paper with the food group on the pyramid?
- 3) Some of the papers are really large because we should eat a lot of foods from those groups. Which food groups are those?
- 4) Some of the papers are really small because we should only eat a little of them. Can you find the yellow food group on the food pyramid? What is in that group?
- 5) [Hold up the beige paper] This color represents foods and drinks that aren't even on the food pyramid because they're not very healthy and we shouldn't eat them very often even if they taste really good. You might see them advertised on TV a lot. What do you think might be in that group?
- 6) Some foods might go in more than one food group? Can anyone think of something that might need to go in more than one food group?

Possible Answers: Grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, meats and beans, oils, [if they give specific foods like milk or bread, probe to help them decide what food group it should be in]

Possible Answers: Red is fruit, orange is bread and cereal, blue is milk and cheese, etc.

Possible Answers: The green one for vegetables, like carrots, tomatoes, celery, green beans, red peppers; the orange one for grains, like bread, pasta, rice, and oatmeal; the red one for fruits, like apples, bananas and strawberries.

Possible Answers: It's oil. [explain about different kinds of healthy oils, like olive oil, or canola oil; distinguish that from fats found in butter, margarine and fried foods]

Possible Answers: Sugar, candy, ice cream, cake, cookies, gum, soda, fats, butter, fried things.

Possible Answers: macaroni & cheese, hamburgers, yogurt with fruit in it, French fries, a cereal that has a lot of sugar.

Activity

Let's see if we can figure out what food group each of these foods should go in. What about this pear? How about this spaghetti? What about this cottage cheese? How about this red pepper? What about these kidney beans? What about this donut?

Now let's see if you can figure out where the rest of these foods go in the food groups.

You may have the students work in groups, with each group finding foods to go in one of the food groups; or have few students come up to get foods at the same time.

Discussion Questions & Answers

ASK

1) Which foods were the hardest to figure out? Why?

Possible Answers: things that have a lot of sugar in them but aren't candy or all sugar, things that have more than one kind of food in it [discuss how to decide and where the food should go – which might be more than one place; especially clarify that “fruit” snacks and drinks have hardly any fruit, so they shouldn't go in the fruit group]

2) Why do we want to eat healthy foods?

Each food group is important for different reasons. Fruits give us energy and vitamins to help us fight infections. Vegetables give us vitamins & minerals that help us see better. Grains give us lots of energy. Dairy gives us calcium for strong bones and teeth. Meats & Beans give us protein to build muscles and help us grow.

Possible Answers: we need them for energy, we need vitamins and minerals to keep our skin and eyes and teeth healthy, they help us think better, we need them to grow and to be strong

3) Why should we try not to eat very many unhealthy foods?

Possible Answers: It could make us sick, we wouldn't have any energy, we might get cavities in our teeth, we might gain too much weight, it might make us feel funny.

4) There's one important drink that's not on the food pyramid, but we should drink it every day because it helps our blood and skin, and helps us get rid of wastes by going to the bathroom. Can you guess what it is?

Answer: Water.

Activity

I've got some pictures that show healthy people and healthy bodies. Let's see if we can match each picture to the food group that helps us have that part of our healthy body or helps us do those things.

Show each picture, discussing what the students see – and then reminding them what foods will help develop that. Students can paste each picture on the appropriate colored paper representing that food group.

Summary Questions & Answers

ASK

1) What are the five food groups?

Possible Answers: Grains, Vegetables, Fruit, Dairy, Meats & Beans

2) How does the food pyramid help us to be more healthy?

Possible Answers: by helping us remember what kinds of foods to eat

3) How do foods help us be healthy?

Possible Answers: They give us vitamins, energy, protein, and calcium.

4) From which food groups should we eat the most?

Possible Answers: Grains, fruits, vegetables.

5) From which food groups should we eat the least?

Possible Answers: Unhealthy fats and sugars.

6) Sometimes foods and drinks that have a lot of sugar also add vitamins. They might say something like "contains 100% Vitamin C." Does that mean that they are just as healthy for us to have as real fruits and vegetables?

Possible Answers: No, they still have a lot of added sugar which is unhealthy, so it's not the same as eating fruit or vegetables.