

WHAT IS A BALANCED DIET? (Grades 1-3)

Focus Lesson: What is a Balanced Diet?

Materials:

Blank *My Plate* worksheet (www.choosemyplate.org)

Food Diary Sheet (students can complete this at home the day before teaching this lesson plan)

The Edible Pyramid: Good Eating Every Day by Loreen Leedy

KidsHealth.org

Food Guide Pyramid Becomes a Plate

ChooseMyPlate.gov

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html>

Add more Vegetables to Your Day

Focus on Fruits

Time: 50 minutes

**Consider sending home a letter explaining to parents that the class will be studying nutrition and exercise as a part of the next science unit, since students will be examining components of healthy meals and developing personal exercise plans.

**Students can *voluntarily* share the meals logged on their Food Diaries.

*Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.7

Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.

Thinking Skill: Labelling, Using Diagrams

Objective:

Students will recognize what it means to eat a balanced diet and more about the Food Groups.

Students will learn the suggested serving sizes for each food group

Students will be able to place specific ingredients of certain meals on *My Plate* and identify whether the meal is balanced or not.

Connection:

We've been learning about *My Plate* and what kinds of foods fall into which groups, but now let's think about how much of each food group we should be eating. If I asked you what a balanced diet was, what would you say to me?

- Explain the importance of not only eating foods from different food groups, but also incorporating exercise.

Today we're going to learn about the recommended portions of our food groups and then figure out if any of us are eating a balanced diet. Believe it or not, everything we eat fits somewhere on the plate!

Explicit Instruction:

Read *The Edible Pyramid: Good Eating Every Day*. This book will help explain the different food groups (but keep in mind that the USDA is using *My Plate*).

Another good source on the Food Groups is <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/>. This site also shows the appropriate serving sizes of individual foods. For example, click on the Commonly Eaten Vegetables in Each Subgroup (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables.html#>) to see that a serving size of romaine lettuce equals 1 cup.

Pull up big *My Plate* on smart board or post one on white board

- Have serving sizes on the side to match up with each food group

Ask students to make educated guesses about how much of each food group they should be eating.

- Should we be eating more grains than fruits and vegetables?

Guided Practice:

Once you've established which serving sizes go with which food groups, have students pull out their *My Plate* worksheets from the intro lesson.

- Go ahead and label your plate with the correct food groups, and leave them out on your desks to use during the next activity.

Walk around the room and make sure students are labeling correctly (this should not take long).

Reconvene at the front of the classroom.

Ask for a volunteer to get his or her lunchbox (or check the school's hot lunch menu).

- Examine all of the foods in the lunch. Where do they fit on *My Plate*? Is there something from every group?

- Make list on the board.

Ask the same student what they had for breakfast (they can use their *Food Diaries* if comfortable).

Reconfigure the servings for each food group. Does that student seem to be eating a balanced diet?



Independent Practice:

Break the class up into four groups. Each group gets a different scenario that outlines the diet of an individual (students can use their *Food Diaries* if comfortable sharing them). The students' job is to determine whether the individual has a balanced diet or not.

Reflection – Group Share:

Students will report their findings back to the class, walking us through what they found in each of the meals and what helped them determine whether their diet balanced or not.
- Remind students to factor in any exercise.

Reading List:

For the food groups: *The Edible Pyramid: Good Eating Every Day* by Loreen Leedy

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/>

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/nutrition/food/pyramid.html#>

KidsHealth.org

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ChooseMyPlate.gov

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html>

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Teacher Note:

The USDA is using My Plate now in place of the Food Pyramid.

Information on the different food groups can be learned from either source (Plate or Pyramid).

*This lesson pairs well with Intro to My Plate and Design a Day of Meals.

*For lessons on the individual food groups, refer to Chickens and Eggs on My Plate (for protein/food groups), Tomato Debate, and Foods Made From Milk.

FOOD DIARY

What I ate today (including all drinks and snacks)

Meals	Foods and Drinks
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Snacks	
Dinner	
Dessert	