

## WHAT IS A BALANCED DIET? (Grades 4-5)

### Focus Lesson: What is a Balanced Diet?

#### Materials:

Blank *My Plate* worksheet ([www.choosemyplate.org](http://www.choosemyplate.org))

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

#### [KidsHealth.org](http://KidsHealth.org)

Learning About Proteins  
Learning About Carbohydrates  
Food Guide Pyramid Becomes a Plate

#### [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov)

Add more Vegetables to Your Day  
Focus on Fruits

**Time:** Day 1 to Day 4, 1-2 hours each day

5-6 days if used with Intro to My Plate and Design a Day of Meals

\*\*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.4.7](#)

Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

#### Thinking Skill: Labelling, Using Diagrams, Close Reading

#### 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:

Day 1: Read *Food Guide Pyramid Becomes a Plate* on KidsHealth.org as a class (or use Intro to My Plate lesson plan).

Day 2 and 3: Divide the class into pairs to read more about carbohydrates and proteins. Have each pair highlight the important aspects of these two food groups. During their research inquiries, they should include serving sizes of common foods in each group.

A 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 Grains in Each Subgroup (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/grains.html>) to see that a serving size of whole wheat bread is one slice.

[KidsHealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org) also has helpful information about proteins and carbohydrates.

Divide class into groups of 4-6 students. Each group makes a chart of the importance of carbohydrates and proteins (what they do for our bodies, food sources, how many servings a 10 year old should eat daily, etc). These groups will share their findings with the class.

Day 4: Have students read independently (close reading) and highlight the two articles from ChooseMyPlate.gov on fruits and vegetables. They will share with their partner the important aspects of the articles.

Once students are finished, explain that they will now analyze their own lunches using what they have learned from My Plate and the Food Groups.

### 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:

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

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

[KidsHealth.org](http://KidsHealth.org)

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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 Powerful Protein and Tomato Debate

## FOOD DIARY

What I ate today (including all drinks and snacks)

Meals	Foods and Drinks
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Snacks	
Dinner	
Dessert	