

MyPlate Meets “My Favorite Meal”

The Big Idea

Students will learn more about the five food groups, and discover how to choose healthy options for snacks and well-balanced meals using **MyPlate**.

Education Standards: (NHES) Health: 3.5.2, 4.5.1, 5.5.5, 6.5.1, 8.5.2; (CCSS) English Language Arts: RI.2-3.7, RF.2-3.3, W.2-3.2, SL.2-3.1, L.2-3.1, L.2-3.2, L.2-3.5

GOALS AND SKILLS

Students will...

- Explore the **MyPlate** icon and the five food groups
- Name the five **MyPlate** food groups
- Identify food choices in each food group
- Create a **MyPlate** meal plan
- Share what they have learned with others in the school community and at home

Supplies and Preparation:

- **MyPlate** icon*
- Chart paper
- Art supplies (poster paper, color markers, crayons, markers, color pencils, glue sticks, tape, scissors, grocery store circulars, food magazines)
- Download and make copies of the **MyPlate Coloring Sheet**: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/MyPlate/ColoringSheet.pdf>

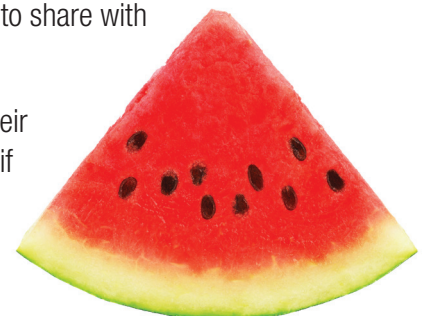


***Background for Teacher:** Visit USDA's website www.choosemyplate.gov to learn more about and download the **MyPlate** icon. You can print it out or use a projector. To learn more about healthy foods that belong in each food group, visit www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups. You can also download a two-sided and kid-friendly **MyPlate** poster here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/eatsmartposter.pdf>.

INSTRUCTION STEPS

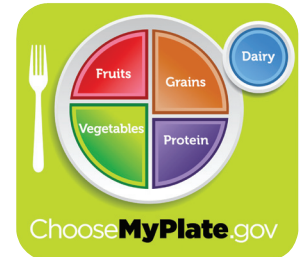
1. Favorite Meals. Begin by asking students: *What is your favorite meal?* Distribute copies of the **MyPlate Coloring Sheet** and have students write down the various foods their favorite meal contains on the backside (have students fold the paper in half vertically and use the left side; they will revisit the activity as a reflection). Invite a few of them to share with the class. Make a list of the foods on the board or chart paper.

Next, ask students how they would organize or sort the foods listed. Allow students to share their suggestions, for example: color, shape, taste, texture, growing season, or mealtime. Take note if any students mention a food group.



2. Discover MyPlate. Display the **MyPlate** icon or poster, or have students turn over their **MyPlate Coloring Sheet**.

Ask students if they recognize the icon. If they do, invite students to explain what it means or where they have seen it. Explain that just as we can sort foods by taste, color and by mealtimes, we can also sort foods into five food groups: **Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein, Dairy**.



Tell the students: The **MyPlate** icon serves as a reminder that a person should eat from each of the five food groups every day. Each food group has different nutrients, or ingredients, that are good for our bodies and help us grow, get strong, concentrate at school, and have energy to play. By eating from the five food groups, we give our bodies what they need!

Spend a few more moments letting students observe what they see on the icon. For example, fruits and vegetables make up half of the plate. So, what foods are in each food group? Invite students to share ideas.

The next activity will help students uncover healthy foods in each food group.



3. MyPlate Scramble. Play this fun and challenging word scramble game that will exercise your students' spelling and literacy skills as they identify healthy foods and sort them into food groups. Divide the class into 5 teams. Explain the premise of the game: A word will be written on the board with its letters scrambled. Give them a hint by telling them that all words are foods or beverages. One team will start and have 15 seconds to unscramble the word and make a guess. If they answer correctly, they receive a point. If they guess incorrectly, the turn goes to the next team. Teams have a chance to earn 5 bonus points by identifying the correct food group that the food belongs to. As the food words are unscrambled, have a volunteer record a running list of them on the side of the board or on chart paper for future reference.

Start with the **MyPlate Scramble** list provided. Play as many rounds as you have time for.

Modifications:

- If this game is too challenging, play in food group categories, e.g., specifying that the next series of words will all be vegetables.
- For an extra challenge, leave a letter out of the scramble, and insert a “?” in its place.

4. MyPlate Collage Posters. With students still in their teams, have them work together to create colorful collage posters. Assign each team one of the five food groups to focus on. Teams should start by brainstorming what healthy and colorful foods belong in their food group. If needed, use the foods listed on the Choose **MyPlate** website as a reference:

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

Once teams have thought about what foods they want to show, and how, have them think of descriptive adjectives that will promote and entice others to try their food group. Encourage them to think about taste, texture, shape, color, and combinations with other foods.

Provide poster board and art supplies to teams. Include grocery store circulars or food magazines with pictures of foods that students can cut out for their collages. When they are finished, collages can be displayed on hallway bulletin boards, in school halls, or in the cafeteria to promote healthy foods.

Modification:

- For an extra challenge, if you have more time, or if there are multiple teams with the same food group, have students explore the subcategories within their food group. For example, the vegetable group has 5 subgroups: “Dark Green,” “Starchy,” “Red & Orange,” “Beans and Peas,” and “Other.” Grains could be divided into “breakfast grains” and “dinnertime grains,” and fruits could be categorized by “citrus,” “melons,” “berries,” etc. Teams can create a poster for each of the subgroups.

5. Reflect. Have students revisit their “favorite meal” from the beginning of the lesson, written on the back of the *MyPlate Coloring Sheet*. Ask:

- *What food groups are missing?*
- *What could they be eating more of?*
- *How can they change and “healthify” their meals to fit MyPlate?*

Tell them that by “scrambling up” their usual meals, they can add in **MyPlate** foods to make their favorite meals even better . . . and healthier! Encourage them to revisit the words they unscrambled in the *MyPlate Scramble* as idea-starters for new foods to add to/enhance their favorite meals. (For example: Add nuts and/or diced kiwi as toppers to their favorite ice cream or cereal.) In addition to those on the list, what other healthy foods could they add? Invite students to write down the potential updates to their favorite meals on the back of the *MyPlate Coloring Sheet* (on the right side) and share these “new plans” with the class.

6. Extend the Lesson. Pick a healthy food from each of the food groups to “feature” each week. Make it a goal for everyone in the class to try it. Focus on nutritious but commonly under-consumed foods (e.g., Dark Green Vegetables, Red & Orange Vegetables, Beans and Peas, Fruit, Whole Grains). For extra fun, invite other classes to participate; if possible, speak with the school dietitian to explore adding some of these foods to the school menu!

7. Home Connection. Have students bring home and share their new “My-Plate-ified” favorite meals with their families to discuss recipes and make a shopping list together. Parents/caregivers may be interested to discover what their child’s favorite meal is!

TEACHER TOOL: MyPlate Food Scramble

Note that the word scrambles increase in difficulty. For additional foods in each food group, visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/>.

Word Scramble	Answer	Food Group
GEGS	EGGS	Protein
ANBANA	BANANA	Fruit
NOCR	CORN	Vegetable
STNU	NUTS	Protein
IWK	KIWI	Fruit
PEPAL	APPLE	Fruit
AUTN	TUNA	Protein
HMRSPI	SHRIMP	Protein
IEC CRMEA	ICE CREAM	Dairy
GANOM	MANGO	Fruit
RECLAE	CEREAL	Grain
TGOUYR	YOGURT	Dairy
UTYRKE	TURKEY	Protein
ASNEB	BEANS*	Vegetable and Protein
SMOANL	SALMON	Protein
PISAHNC	SPINACH	Vegetable
EOLNM	LEMON	Fruit
ODONSEL	NOODLES	Grain
RTRAOC	CARROT	Fruit
AYPAA	PAPAYA	Fruit
EUELTC	LETTUCE	Vegetable
CECIHNK	CHICKEN	Protein
COLOIBRC	BROCCOLI	Vegetable
ICARNAOM	MACARONI	Grain
LGEANGPT	EGGPLANT	Vegetable
OTSTOAME	TOMATOES	Vegetable
AZZAEMOLLR	MOZZARELLA	Dairy
BNOWR EIRC	BROWN RICE	Grain
PAETOSTO	POTATOES	Vegetable
SMKI KMLI	SKIM MILK	Dairy
AISSNR	RAISINS	Fruit
LATEAMO	OATMEAL	Grain
OUFT	TOFU	Protein
ICIUHCNZ	ZUCCHINI	Vegetable
INAOUQ	QUINOA	Grain
RLAITLTO	TORTILLA	Grain
ENBA ERUBRG	BEAN BURGER*	Vegetable and Protein
TIAP ECPKOT	PITA POCKET	Grain
RLMTONAWEE	WATERMELON	Fruit
SLSUBERS URTSSOP	BRUSSELS SPROUTS	Vegetable
HEWLO EWATH EADRB	WHOLE WHEAT BREAD	Grain

*Remember! Beans are special! They are part of the Vegetable *and* Protein food groups.