

**Families:**

Pilot Light Family Meal Lessons are designed to easily bring food education into your home. We recommend using the Family Resources in the following way:

1. Watch the Family Meal video for the lesson as a family.
2. Make the recipe as a family.
3. In the Common Core Connections section, children can learn through and about food while strengthening Common Core English Language Arts or Math skills.
4. Family Discussion questions and Extension Activities are provided to allow learners of all ages opportunities to participate in the learning experience!



**Pilot Light Family Meal Lesson**  
**How to Fillet and Cook Fish**

**+ Grades 6-8 - Common Core English Language Arts - Writing -  
Text Types and Purposes**

**Suggested Recipe Age Range: 12+ with adult help**

**Recipe by Chef Geef Fellows**

**Fish with Couscous (serves 4)****Ingredients:**

- 1 fish (~2 lbs ), inner guts removed and scaled (any round fish will work here!)
- 1 cup couscous
- 3 cups water
- 1 medium shallot, sliced thinly (or use another allium like onion or leek)
- 2 cloves of garlic, sliced thinly
- 1 ½ Tbsp thyme, fresh (or 1 tsp. if using dried)
- ½ cup raisins
- 4 Tbsp butter, sliced in ½ inch pieces
- ¼-⅓ cup white wine
- Olive oil
- Lemon juice, to taste
- Salt and pepper, to taste

**Materials:**

- Knife
- Scissors (optional)
- Spatula
- Spoon
- Cutting board and knife



- 2 medium saute pans (for fish and sauce)
- 1 sauce pot (for couscous)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Paper towels

Directions:

1. Fillet the fish:
  - a. Wipe the fish with a paper towel to assure it is dry, then lay the fish with the belly facing you and head to the right side of your board.
  - b. Using scissors or a knife, remove all fins and discard. Remove the head by cutting at a 45 degree angle starting at the top of the gill down towards where the fin was. Be sure to apply pressure to cut through the neck at the top.
  - c. You will now open the fish up by cutting guidelines on the top and bottom of the fish.
    - i. If your fish has had it's spine bones removed (as they are in the video), flip the fish so the belly is facing away from you. Slide your knife so it is parallel to the cutting board and cut along the back of the fish's spine bones to separate into fillets. Be sure to hold the fish with the hand that is not holding the knife.
    - ii. If your fish has NOT had it's spine bones removed, slide your knife along the spine and use your knife to zip through the spine bones. Be sure to hold the fish with the hand that is not holding the knife. Flip, and repeat for the other side (belly towards you) to remove the spine bones. Remove the rib bones near the belly of each fillet by making a diagonal slice (or multiple if you need) towards the tail and pressing upwards towards the rib bones.
  - d. Cut any extra pieces from fins off, and portion to cook.
2. Make the couscous:
  - a. Bring water to a boil in a medium pot, and add couscous.
  - b. Stir and bring the couscous to a boil. Remove from the heat and cover for ten minutes.
  - c. After ten minutes, remove the lid and fluff with a fork to aerate. Add olive oil and salt to serve.
3. Cook the fish:
  - a. Get your saute pan hot first on medium high heat. Add some oil and then your fish. Using a spatula, apply a little weight, to get a nice flat sear on your fish.
  - b. When your fish is lightly golden brown, add 2T butter and brown for an added nutty flavor.
    - i. Once brown, stop the browning by adding a squeeze of lemon juice (but be careful doing this over an open flame as it will spit!).
    - ii. Baste the fish with some of the butter by spooning it over.
  - c. Once you have stopped the butter from browning, flip your fish over and turn off the heat to further slow cooking while the sauce builds.
4. Make the sauce:
  - a. Cook your fish until step 3(c), then begin!
  - b. Bring a small pan to medium heat and add olive oil.
  - c. Add the shallot and cook, then add garlic and thyme and cook low until the

- shallot and garlic are translucent.
- d. Add raisins and white wine and lightly simmer.
  - e. When wine has reduced, begin adding remaining 2T of cold butter, one piece at a time, until emulsified then season with lemon and salt. This is called mounting the sauce and gives it a creamy, velvety texture.
5. Serve: plate couscous first, then top with fish, and fish with sauce on top. Enjoy!

### Common Core Connections:

#### Grades 6-8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

#### What does this mean?

While this standard is written for 6th grade writing levels, it is appropriate for all ages and stages. It asks students to explain a topic -- how an experiment is done, or how to solve our environmental crisis. As the topic becomes more complex, so, too, does the necessary explanation.

In this lesson, you (the student) will be working on teaching someone how to do something by writing instructions. You just learned how to prepare a meal through written instructions: a recipe is a kind of informative/explanatory text. Now, you'll create a "recipe" for something you know how to do.

#### What does this look like? [Scaffold by grade when possible]

Materials needed:

- Paper
- Pen or Pencil

Directions:

You're about to become a teacher. In this activity, you are going to teach someone how to do something at which you're an expert. (Just like Chef taught you how to prepare a fish dinner.) Are you GREAT at tying your shoes? Can you throw a baseball more accurately than ANYONE? Now is your chance to spread your knowledge.

1. Your first step is to brainstorm all the things you're really good at doing. Write a list. Illustrate the list if you'd like. Sometimes drawing helps you think of even more ideas.
2. Pick your favorite activity from the list. Keep in mind that you're going to be explaining how to do this activity to someone who may not know anything about how to do it. Don't pick something TOO complicated. Throwing a baseball seems easy, but there are a lot of steps to teach somebody who wants to learn how to do it.
3. Next, write down every single thing you'll need to carry out your task. Wrench? Pencil? Paper? A partner? A shoe? No need to worry about organizing at this point,

you're still brainstorming.

4. Now you want to write down every single step involved in your task. Again, do not worry about organization. Be detailed! If you're describing how to throw a baseball, don't forget that the person throwing has to pick up the ball!
5. Put your steps in order by numbering them on your page. Don't worry about crossing out and reordering.
6. You're ready to write your essay! Use the format below to guide you:
  - a. **Introductory Paragraph:** This section introduces your reader to the task and outlines all the materials needed.
  - b. **Body Paragraphs:** Body paragraphs provide instructions on what to do with all the materials you included in your Introductory Paragraph.
  - c. **Conclusion:** How should your project conclude? What does it look like if you've done it correctly?
7. Your FINAL step is to give your instructions to someone else. Can they do your activity? If not, go back and edit your work.

#### **Family Discussion Questions:**

##### **Families/children could discuss or write about:**

- What makes someone an expert?
- What is difficult about writing an explanation of something?
- How do you like to be taught to do something? Reading directions? Modeling by an expert?

#### **Extension Activities:**

##### **Here are some suggestions for additional activities that relate to this recipe:**

- A fun extension activity is to create an Experts Collection. Each person in the family writes and collects directions for things at which they are expert. If you compile the writings, you have a how-to guide for all kinds of great skills and activities!

*This original Family Lesson was written by Pilot Light Food Education Fellow, Kristine Wilber*