

The Six Healthy Food Groups

Grade Levels & Subjects: Grades 3 – 5 English Language Arts

Learning + Food Objectives:

Students will learn how food impacts health by learning about the six healthy food groups and creating a meal through drawing and writing that contains all six food groups.

Common Core Standards:

Common Core English Language Arts

Writing - Recalling information and categorizing information

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3-5.8](#)

Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information and provide a list of sources.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pilot Light Video: "The Six Healthy Food Groups" <https://vimeo.com/511759696>
- Student Worksheet (Attached below)

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

1. Ask students to think about a group they belong to. (You could prompt them with ideas such as a club or sport, this classroom, a homeroom, a grade level, their family, a church, or friend group).
2. Take several answers and then tell students that they will be talking about food groups. The types of food we eat fits into different groups. It's important to get food from all of these food groups, and sometimes a food may fit into more than one group (for example: I may be in the 2nd grade but also belong to the basketball team).

INSTRUCTION (45 minutes)

1. Ask students to list the six food groups in a healthy diet. (*Note: the USDA lists six food groups. Other sources may list food groups in different ways – so feel free to adjust at teacher’s discretion*). As students are listing their ideas, circle groups that are correct or make connections like a web (i.e. if a student lists “greens” you could connect that to the vegetable group, or “sweets” could connect to any of the groups depending on what is inside).

The food groups in this lesson/from the USDA are:

fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, dairy, and oils

**Processed foods (like sweets) are also part of a realistic diet, but we are focusing on the six food groups in a healthy diet. It’s up to the teacher how much to go into this topic, but it is important to mention everyone will not eat from these food groups all of the time. Processed foods can be very yummy, but they should be limited to once in a while.*

2. After brainstorming, make a clear list of the six groups in a healthy diet: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, dairy, and oils.
3. Tell students that they are going to learn more about these six groups and design a meal that includes all of the healthy food groups. Show “The Six Healthy Food Groups” video linked here that introduces the six groups and provides examples (<https://vimeo.com/511759696>).
4. After watching the video, provide a graphic organizer for students that lists the food groups, their roles in a healthy diet, and examples of them. The food group video could be re-watched and students can take notes in graphic organizer. Teacher could also create a fill-in-the-blank version of the graphic organizer. A completed graphic organizer is provided below for teacher reference.
5. Have students list or draw additional examples of each group and allow students to share out (teacher can also use this as a check for understanding).
6. Students will then independently create a meal that contains all most food groups using the MyPlate.gov organizer provided below. This can be done as a drawing and/or in writing for more advanced students as a paragraph. Teacher can adjust worksheet to students’ ability levels. If this is done in the classroom, students can color their plates. If this is done remotely, students can search for images to paste onto their plates.

CLOSING (teacher discretion)

1. Ask several students to share out their work and ask them to be sure identify the six foods groups within the meal while presenting.
2. Discuss, how can you use MyPlate.gov to get the right proportions of the foods you eat?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020 – 2025” from the USDA
https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf
- *Good Enough to Eat* by Lizzy Rockwell – children’s book about nutrients found in food – an additional way food can be grouped or categorize

RECIPE

Below is the recipe for a video that contains ingredients from every healthy food group. Teacher could ask students to identify each of the healthy food groups in this video/recipe.

Easy Chicken Enchiladas by Chef Kristin Koury: <https://vimeo.com/416129906>

Serves 6–8

Ingredients:

- 2 cups chicken, cooked and shredded (from a roasted chicken from the store, roasted whole chicken leftovers, or cooked chicken breasts or legs and thighs)
- 2 ea 16oz jars of salsa (tomatillo salsa, red salsa, or canned enchilada sauce)
- 1½ cups shredded cheese (use whatever you have on hand: Chihuahua, mozzarella, cheddar, Monterey jack or a combination)
- ½ cup sour cream or yogurt
- 8 large tortillas
- (Optional toppings): cilantro, green onions, jalapeno slices, chopped tomatoes, avocado slices, shredded lettuce

Materials:

- Oven
- Large mixing bowl
- Large spoon
- Sheet tray
- 9x13 baking pan and foil

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350F.

2. Combine shredded chicken, 1 jar salsa, 1 cup of cheese, and sour cream/yogurt in a large bowl and mix.
3. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ of a jar of salsa in the bottom of the 9x13 pan.
4. Put a few spoons of salsa onto the sheet tray. Place one tortilla on top of the sauce and wet the tortilla (this makes it easier to roll – you may need to add more salsa as you go).
5. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of chicken mix on the tortilla with your hands and spread down the middle. Roll and place in pan. Repeat.
6. Top rolled tortillas with remaining salsa then sprinkle with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cheese.
7. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Remove foil then bake for an additional 10 minutes.
8. If using, garnish enchiladas with cilantro, green onions, jalapeno slices, avocado slices, chopped tomatoes, and/or shredded lettuce. Serve and enjoy!

The student worksheet below can be printed or copied onto any online learning platform.

For teacher reference - blank student worksheet on next page:

| Food Group | Role in a healthy diet | Examples |
|---------------|---|--|
| Fruits | Most fruits are low in fat and calories and provide important nutrients for your body like fiber, potassium, and vitamins. | Banana, apple, orange, blueberry, raisins |
| Vegetables | Most vegetables are low in fat and calories and provide important nutrients for your body like fiber, potassium, and vitamins. | Green bean (canned/frozen), spinach, carrot, broccoli, potato, avocado |
| Grains | Whole grains give us energy, fiber, and vitamins, and minerals. | Pasta, bread/roll, rice, tortilla |
| Protein Foods | Proteins give us, of course, protein, iron, magnesium, and other vitamins and minerals. | Nuts, eggs, meat, fish or shrimp |
| Dairy | Dairy provides calcium, vitamins, and minerals that help us have strong bones. | Milk, cheese, yogurt |
| Oils | These foods should only be eaten sometimes - but they can provide fat that is healthy for us - like in nuts and seafood- and sometimes they help provide flavor to the food we eat. | Vegetable oil, olive oil, oils in some foods like nuts and seafood. |

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| Food Group | Role in a healthy diet | Examples |
|------------|------------------------|----------|
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Complete the chart below:

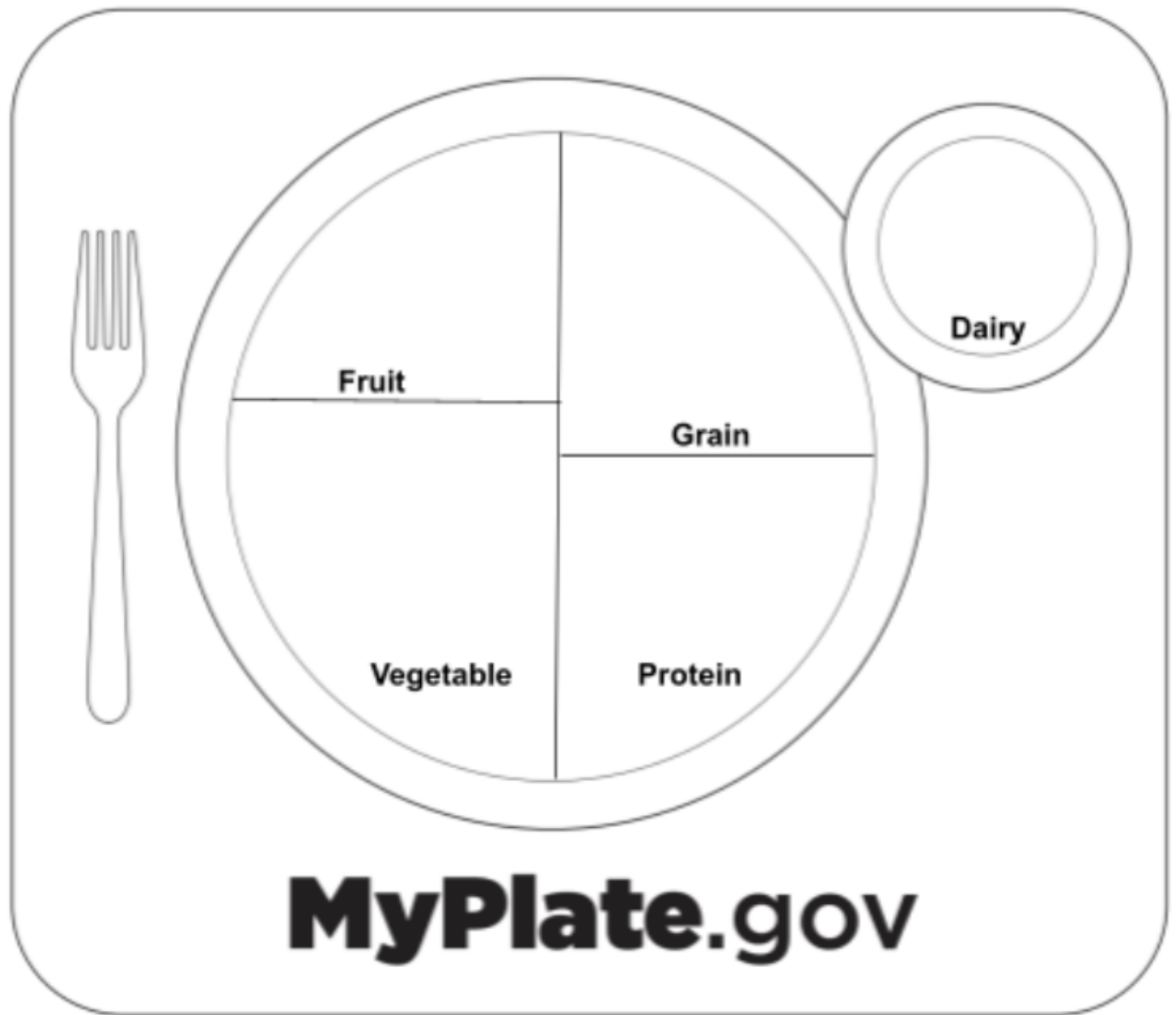
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2.

Draw a meal that includes most of the healthy food groups.

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3. Write a paragraph about what is in your healthy meal. Be sure to say which food belongs to which food group!

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