



LESSON PLAN A

Fill Your Plates

Time Frame: Three 40-minute sessions

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the five food groups and give examples of foods in each.
- Explain how healthy eating is part of overall wellness.
- Understand ideas and actions that promote health and prevent disease.
- Explain the importance of eating fruits and vegetables of every color for good health.
- Make and reflect on goals related to personal health.
- Understand that foods have nutrients that help us grow and stay healthy.
- Create a healthy meal plan that includes foods from each food group.

Materials for Lesson Plan:

- Copies of MyPlate coloring page
- Copies of Meal Planning clip art page
- Crayons or colored pencils: red, orange, green, purple, blue (required for plate); other colors to supplement for pictures of food
- Scissors
- Letter size envelopes (for clipart food items)
- MyPlate placemats and food cut-outs from Activity A
- Computer with Internet access (Optional)
- Projector (Optional)
- Food items for Mini-Plate Snack (see below)
- Paper plates and paper cups
- Copies of lyrics to the “Alive With Five Groups” song

Overview:

These activities all center around the MyPlate recommendations from the USDA. Use them to introduce or reinforce key concepts in an engaging, hands-on way. Each activity comes with creative snack ideas to serve during class time. These align with key teaching points in the curriculum but are optional.

Part A. Make-Your-Own Plate

Time Frame: 40 minutes

Materials for Activity:

- Copies of MyPlate coloring page
- Copies of Meal Planning clip art page
- Crayons or colored pencils: red, orange, green, purple, blue (required for plate); other colors to supplement for pictures of food
- Scissors
- Letter size envelopes (for clipart food items)

Instructions:

1. Show the [MyPlate graphic](#) on an overhead projector for all to follow as a guide. Or print out a color copy to show as a display.
2. Then pass out a black-and-white photocopy of the MyPlate coloring page to each student. (See Worksheets & Downloads at the end of this lesson plan.)
3. Introduce this activity with some questions:

Raise your hand if you've seen the MyPlate picture before. Can you describe what it is?

MyPlate is a tool that shows us the types and amounts of food and drink we should have at each meal and each day.

What do the different colors mean?

They symbolize the 5 food groups. Think of these 5 food groups as the building blocks of a healthy diet.

Why is each food group a different size?

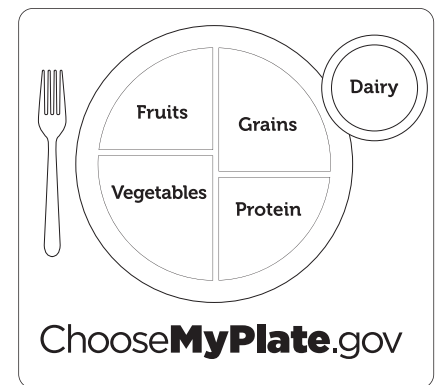
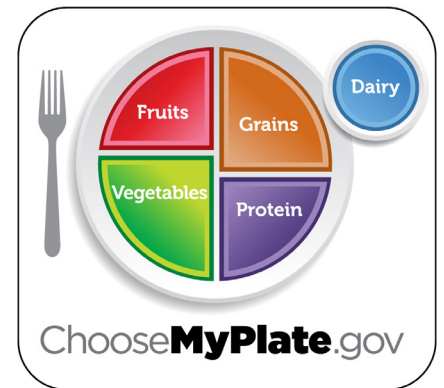
Because we need different amounts of each group for a balanced diet. These are the amounts recommended by doctors and scientists. This combination of different foods gives our bodies the nutrients and energy we need to grow and be healthy.

Do you need to carry your MyPlate picture with you wherever you go?

No, but try to keep a picture of it inside your head as a visual memory. Before you eat, stop and think about what goes on your plate, in your cup, or in your bowl.

4. Instruct students to color in each section of their plate and cup, using the same colors to match the MyPlate sections.

- Which group will you color in red? (Fruits)
- Which group will you color in green? (Vegetables)
- Which group will you color in orange? (Grains)
- Which group will you color in purple? (Protein)
- Which group will you color in blue? (Dairy)



ChooseMyPlate.gov

5. Now students should color some of the items on their Meal Planning sheet. Ask them to color in at least one item from each food group. Next, they should cut out each item, so they can use them for menu-planning activities on their plate.
6. Challenge students to plan some meals by placing food items in each category on their MyPlate page. Encourage them to experiment with different combinations and then choose what looks like a perfect meal to them. Suggest they choose things they like to eat — or would like to try to eat — from each group.
7. Optional: Take a picture of each student's chosen meal. Then, after learning more and doing more lessons, they can compare that meal with a later one.

Discussion Points:

As students are coloring their MyPlate planners and foods from their coloring sheets, talk about the five food groups:

Fruit Group:* Along with being sweet and delicious, fruits contain vitamins, minerals and fiber that keep us healthy and help to prevent disease. Citrus fruits are especially high in vitamin C.

Vegetable Group:* Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamin A and vitamin C. Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories.

***Fruits and vegetables** are a healthy way to get the nutrients and energy your body needs to feel and look good. Try to eat more of these two food groups every day by making half your plate fruits and vegetables!

Protein Foods Group: Protein-rich foods keep us feeling full. They also build bones, muscles, blood and other body parts. This food group includes more than just meat, poultry and fish. Other foods like eggs, beans, peas, soy products, nuts and seeds all fall into this category as well.

Dairy Group: Products in this group contain calcium, which is very important for children and teens who are still growing. The dairy group includes most foods made from milk, including yogurt and cheese. However, it does not include butter, cream cheese and cream. Calcium-fortified soy milk also counts as a dairy food.

Grains Group: This includes any foods made from a cereal grain such as wheat, rice, barley or cornmeal. At least half of all your grain servings should come from whole-grain foods, as they provide more fiber and nutrients.

Extensions:

Download the Food Group graphics from the Pre-K section here [add link] to supplement the Meal Planner graphics. Or use them to play the memory game explained in the lesson [add link].

Make a large placemat for your MyPlate page and Meal Planner shapes. Use colored construction paper or scraps of recycled paper taped together to make one big enough to fit your cutouts. You will use this for the next activities. Decorate your mat with doodles, positive messages or graphic elements if you have time to spare.

Family Connection:

Make homemade placemats for each member of your family. Have your siblings help out as well. This is a fun way to get families more committed to eating together at the dinner table. Ideas: 1) Cut one piece of colored construction paper into horizontal strips. Cut another piece of construction paper (a different color) into vertical strips. Weave the two of them together and secure them in place with glue or clear tape on the back. 2) Make a collage on a piece of construction paper, using cutout pictures of colorful fruits and vegetables. 3) Write compliments and positive messages on construction paper and decorate with cheerful illustrations. Use these placemats at your family dinner table for a meal or two, or laminate them to make them last all year long.

Additional Resources:

[MyPlate: 10 Practical Tips](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-choose-myplate)
www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-choose-myplate

[MyPlate Kids Place](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids)
www.choosemyplate.gov/kids

[Resources for Parents and Educators](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids-parents-ducators)
www.choosemyplate.gov/kids-parents-ducators

Part B. Serve Yourself!

Time Frame: 40 minutes

Materials for Activity:

- MyPlate placemats and food cut-outs from Activity A
- Computer with Internet access (Optional)
- Projector (Optional)

Part 1. “Healthy Plate” Video (Optional)

Watch the video [“Healthy Me: A Healthy Plate”](#) with your class, and then discuss it afterwards.

Part 2. Discussion Questions

Which foods should take up half of your plate?

Fruits and vegetables.

Why is it important for us to eat healthy foods?

Because they supply the nutrients we need for our bodies to grow and to be in good health.

Because healthy meals and an active lifestyle help us maintain or achieve a healthy weight.

Because a balanced, nutritious diet gives us the energy we need to do school work and to play.

Part 3. Servings Made Simple**Instructions:**

Take out your MyPlate placemats and food cut-outs from the last lesson. You’ll use those today to plan some meals. We don’t have real food to play with, so we’ll just have to use our imaginations!

Let’s start by seeing how much of each food group we should eat each day. Once we know that, then we can spread out those amounts over three meals in a day.

Let’s start with fruit. According to food scientists, kids your age should eat 1 to 1½ cups of fruit each day. Does that mean we need to carry measuring cups with us wherever we go? No, but here are some easier ways to think about portions.

Let's look at what 1 cup of fruit looks like.

Fruits: 1 cup = 8 large strawberries, 1 banana, 1 small apple or $\frac{1}{2}$ large apple, 1 orange, 32 seedless grapes, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dried fruit (like raisins or apricots)

Now set aside $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of your choice of fruits to eat in a day. That's your recommended amount.

Carry on with the other Food Groups. Read the list based on your class age group and abilities, let kids lead the way and give them prompts when needed.

Vegetables: 1 cup = 3 spears of broccoli, 2 medium size carrots or 12 baby carrots, 1 large ear of corn or 2 small ears of corn, 2 large stalks of celery, 1 large red pepper

Grains: 1 ounce-equivalent = 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta or cooked cereal

Protein Foods: 1 ounce-equivalent = 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter or $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of nuts or seeds

Dairy: 1 cup = 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or soymilk (soy beverage), 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese

Have you set aside your full day's amount of the 5 food groups? Let me know if you'd like some help.

Raise your hand if you'd like to eat and drink all the things, one food group at a time. How would you do that?

Raise your hand if you'd like to eat all your favorite things early in the day and leave the foods you like the least until the end of the day?

Raise your hand if you'd like to spread each one out over the day?

Next, it's time to decide how you'd like to divide them up over three meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Extension for Grades 1–2:

Help me do the math! If 1 cup = 8 large strawberries, then how many strawberries are in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups? Half of 8 is 4, and $8 + 4 = 12$. So, you could eat 12 strawberries for breakfast and that would be all the fruit you need for the day. Or you could divide it up over your 3 meals. Can you give an example of how you'd do this?

Fruits: 1 cup = 8 large strawberries, 1 banana, 1 small apple or $\frac{1}{2}$ large apple, 1 orange, 32 seedless grapes, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dried fruit (like raisins or apricots)

Instructions, continued:

Now take a few minutes to make a well-balanced breakfast. Use items that you've set aside for your day. Have you used foods from all 5 food groups?

Ask for volunteers to describe their well-balanced breakfast.

Repeat this procedure for lunch and for dinner.

High Five! You've all done a great job with meal planning. Next time we meet we'll have a "Serve Yourself" snack session to celebrate.

Alternative Activity for Grades K–1:

Print these coloring pages and have students color them in and then use them for reference. This is a math and nutrition activity rolled into one!

[What Does One Cup of Vegetables Look Like?](#)

[What Does One Cup of Fruit Look Like?](#)

[Fresh vs. Dried Fruit – Cup Equivalents](#)

Teacher Reference:

The recommended daily amounts for this age group are listed at the end of this lesson. What kids need to know at this age: These are the foods and portions required for a nutritious diet. This combination of different foods supplies our bodies with the nutrients needed for our health.

K–2 students should learn about the 5 Food Groups and the importance of eating a variety of nutritious foods. However, the detailed information about quantity and portion sizes can be taught in grades 3–5. For now, use concrete examples like the following to explain roughly how much they should have of each food group each day.

Here are the recommended daily guidelines for children ages 4–8:

Grains: 5 oz

Vegetables: 1 ½ cups

Fruits: 1–1 ½ cups

Milk/Dairy: 2 ½ cups

Protein Foods (Meat/Beans, etc.): 4 ounces

Portion Sizes – Cups and Ounces Equivalents

Examples: 1 slice of bread = 1 ounce-equivalent grains,

¼ cup of raisins = ½ cup-equivalent fruit

A 3-ounce piece of chicken is the size of a deck of cards

Fruit Group

1 medium bunch of grapes (about 50 grapes) = 1½ cup-equivalent

¼ cup of raisins = ½ cup-equivalent fruit

1 small apple counts as 1 cup-equivalent

1 snack container of applesauce (4oz) = ½ cup-equivalent fruit

1 large banana = 1 cup-equivalent

8 large strawberries = 1 cup-equivalent

1 small orange counts as ½ cup-equivalent

½ cup of 100% orange juice (4 fluid ounces) counts as ½ cup-equivalent

Vegetable Group

6 baby carrots or 1 medium carrot = ½ cup-equivalent (Red and Orange subgroup)

1 large stalk of celery = ½ cup-equivalent (Other Vegetables subgroup)

1 small ear of corn (6" long) = ½ cup-equivalent (Starchy subgroup)

1 large baked sweet potato = 1 cup-equivalent (Red and Orange subgroup)

1 medium baked or boiled potato = 1 cup-equivalent (Starchy subgroup)

1 cup of baby spinach (raw) = ½ cup-equivalent (Dark-Green subgroup)

1 cup of romaine lettuce = ½ cup-equivalent (Dark-Green subgroup)

1 cup of iceberg lettuce = ½ cup-equivalent (Other Vegetables subgroup)

½ cup of pinto beans (cooked) = ½ cup-equivalent (Beans and Peas subgroup*)

Grains Group

- 1 slice of 100% whole wheat bread = 1 ounce-equivalent (Whole Grains subgroup)
- 1 flour tortilla (8" diameter) = 2 ounce-equivalents (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- ½ large bagel = 2 ounce-equivalents (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- 1 large muffin = 3 ounce-equivalents (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- 2 whole-grain waffles = 2 ounce-equivalents (Whole Grains subgroup)
- 1 cup of cooked macaroni, noodles or pasta = 2 ounce-equivalents (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- 1 sandwich roll (2½ ounces) = 2½ ounce-equivalents (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- 1 piece of cornbread (2½" by 2½") = 2 ounce-equivalents (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- 3 cups of popcorn = 1 ounce-equivalent (Whole Grains subgroup)
- 5 whole wheat crackers = 1 ounce-equivalent (Whole Grains subgroup)
- 7 saltine crackers = 1 ounce-equivalent (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- ½ cup of oatmeal (cooked) = 1 ounce-equivalent (Whole Grains subgroup)
- 1 cup of whole wheat cereal flakes = 1 ounce-equivalent (Whole Grains subgroup)
- 1 cup of corn flakes = 1 ounce-equivalent (Refined Grains subgroup*)
- ½ cup portion of cooked brown rice = 1 ounce-equivalent grains (Whole Grains subgroup)
- 1 cup of white rice (cooked) = 2 ounce-equivalents (Refined Grains subgroup*)

Dairy Group

- 1 cup of yogurt (made with milk or soymilk) = 1 cup-equivalent dairy
- 1 snack size container of yogurt (4 ounces) = ½ cup-equivalent dairy
- 1½ ounces portion of cheddar cheese = 1 cup-equivalent dairy
- 1 cup frozen yogurt = 1 cup milk
- 1 slice of processed cheese = ⅓ cup milk

Protein Foods Group

- 1 large egg = 1 ounce-equivalent protein foods
- 2 tablespoon of peanut butter = 2 ounce-equivalents protein foods
- 1 ounce portion of walnuts = 2 ounce-equivalents protein foods
- ½ cup portion of black beans = 2 ounce-equivalents protein foods
- 4 ounce portion of pork = 4 ounce-equivalents protein foods

Food	Portion Size	About the Size of...
Grains Group		
Bread	1 ounce or 1 regular slice	CD cover
Dry cereal	1 ounce or 1 cup	Baseball
Cooked cereal, rice or pasta	1 ounce or ½ cup	½ baseball
Pancake or waffle	1 ounce or 1 small piece (6 inches)	CD
Bagel, hamburger bun	1 ounce or ½ piece	Hockey puck
Cornbread	1 piece	Bar of soap
Fruits Group		
Orange, apple, pear	1 small fruit (2½ inches in diameter)	Tennis ball
Raisins	¼ cup	Golf ball
Vegetables Group		
Baked potato	1 medium	Computer mouse
Vegetables, chopped or salad	1 cup	Baseball
Dairy Group		
Fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt	1 cup	Baseball
Cheese	1½ ounces natural cheese or 2 ounces processed cheese	9-volt battery
Frozen yogurt	½ cup	½ baseball
Protein Foods Group		
Lean beef or poultry	3 ounces	Deck of cards
Grilled or baked fish	3 ounces	Checkbook
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons	Ping-pong ball
Oils		
Margarine	1 teaspoon	Standard postage stamp
Oil or salad dressing	1 teaspoon	Standard cap on a 16-ounce water bottle

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

<https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/dietary-guidelines-and-myplate/kids-and-portion-control>

Part C. Healthy Snacks – High Five!

Time Frame: 40 minutes

Materials for Activity:

- Food items for Mini-Plate Snack (see below)
- Paper plates and paper cups
- Computer with Internet access
- Copies of lyrics to the “Alive With Five Groups” song

Teacher Preparation:

Set up a snack station for students with paper plates, cups, and foods from as many food groups as possible. For example:

- Whole-grain crackers (Grains Group)
- Cheese cubes or slices (Dairy Group)
- Grapes or apple slices (Fruit Group)
- Mini carrots (Vegetable Group)
- Orange juice fortified with calcium (Dairy and Fruit Groups)
- Or water to drink

Instructions:

Part 1. Mini-Plate Snack Session

Wash hands!

Q: Before we have our snack, what do we need to do?

A: Wash our hands! [Go first in line to model how to thoroughly wash your hands.

Wait until all students have washed their hands before beginning.]

Set guidelines.

Tell students in advance how many they may have from each group. For instance: 2 crackers, 2 cheese chunks (or 1 cheese slice), 2 apple slices or 6 grapes, 2 mini carrots. Point to each food group as you give your instructions.

Ask an essential question.

Q: What makes a snack healthy and balanced?

A: Combining as many of the food groups as possible. Think of a snack as a mini meal! What makes up the most of your snack plate? Fruits and vegetables, just like a main meal.

Now eat, drink and enjoy!

If students are thirsty after the first cup of water or juice, let them have a glass of water. Tell them that doctors say they should drink about 6 cups of water a day!

Part 2. Learn the Lyrics: Alive With Five!

Print out the lyrics to the “Alive With Five Groups” song (found at the end of the lesson) and pass out a copy to each student.

Download the song and play it for the class. Explain that you want them to listen to the words and try to learn the verses over the next few classes. Then, you’d like them to sing it as a group on the last day of this lesson unit.

Play the song two or three times. Encourage students to “act it out” and think of creative movements to match the words and messages.

Audio File: [“Alive With Five Groups”](#)**Extensions:**

For the rest of class time, pick one of these tie-in activities:

Food Songs & Videos

[PBS Kids: Fizzy’s Lunch Lab | Food Songs & Videos](#)

These funny videos and songs with clever lyrics will keep students engaged while learning key content. Includes: Food Rainbow, Ballad of Fiber, Feast of the Seven Seas, Fruit is Nature’s Candy, Veggie Fever, Calcium Yum Yum, and Wheat is Sweet.

Food Games & Coloring Pages

[MyPlate Maze](#) (K–2)

Lead the MyPlate pal through the maze and help her find foods from each food group along the way.

[Crack the Secret Code](#) (Grade 2)

Use your detective skills and the code at the right to complete the sentences.

[Whole Grains Fact Sheet & Coloring Page](#)

[Fruits Coloring Pages](#) | Produce for Better Health Foundation

[Healthy Message Activity Pages](#) – Action for Healthy Kids

Consume 3 servings of dairy each day

Make half of your plate fruits and vegetables

Consume 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day

Focus on Fruits resource lesson plans and worksheets

Vary your Veggies lesson plans and worksheets

Family Connection:**MyPlate at Home: Tips for Families With School-Age Children**

The [MyPlate at Home](#) guide offers some fun and easy tips for building healthier family meals that include the five food groups. Healthy eating patterns can work for anyone, accommodating their traditions, culture, and budget. Click on the link or read below:

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables—on a budget

- Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are all smart choices. Look for sales and buy some of each to last until your next shopping trip.
- Choose frozen vegetables that do not have added fat, salt, or sugars.
- Buy canned fruits packed in “100% juice” or water.
- Look for canned vegetables that say, “No added salt.”
- For additional tips, check out MyPlate’s Healthy Eating on a Budget <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget>

Start every day the whole-grain way

- Serve whole-grain versions of cereal, bread, or pancakes at breakfast.
- Whole grains with more fiber will help your kids feel fuller longer so they stay alert in school.
- Choose foods with “100% whole wheat” or “100% whole grains” on the label. Or check the ingredient list to see if the word “whole” is before the first ingredient listed (for example, whole-wheat flour). If it is, it’s whole grain.

Milk matters

Children of every age, and adults too, need the calcium, protein, and vitamin D found in milk for strong bones, teeth, and muscles.

- Drink milk at meals.
- If you’re lactose intolerant, try lactose-free or lactose reduced milk or calcium-fortified soy beverage

Standards Alignment | Students will:**National Health Education Standards**

Standard 1. Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
Standard 3. Demonstrate the ability to access valid information, products, and services to enhance health.
Standard 6. Demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

SHAPE America, National Physical Education Standards

Standard 4. Exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.

Common Core Standards > Math > Measurement & DataDescribe and compare measurable attributes:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.MD.A.2 – Directly compare two objects with a measurable attribute in common, to see which object has “more of”/“less of” the attribute, and describe the difference.

Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.MD.B.3 – Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

Common Core Standards > Math > Counting & CardinalityCount to tell the number of objects:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4 – Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality.

Compare numbers:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.C.6 – Identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than, less than, or equal to the number of objects in another group, e.g., by using matching and counting strategies.

Common Core Standards > Math > GeometryReason with shapes and their attributes:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.G.A.3 – Partition circles and rectangles into two, three, or four equal shares, describe the shares using the words halves, thirds, half of, a third of, etc., and describe the whole as two halves, three thirds, four fourths. Recognize that equal shares of identical wholes need not have the same shape.

Common Core Standards > English Language Arts > Speaking & Listening**Comprehension and Collaboration:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1 – Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade appropriate topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.A – Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

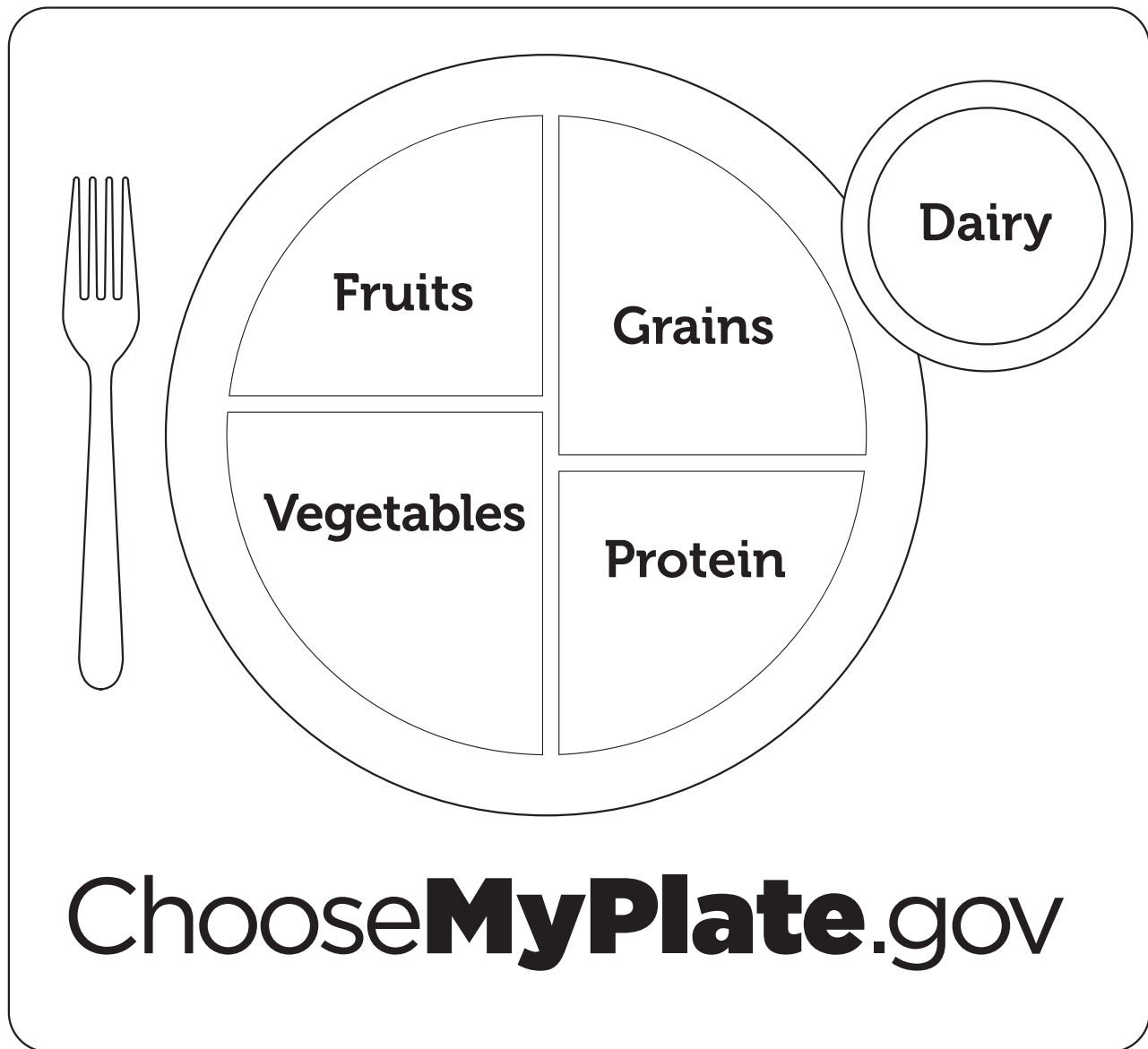
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B – Build on others’ talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

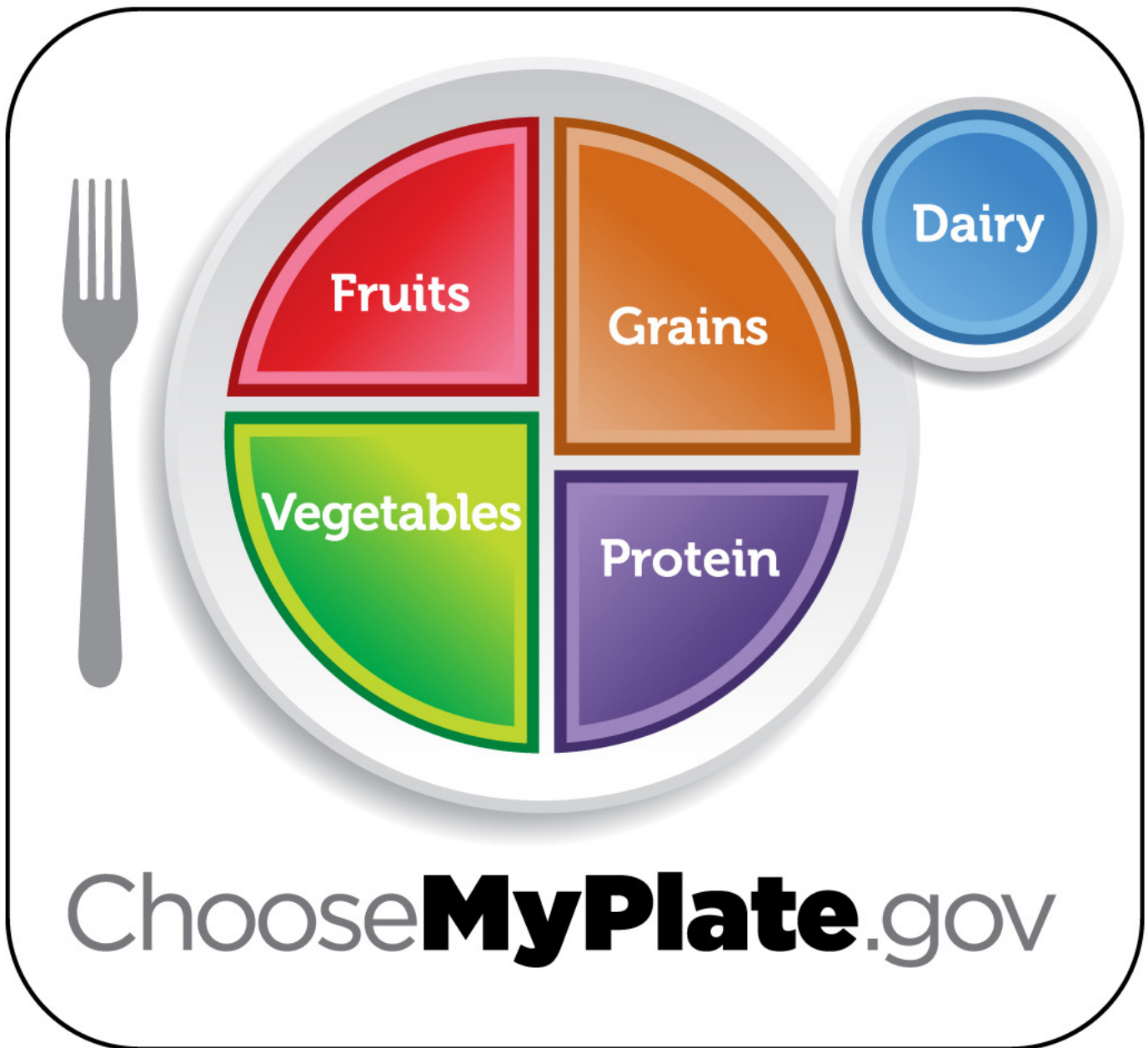
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.C – Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2 – Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.3 – Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

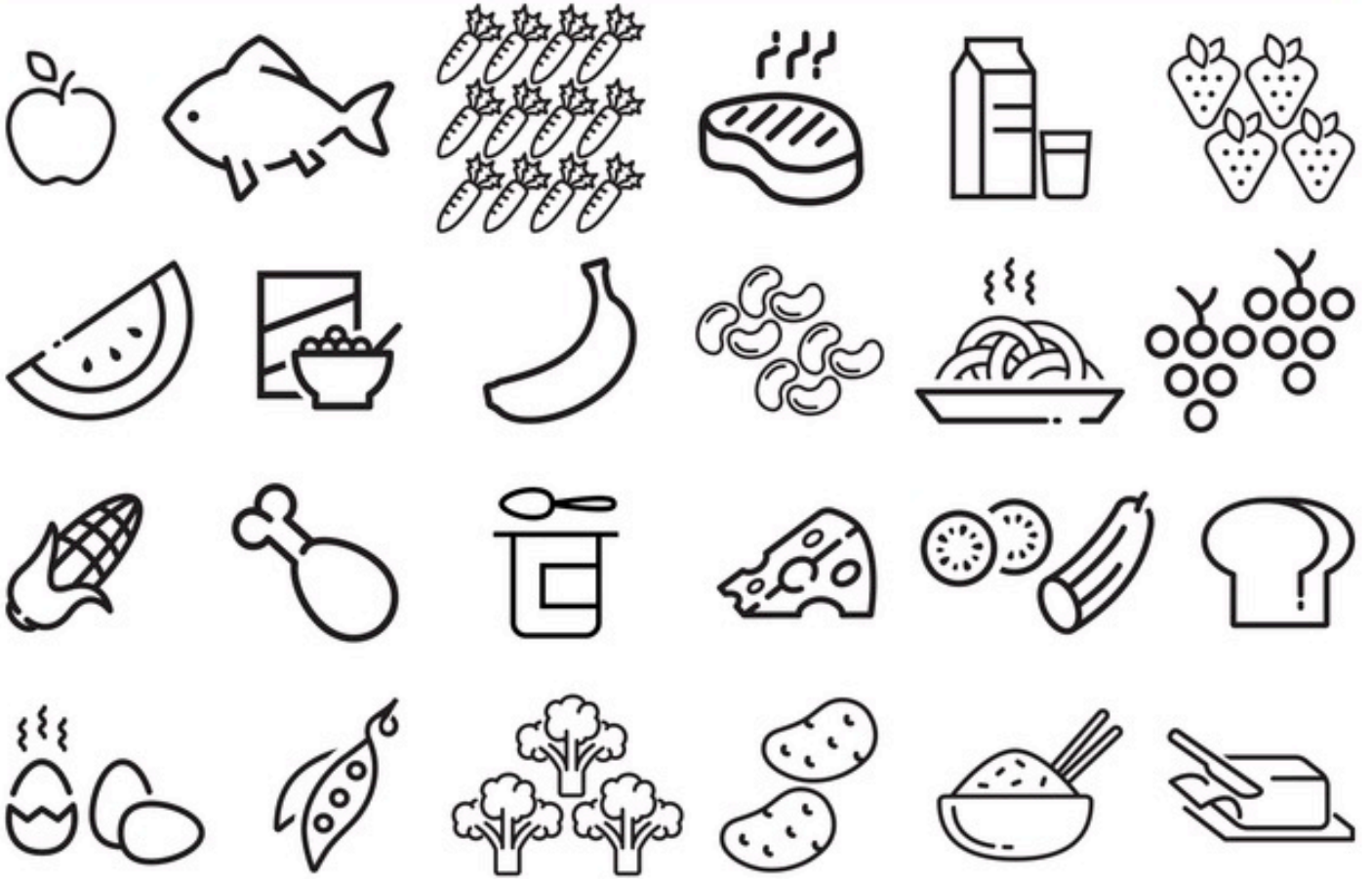
Worksheets & Downloads:





Color version of MyPlate placemat – for teachers to print and use as reference display
https://choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/printablematerials/myplate_white.jpg

Meal Planning



“Alive With Five Groups”

Song Lyrics:

(Talking about the five food groups, what they are
and what they help do)

Banana is a fruit, broccoli is a veggie
Rice is a grain, chicken is a protein food
Milk is dairy, and now we’ve got five
We’re going to feel our best (uh huh), we’re going to feel alive!

Chorus:

Alive, with five, both you and I
Alive with five, let’s give them a try
Fruits and vegetables, dairy and grains
Add to that a protein food and you’ll be on your way!
So many fruits and vegetables are good for me
Some help me heal my wounds, or give me more energy
Sometimes I like to eat them with some meat, bread, and cheese
These five food groups give me what I need, wouldn’t you agree?

Chorus:

I’ve got a red apple (a fruit, a fruit)
And green spinach leaves (a vegetable, a vegetable)
I toasted up some bread (a grain, a grain)
With some low-fat cheddar cheese (that’s dairy, that’s dairy)
A few slices of turkey (a protein food, a protein food)
That’s a fine-looking plate (my plate, my plate)
If you want to be healthy, if you want to feel your best
These five food groups are the key to your success!