Nasco Education™

LESSON PLAN

PE/ Health

MyPlate: Fun with Food Groups

Volume 18 | Gr. 3–12

Time: 2–3 class periods

Health Education Standards (NHES)

1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.

FCS National Standards

9.3: Evaluate nutrition principles, food plans, preparation techniques, and specialized dietary needs.

Materials

- Nasco Fun with Food Groups MyPlate Kit (**NE40704**)
- Markers and pencils
- Smartphone or digital camera for photos

NE40704

Objectives

Students will...

- Understand the different food groups represented by MyPlate
- Learn to identify portion sizes and nutritional information from nutrition labels
- Develop an understanding of portion control and dietary guidelines
- Create a balanced meal plan using the MyPlate framework
- Apply critical thinking to plan meals for specific dietary needs or restrictions

Nutrition exploration (45 minutes)

1. Begin by explaining the importance of a balanced diet and how MyPlate helps us understand portion sizes and the importance of eating a meal that includes all the food groups.
2. Then, choose from the following games and activities for students to play in pairs or small groups using the food cards from your kit.
   - **Nutrient scavenger hunt:** Set up a food card scavenger hunt where students have to find foods based on specific nutrients. For example, "Find a food that is high in vitamin C" or "Find a food that provides fiber."
   - **Food group sorting challenge:** In groups, challenge students to sort nutrition cards into the correct food groups within one minute and explain why each food belongs in that group.
   - **"What's missing?" game:** Create sets of balanced meals from the food cards but remove one card from each set. Then divide students into two teams and have them stand in two rows facing you. Flip one set of cards over and the first person in the row on each team competes to name the food group that's missing from the set. They can earn another point if they name a food that fits that group.
   - **What's my food?** Students take turns selecting a food card, but do not reveal it to their partner. They describe the food and its nutritional benefits to the partner, who has to guess what food it is.
   - **MyPlate matchup:** Make several balanced meals out of the cards and then hand one nutrition card to each student from your card sets. When you say "go," students should move around the room and work together to create groups that represent balanced meals.

Food modeling (30–45 minutes)

1. Have students each create 5–7 play dough food models from the nutrition cards they've interacted with and place them in the correct sections of their MyPlate paper plate. They should consider portion sizes as they model the food. Check for understanding as you observe their work.
2. After creating their play dough foods, have students move their foods off their plate and then pair up with a partner. Each student should take turns placing their partner's foods in the correct sections of their MyPlate. Switch partners after each pair has had a turn.

Extension activities:

1. After creating their play dough foods, have students use a camera or smartphone to take photos of each of their play foods, as well as their meals arranged on their MyPlate. Students should then arrange the photos of their foods to create a wall display, posterboard, or digital display to educate others about MyPlate and balanced nutrition.
2. Have older students create a second set of play dough models to create a balanced meal for a person with dietary restrictions, such as low-sodium, low-fat, gluten-free, or vegetarian meal.
3. Have students role play as nutritionists, using the "Meal planning" worksheet on p. 3 to create personalized meal plans for clients with specific dietary needs (e.g., athletes, individuals with food allergies, elderly clients).
4. Have students bring in food labels from home and then have them use their labels to fill out the "Food label analysis" worksheet on p. 4.

Meal planning

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions

1. Choose a nutritional scenario below and plan a complete meal for the specific diet. Ensure you include portions from all food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy (or a non-dairy equivalent).
2. Consider portion sizes, caloric intake, and nutrients like protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals.

Choose **one** of the following:

Athlete's meal plan

- High-calorie, high-protein meals to fuel intense training.
- Include foods rich in complex carbohydrates for energy.
- Balance with fruits and vegetables for vitamins and recovery.

Gluten-free meal plan

- Avoid all foods containing wheat, barley, and rye.
- Substitute grains with gluten-free options like rice, quinoa, or corn.
- Ensure meals still meet MyPlate guidelines.

Non-dairy meal plan

- Avoid milk-based products and choose calcium-rich non-dairy alternatives (e.g., almond milk, soy yogurt).
- Include plant-based proteins and healthy fats.

Low-sodium meal plan

- Focus on fresh, unprocessed foods.
- Avoid canned or pre-packaged items high in sodium.
- Incorporate herbs and spices for flavor instead of salt.

Vegetarian meal plan

- Include plant-based protein sources such as beans, lentils, tofu, or eggs.
- Add whole grains and plenty of fruits and vegetables for variety.

Diabetic-friendly meal plan

- Limit sugar and carbohydrate intake by focusing on complex carbs like whole grains, legumes, and vegetables.
- Include lean proteins and healthy fats to stabilize blood sugar levels.
- Avoid processed foods and sweetened beverages.

Meal Planning Table

Meal	Food items	Portion size	Food group	Nutritional benefits
Breakfast				
Lunch				
Dinner				
Snack				

Food label analysis

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions

1. Bring a food label from a packaged item at home (e.g., cereal, snack, canned food). Use the table below to record key details about the food item and analyze its ingredients and nutritional content.
2. Answer the questions to evaluate how this item fits into a healthy diet.

Food Label Analysis Table

Food item	Food group	Calories	Key nutrients (e.g., Protein, carbs, fat)	Main ingredients	Added sugars?	Sodium content	Portion size
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Reflection Questions

1. Which food group does your item belong to?

2. How does the portion size compare to what you would typically eat?

3. What surprised you about the ingredients or nutritional information on the label?

4. Does this item contain added sugars, artificial ingredients, or high sodium levels?
   How might that impact its place in a healthy diet?

5. Would you consider this item a healthy choice for its food group? Why or why not?