

# Sack It! Building a Healthy Lunch

This lesson introduces students to the different food groups and the types of foods in each. Students will also learn why it is important to eat a variety of foods. With this knowledge, students construct a healthy lunch sack filled with foods from the different food groups.

## SUBJECTS



NUTRITION



SCIENCE

**STEM Aligned**

## GRADE LEVEL

**4**

## TIME

**45 min**

# Sack It! Building a Healthy Lunch

---

## Objective

- Students will identify the MyPlate groups and categorize foods into each
- Students will construct a healthy lunch containing foods from each of the food groups
- Students will explain what a nutrient is and its relationship to overall health

---

## Materials & Preparation

- Copies of the MyPlate coloring sheet:  
[choosemyplate.gov/print-materials-ordering.html](http://choosemyplate.gov/print-materials-ordering.html)
- Grocery store ads (at least one ad for every 2–4 students)
- Paper lunch bags for team or a copy of the lunch sack image
- Preview the following items to better understand concepts related to MyPlate:
  - Tips based on MyPlate are available at [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov)
  - Pull up several examples of a well-rounded healthy meal by searching images of MyPlate for kids. Here is an example:  
[choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/tentips/dgtipsheet11kidfriendlyveggiesandfruits.pdf](http://choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/tentips/dgtipsheet11kidfriendlyveggiesandfruits.pdf)
- In pairs or guided reading groups, have students read texts about food. (i.e. “What’s Cooking, Jenny Archer?” by Ellen Conford. Another shorter book that can be used is “A Forest is a Food Factory” by Erin Horner. Both books can be used to connect to students’ visual presentations of their lunch creations.

---

## Common Core Standards

- RL.4.1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL.4.7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

# Sack It! Building a Healthy Lunch

---

## STEM Alignment

- Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information
- Developing and using models
- Engaging in argument from evidence

---

## Lesson Introduction

1. Ask students to raise their hands and when called on, ask them to name a food that they ate today or yesterday. Write 7–10 of these foods on the blackboard or whiteboard.
2. Explain that different foods provide different types of nutrients. Ask students: “What is a nutrient?” Most likely they will not know. Explain that a nutrient is a substance in food that helps us to stay healthy. Nutrients are divided into six groups: carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, protein and water. (Write these on the board). Explain that each nutrient has a different job when it comes to keeping us healthy. For example, fats and carbohydrates give us energy; minerals help to build strong bones, protein helps to build strong muscles and vitamins help to keep our eyes, skin and hair healthy.

---

## Body of Lesson

3. Explain that scientists who study nutrition have put together MyPlate to guide us in making healthy food choices. Elaborate that the plate is divided into food groups based on the different nutrients those foods give us. Those food groups are: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy and protein.
4. Pass out the MyPlate for Kids Coloring Sheet. Help students label the food groups. If you want students to create the color-coded plate, have them use crayons or colored pencils to label them as follows: Orange-grains; Green-vegetables; Red-fruits; Blue-dairy; Purple-protein.
5. Go back to the board where you wrote down the foods that students ate. As part of a discussion, label the foods with the different food groups. You and the students may find that some foods are combination foods, such as pizza (milk, grains, vegetables, and possibly meat).
6. Tell students that they are going to fill a lunch sack (or if you made copies of the lunch sack image, they will glue or tape images) with foods from each of the food groups to build a lunch.

# Sack It! Building a Healthy Lunch

7. Divide the students into teams of 2–4. Provide each group with a grocery store ad. Tell students that as a team, they are to cut out images from the grocery ad to build lunches that contain at least one item from each of these food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy and protein. If you provided each team with a paper sack, they will drop the cut-out food images into the sack; if you provided each team with the photocopy of the paper sack, they will glue the images to the sack.

---

## Conclusion

8. Have each team share the lunch they constructed with the class. There should be one food from each of the food groups. Note: sometimes one food might cover more than one food group.
9. As a class, help to make corrections as necessary. Explain that learning how to make healthy food choices is a skill, and like all skills it takes practice. To illustrate resources available to help with this, show some websites or recipes with projector technology, provide cookbooks (for example, “The Kids’ Multicultural Cookbook: Food & Fun Around the World” (Williamson Kids Can! Series) by: Deanna F. Cook (Author), Michael Kline (Illustrator), or other books with healthy recipe ideas, and encourage kids to check out cookbooks from the public or school library for inspiration. The key with this lesson is to make sure that you are eating foods from all of the groups every day to get the nutrients you need to stay healthy.

---

## Extensions

- Homework/guided reading groups: Read a book about food. i.e. “What’s Cooking, Jenny Archer?” by Ellen Conford or “A Forest is a Food Factory” by Erin Horner. Have students make lunches at home and make connections and inferences between the Jenny Archer character and their own experiences and characteristics. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- Picture books “Fuel the Body” by Doering Tourville or “A Medieval Feast” by Alike

# Sack It! Building a Healthy Lunch

