

Lesson Plan: Superfood Superheroes and the Balanced Plate Mission

Materials Needed:

- A large paper plate or a large circle drawn on paper
 - Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
 - Old food magazines or grocery store flyers (for cutting out pictures)
 - Scissors and glue
 - Several sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Optional: A computer with internet access for research and creating a digital advertisement
 - Optional: A few examples of real, healthy foods (e.g., an apple, a carrot, a handful of almonds, a carton of yogurt)
-

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify the five main food groups as represented in the MyPlate model (Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein, Dairy).
- Design a balanced, single-day meal plan that incorporates all five food groups.
- Analyze the nutritional benefits of a specific healthy food and communicate them creatively through a persuasive advertisement.

2. Alignment with Health Education Standards

This lesson aligns with common middle school health standards, focusing on:

- **Standard 1:** Comprehending concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention (e.g., understanding nutritional guidelines like MyPlate).
- **Standard 4:** Analyzing the influence of technology, media, and culture on health choices (e.g., creating a food advertisement).
- **Standard 7:** Practicing health-enhancing behaviors and avoiding or reducing health risks (e.g., applying knowledge to build a healthy meal plan).

3. Instructional Activities (Step-by-Step)

Part 1: The "What Am I?" Food Mystery (5 minutes)

Goal: To spark curiosity and activate prior knowledge about food.

Instructions:

1. Play a quick guessing game. Describe a healthy food without naming it. For example: "I am long and orange. I'm crunchy, and rabbits love me. I am good for your eyesight. What am I?" (A carrot).
 2. Do this for 2-3 different foods from various food groups.
 3. Explain that today's mission is to become a food expert and a creative advertiser for healthy
-

eating.

Part 2: Cracking the Code with MyPlate (10 minutes)

Goal: To introduce the five food groups in a simple, visual way.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the paper plate. Say, "This isn't just a plate; it's a secret map to a healthy meal, called MyPlate."
2. Using a marker, divide the plate into the MyPlate sections: a line down the middle, and a horizontal line across the left side to create four sections. Draw a circle for "Dairy" on the side.
3. Label each section: Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, and Protein. Label the circle Dairy.
4. Briefly explain what belongs in each group. Keep it simple:
 - **Vegetables & Fruits:** Make these the biggest sections. "Half your plate should be colorful fruits and veggies!"
 - **Grains:** "Things like bread, pasta, and rice. Try to make half of these whole grains."
 - **Protein:** "This helps build strong muscles. Think meat, beans, eggs, and nuts."
 - **Dairy:** "Helps build strong bones. Think milk, yogurt, and cheese."

Part 3: The Great Food Sort (15 minutes)

Goal: A hands-on activity to reinforce the food groups.

Instructions:

1. Give the student the food magazines/flyers, scissors, and glue.
2. Their task is to go on a "food hunt." They must find, cut out, and glue at least two examples of food for each of the five MyPlate categories onto their labeled plate.
3. As they work, ask questions like, "Why did you put chicken in the protein section?" or "What other grains can you think of?"

Part 4: Create a Superfood Superhero! (30 minutes)

Goal: To foster creativity and deeper thinking about the specific benefits of one healthy food.

Instructions:

1. Tell the student to choose one healthy food from their plate to be the star of an advertising campaign.
2. Their mission is to turn this food into a "Superfood Superhero." They will create a one-page advertisement for their hero.
3. The ad must include:
 - **A Catchy Name:** (e.g., "Captain Blueberry," "Agent Avocado," "The Incredible Spinach").
 - **A Drawing of the Superhero:** Personify the food. Give it a cape, a mask, or a powerful pose.
 - **Superpowers:** What are its health benefits, framed as superpowers? (e.g., "Carrot-Vision": helps you see better; "Almighty Almond": gives you long-lasting energy; "Broccoli Barrier": helps fight off sickness).
 - **A Slogan:** A memorable catchphrase for their hero (e.g., "Captain Blueberry: Blasting baddies with antioxidants!").
4. Encourage creativity and humor. The goal is to make healthy eating seem exciting and powerful.

Part 5: Design-a-Delicious-Day Meal Plan (15 minutes)

Goal: To apply the MyPlate concept to a real-world scenario.

Instructions:

1. On a new sheet of paper, have the student create a simple table with three columns: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner.
2. Using their MyPlate as a guide, their task is to design a full day of balanced meals they would actually enjoy eating. They should try to include all five food groups throughout the day.
3. Next to each meal, have them list the food groups present. (e.g., Breakfast: Oatmeal with berries and a glass of milk - Grains, Fruit, Dairy).

4. Differentiation and Extension

- **For Support:** Provide a pre-made list of food examples for each food group if the student struggles with the "Food Sort." For the meal plan, offer a template with sentence starters like "For a grain, I could have..."
- **For a Challenge (Extension):**
 - **Budget Challenge:** Research the approximate cost of their "Design-a-Delicious-Day" meal plan.
 - **Global Foods:** Research and add a healthy dish from another culture to their meal plan, identifying its food groups.
 - **Digital Ad:** Instead of a paper ad, have the student create a short video commercial or a digital poster for their Superfood Superhero.

5. Assessment

Learning will be assessed through observation and review of the created work:

- **Formative (during lesson):**
 - Observing the accuracy of the "Great Food Sort" on the MyPlate visual.
 - Listening to the student's reasoning during discussions.
- **Summative (end of lesson):**
 - **Superfood Superhero Ad:** Evaluate using a simple rubric:
 - **Superhero Identity (5 pts):** Includes a creative name, drawing, and slogan.
 - **Accurate Superpowers (5 pts):** Health benefits are correctly identified and creatively presented.
 - **Persuasiveness & Creativity (5 pts):** The ad is engaging, neat, and effectively "sells" the food.
 - **Design-a-Delicious-Day Meal Plan:** Review the meal plan to see if all five food groups are represented logically throughout the day and the meals are balanced.

6. Wrap-Up and Reflection (5 minutes)

End with a brief conversation:

- "What was your favorite part of the mission today?"
- "Show me your Superfood Superhero! What's their most important superpower?"
- "Looking at your meal plan, what is one healthy meal or snack you'd be excited to try this week?"