

# Mission: Nutrition - Design Your Own Healthy Food Truck!

**Subject:** Health & Nutrition

**Grade Level:** 5th-6th Grade (Age 11)

**Time Allotment:** 90-120 minutes (can be split over two days)

## Materials Needed

- Large paper or poster board (or a shoebox to build a 3D model)
- Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- Pencil and eraser
- Ruler
- Access to the internet (with supervision) for research, or pre-printed resources like food group charts and healthy recipe examples.
- Optional: Menu template printout, magazines for cutting out food pictures (for a collage-style menu).

## Learning Objectives

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

- **Identify** the three main macronutrients (proteins, carbohydrates, and fats) and their primary functions.
- **Apply** knowledge of balanced meals by designing three unique menu items that include a healthy balance of food groups.
- **Create** a unique food truck concept, including a name, logo, and menu, that creatively promotes healthy eating.
- **Justify** their menu choices by explaining how the ingredients contribute to a healthy diet.

## Lesson Activities

### Part 1: The Agent Briefing (15 minutes)

1. **Hook:** Introduce the lesson as a "Top Secret Mission." Say, "Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to combat unhealthy eating by launching a secret weapon: your very own healthy food truck! To succeed, you first need to understand the science behind fueling the human body. We need to crack the code of 'balanced meals'."
2. **Introduction to Macronutrients:** Briefly and simply explain the "Big 3" nutrients:
  - **Proteins:** The "Builders." They build and repair our body, like muscles and organs. Found in meat, beans, nuts, and eggs.
  - **Carbohydrates:** The "Go Fuel." They give us fast energy for running and thinking. Found in bread, fruits, vegetables, and pasta.
  - **Fats:** The "Reserve Fuel" and "Brain Boosters." They give us long-lasting energy and help our brains work. Found in avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil.
3. **Defining "Balanced":** Explain that a balanced meal is like a team where all the players (macros, vitamins, minerals) work together. A great, simple guide is the "MyPlate" model: aim to fill half

your plate with fruits and vegetables, a quarter with lean protein, and a quarter with whole grains.

## Part 2: Field Research (20-30 minutes)

1. **Investigate:** Task the student with being a "Nutrition Detective." Their goal is to research and list 5-7 healthy examples for each food category (Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Proteins, Healthy Fats).
2. **Guiding Questions for Research:**
  - What are some colorful vegetables I could use?
  - What are some whole grains besides brown rice? (e.g., quinoa, whole-wheat pasta, oats)
  - What are some lean protein options that aren't meat? (e.g., chickpeas, tofu, lentils)
  - What are some "superfoods" that would make my truck famous? (e.g., blueberries, spinach, salmon)

## Part 3: The Blueprint - Design Your Food Truck (45-60 minutes)

1. **Brainstorm a Concept:**
  - What is the name of your food truck? (e.g., "The Fuel Stop," "Planet Wraps," "The Good Food Express")
  - What is its theme or specialty? (e.g., Healthy Tacos, Smoothie Bowls, Super Salads)
  - Design a logo for your truck on the poster board.
2. **Create the Menu:**
  - Design a menu with **at least three complete meal options** and one healthy drink or dessert.
  - For each meal, give it a fun, creative name.
  - List the main ingredients for each meal. Make sure each meal is balanced (contains a protein, a carb, a healthy fat, and lots of veggies/fruits).
  - Write a short, exciting description for each item that highlights why it's both delicious and healthy. For example: *"The Power Pesto Bowl: Grilled chicken (protein power!) over whole-wheat pasta (energy carbs!) with our famous spinach-basil pesto (vitamin boost!) and a sprinkle of sunflower seeds (healthy fats!)."*
3. **Design the Truck:**
  - On the poster board, draw the side of your food truck. Include the name, logo, and maybe a slogan. Make it colorful and appealing! You can also draw your menu on the side of the truck.
  - For a 3D option, decorate a shoebox to look like the food truck.

## Part 4: The Debrief - Present Your Creation (10-15 minutes)

1. **The Pitch:** Have the student present their food truck as if they were trying to get you to be a customer. They should introduce the truck's name and concept.
2. **Menu Presentation:** Ask them to walk you through the menu. For one of their meal choices, ask them to identify the protein, carbohydrate, and fat source.
3. **Reflection Questions:**
  - What was the most challenging part of creating a balanced meal?
  - Which of your menu items are you most proud of, and why?
  - If you were to open this truck tomorrow, what is the first thing you would make?

## Assessment

Learning can be assessed through the completed project and presentation. Use this simple checklist:

- [ ] **Food Truck Concept:** A creative and unique name and theme are present.

- [ ] **Balanced Menu:** At least three distinct meal items are listed.
- [ ] **Nutritional Application:** Each meal demonstrates a clear balance of food groups (protein, carbs, vegetables/fruits).
- [ ] **Creative Descriptions:** Menu items have engaging names and descriptions that mention health benefits.
- [ ] **Verbal Justification:** Student can identify the macronutrients in at least one of their meals and explain why their menu is healthy.

## Differentiation and Extension

- **For Extra Support:** Provide a menu template with sections for "Meal Name," "Description," and "Ingredients." Offer a pre-printed list of healthy foods sorted by food group for them to choose from.
- **For an Advanced Challenge:**
  - Have the student calculate the estimated cost to make one of their menu items and determine a sale price.
  - Ask them to write a short radio jingle or a social media post to advertise their food truck.
  - Challenge them to create a menu item that is specifically vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free, or dairy-free and label it accordingly.