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# Kitchen Detectives: Cracking the Colour Code of Chopping Boards

## Materials Needed:

- A set of coloured chopping boards (Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, White, Brown). If you don't have them, you can use coloured construction paper to represent each board.
- A variety of food items (or pictures of food) to sort, such as:
  - A piece of raw chicken or beef (or a picture)
  - A piece of cooked meat (like a slice of ham)
  - A raw fish fillet (or a picture)
  - Fresh vegetables (like a carrot or lettuce)
  - A piece of bread or a baked good
  - A block of cheese
- Kitchen knife (**adult supervision required**)
- Sink with soap and water
- Poster board and markers OR a tablet/phone with a video camera
- A timer

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## Learning Objectives

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

- Identify the correct food group for each of the six standard chopping board colours.
- Explain *why* separating different food types is essential for preventing food poisoning (cross-contamination).
- Demonstrate how to correctly use different coloured chopping boards when preparing a meal.
- Create a fun and informative guide (a poster or a video) to teach others about food safety.

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## Lesson Plan: Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It...

### Part 1: The Case of the Mystery Illness (10 minutes)

**Teacher/Parent role:** Act as the "Chief Detective" guiding the student.

1. **The Scenario:** Start with a story. "Last night, the Smith family had a wonderful chicken stir-fry for dinner. But this morning, everyone woke up feeling very sick! You are the Kitchen Detective, and you've been called in to solve the case. Your main suspect is something called 'cross-contamination'. What do you think that means?"
2. **Brainstorm:** Discuss what "cross-contamination" might be. Guide the conversation to the idea of invisible germs (bacteria) moving from one food to another. For example, germs from raw chicken getting onto a fresh salad because they were cut on the same board.
3. **The Clue:** Introduce the set of coloured chopping boards. "Professional chefs and smart kitchens

use a secret weapon to stop cross-contamination. It's this colour-coded system. Your first mission is to crack this code."

## Part 2: Cracking the Code (20 minutes)

**Teacher/Parent role:** Facilitate the activity and ask guiding questions.

1. **The Match-Up Challenge:** Lay out the six coloured boards (or papers) and the different food items/pictures. Say, "Before I tell you the answers, let's see if you can crack the code using your own logic. Which colour do you think goes with which food? Why?" For example, "Why might red be a good colour for raw meat?" (It's the colour of blood, a warning colour). "Why green for vegetables?" (Vegetables are often green). Let the student make their best guesses first. This encourages critical thinking!
2. **The Big Reveal:** After the student has made their predictions, reveal the official industry standard colour code. Explain the 'why' for each one.
  - **RED:** Raw Meat (Beef, Lamb)
  - **YELLOW:** Raw Poultry (Chicken, Turkey)
  - **BLUE:** Raw Fish & Seafood
  - **GREEN:** Fruits & Vegetables
  - **WHITE:** Bakery & Dairy (Bread, Cheese)
  - **BROWN:** Cooked Meats
3. **The Safety Simulation:** Now it's time for practical application. "Let's pretend we are making a chicken salad sandwich."
  - "First, you need to slice the raw chicken breast to cook it. Which board do you use?" (Yellow)
  - "Great. Now the chicken is cooked. You need to slice it up. Which board do you use?" (Brown)
  - "Next, you need to chop the lettuce and tomato for the salad. Which board?" (Green)
  - "Finally, you need to slice the bread for the sandwich. Which board?" (White)
  - **Crucial Question:** "What is the most important thing you must do between touching the raw chicken and touching anything else?" (Wash your hands thoroughly!) Practice this step.

## Part 3: Spreading the Word! (Creative Assessment - 25 minutes)

**Teacher/Parent role:** Provide materials and encouragement.

Your final mission as a Kitchen Detective is to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) so other families can learn how to stay safe. You can choose one of two ways to present your findings:

- **Option A: The Food Safety Poster.** On a poster board, create a bright, colourful, and easy-to-read chart that shows the chopping board colours and the foods that go with them. Give it a catchy title like "Don't Get Sick, Know the Trick!" or "Be a Kitchen Star!". Make it something you'd be proud to hang in the kitchen.
- **Option B: The 60-Second Safety Video.** Using a phone or tablet, film a short, fun video. You can be a news reporter, a secret agent, or a chef explaining the system. Show the boards, point to the right foods, and explain clearly why it's so important. Be creative!

This project will be how we know you've truly mastered the colour code and become a certified Kitchen Detective!

## Part 4: Case Closed (Debrief - 5 minutes)

**Teacher/Parent role:** Review and reinforce the learning.

1. Look at the finished poster or watch the video together. Give lots of positive feedback on the creativity and clarity.
  2. Ask some final wrap-up questions:
    - "What do you think is the biggest danger of using only one chopping board for everything?"
    - "How will knowing this change the way you help out in the kitchen?"
    - "If a friend didn't know about this system, how would you explain it to them in a simple way?"
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## Extension Activities (For the Extra-Curious Detective)

- **Global Investigation:** Do restaurants in other countries (like Japan or France) use the same colour-coded system? Do some research to find out!
- **Scientific Deep Dive:** Research a specific foodborne bacterium, like *Salmonella*. Create an "FBI Most Wanted" profile for it: what it looks like, where it hides (its food sources), and what its "crime" is (the symptoms it causes).
- **Design Challenge:** If you could invent your own food safety system, what would it be? Would you use different colours? Add symbols? Sketch out your new and improved chopping board design.

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