

Ann's Awesome Eats: The Meal Plan Mission!

Materials Needed

- Paper (several sheets) or a whiteboard
 - Pencils, colored pencils, or markers
 - Optional: Old grocery store flyers or magazines with food pictures
 - Optional: Scissors and glue stick
 - Optional: Computer or tablet with internet access for finding food ideas
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Subject

Health & Life Skills

Grade Level

4th - 5th Grade (Age 10)

Time Allotment

90 minutes (can be split into two sessions)

Learning Objectives

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

- Confidently identify examples of healthy fruits, vegetables, and proteins.
 - Design a creative and balanced 7-day meal plan for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
 - Create a practical grocery list based on your completed meal plan.
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Part 1: Your Mission Briefing (10 minutes)

Welcome, Agent Ann! Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to become the Master Planner of your family's meals for one full week. You will use your creative skills and knowledge of healthy foods to design a delicious and powerful menu. A great meal plan saves time, reduces waste, and makes sure our bodies get the fuel they need to be awesome. This message will not self-destruct. Let's get started!

Your Three Key Food Groups for this Mission:

- **Proteins (The Builders):** These build strong muscles and keep you full. Think chicken, fish, beans, eggs, nuts, and tofu.
 - **Vegetables (The Protectors):** These are packed with vitamins to help you fight off sickness. Think broccoli, carrots, spinach, peppers, and cucumbers.
 - **Fruits (The Energizers):** These give you quick, healthy energy and are full of nutrients. Think apples, bananas, berries, and oranges.
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Part 2: Food Power-Up! (20 minutes)

Before we build the plan, let's gather our intel. We need to know which foods belong in which group. Your first task is to create a "Food Power" chart.

1. Take a blank sheet of paper and divide it into three columns. Label them: **Protein, Vegetables, and Fruits.**
2. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Your goal is to list as many foods as you can think of for each category. Brainstorm your absolute favorites first!
3. If you have magazines or flyers, you can cut out pictures of food and glue them into the correct columns. This is a great way to make your chart visual and fun!
4. **Talk about it:** When you're done, look at your list. Are there any surprises? Is one list much longer than the others? This chart will be your guide for the next part of the mission.

Part 3: The Meal Plan Blueprint (45 minutes)

This is the main event, Agent Ann! It's time to design your 7-day meal plan. The goal is to make every meal balanced and delicious.

1. **Create Your Grid:** Take a new, large piece of paper and turn it sideways. Create a grid with 7 columns across the top (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) and 3 rows down the side (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).
2. **The Golden Rule:** For each meal box on your grid, your plan must include **at least one protein AND at least one fruit or vegetable.**
3. **Start with Your Favorites:** What is your favorite breakfast? Let's say it's scrambled eggs with a side of strawberries. Eggs are a protein, and strawberries are a fruit. Perfect! Write that in a breakfast box. What about tacos for dinner? The ground meat or beans are protein, and you can add lettuce, tomatoes, and peppers (vegetables). Awesome!
4. **Fill in the Blanks:** Use your Food Power-Up chart from Part 2 to help you fill in the rest of the grid. Think about variety! You don't want to eat the same thing every day. Try to use different colors of fruits and vegetables throughout the week.
5. **Be Creative:** A "meal" doesn't have to be complicated. Lunch could be a turkey wrap (protein) with carrot sticks (vegetable) and an apple (fruit). Breakfast could be yogurt (protein) with blueberries (fruit) and a sprinkle of nuts (protein).

Part 4: The Grocery List Quest (15 minutes)

A brilliant plan is only as good as the supplies you have to execute it. Now, you'll turn your meal plan into a real-world shopping list.

1. Take a new piece of paper and title it "Grocery List."
2. Go through your meal plan, one day at a time. For Monday's breakfast (e.g., scrambled eggs and strawberries), write down "eggs" and "strawberries" on your grocery list.
3. Continue this for every single meal on your plan. If an ingredient repeats (like bread or milk), you don't have to write it down every time, but you can put a little checkmark next to it to remember you'll need it.
4. **Bonus Step:** Organize your list by category (e.g., Produce, Meat/Protein, Dairy) to make a real shopping trip super efficient!

Part 5: Mission Accomplished! (Debrief)

Congratulations, Agent Ann! You have successfully created a complete, healthy, and delicious weekly meal plan and a corresponding grocery list. Present your plan! Explain one of your favorite meal combinations and why you chose it. Your work will help make the week run smoothly and keep everyone in your family fueled for their own important missions!

For an Extra Challenge (Extension Ideas)

- **Budget Boss:** Give yourself an imaginary budget (like \$100) for the week. Use a grocery store's website to look up prices and see if your plan fits within the budget. What could you swap to save money?
- **Recipe Researcher:** Choose one dinner from your meal plan that you've never made before. Find a simple recipe for it online and write down the steps.
- **Snack Planner:** Add a fourth row to your meal plan for "Healthy Snacks." Plan one healthy snack for each day that also includes a fruit, vegetable, or protein.

If You Need a Little Help (Support Options)

- **Start Small:** Instead of a 7-day plan, start by planning just 3 days. You can always add more later!
- **Use a Theme:** Give each day a theme to help with ideas, like "Meatless Monday" (bean burritos), "Taco Tuesday," or "Pasta Night" (add chicken for protein and a side salad for vegetables).
- **Work Together:** Brainstorm the first few meal ideas together to get the ball rolling. Sometimes starting is the hardest part.