

Title: What Am I Missing?

Grade Ranges:

 X K-4

 X 5-8

 9-12

Subject Tag:

Family and Consumer Sciences

Synopsis:

In this lesson, students provide proper diets in response to hypothetical nutrition needs. Following a study of the Food Guide Pyramid, students create their own Food Guide Pyramids. Then, individually or in groups respond to hypothetical stories of students and indicate what nutrients the students are missing.

Keywords:

diet, Food Guide Pyramid, nutrition, malnutrition, symptoms, meal planning

Body:

1. Before class begins, make up a series of “What Am I Missing?” cards. The number is up to you, depending on whether you want students to discuss the cards individually or in groups. (See step 8 below.) The cards should include hypothetical narratives detailing mild and specific examples of malnutrition. From an age-appropriate narrative describing a person with flu-like symptoms, for example, students should be able to deduce that Vitamin C is what is missing.
2. Begin the lesson by asking students if they know anyone who is on a diet. Explain that the definition of diet goes beyond “what you *don't* eat” — diet, in fact, means “what you *do* eat.” To have a healthy diet, therefore, requires learning about healthy foods — and, of course, eating them.
3. To help students eat a healthy diet, introduce them to the Food Guide Pyramid. The Food Guide Pyramid shows students the number of daily servings they should eat from each of six food groups. (For more information, please see the links included below.) For younger students, you may have to help them understand the Pyramid’s categories and the types of foods within each.
4. Ask each student to create a Personal Food Pyramid representing all they ate the day before. Each pyramid should represent all six food groups and the number of servings eaten in each group (even if — and especially if — the number is zero). You may have to help students place some of what they ate into the correct categories. Doing so as a whole class provides an opportunity for other students to suggest how they would categorize something.
5. Allow students time to compare their pyramids with the standard Food Guide Pyramid. Ask each student to identify either aloud or in writing what he or she needs to eat more of or less of. Students should use their responses to draw Personal Food Pyramids that include healthy foods they would like to eat.

6. Define nutrition. Discuss with students the specific nutritional benefits of a variety of fruits and vegetables. (Bananas, for example, provide potassium, which children should eat to maintain water balance and prevent muscle cramping during play.)
7. Consult the links below or your school's health textbook to find more nutrition information, and be sure to go over a definition of malnutrition with students.
8. Next, introduce the "What Am I Missing?" cards. Students, individually or in small groups, should discuss the cards. In small groups, one student reads a card, and the others determine what the person described on the card is missing nutritionally. Resources such as class notes, health textbooks, and the links below should be available to students as they make their diagnoses.
9. For closure, allow the students to discuss their diagnoses in a whole-class setting.

Related Links:**The Food Guide Pyramid**

<http://www.nal.usda.gov:8001/py/pmap.htm>

This Web site includes a description of the Food Guide Pyramid for teachers and students from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Team Nutrition

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>

The USDA also hosts this site, which offers downloadable resources for teacher and student use. Resources include Food Guide Pyramids for children, tips on how to follow dietary guidelines, and links to USDA nutrition activities for children.

Fresh Starts

<http://www.freshstarts.com/antioxidants.cfm>

At "Vitamins in the House," a page on the Fresh Starts Web site, students can click on icons representing food items in a typical refrigerator and cupboard. After each click, detailed but student-friendly information about the food's nutritional benefits appears. This site focuses on antioxidants.

Features:

- ___ Contains special education tips
- ___ Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- ___ Requires Internet access for students to complete

Objective:

By creating Food Pyramid Guides and diagnosing hypothetical cases of malnutrition, students will understand the link between nutritious eating and good health.

Standards:

NY: 1.1 Personal Health and Fitness. Students will use an understanding of the elements of good nutrition to plan appropriate diets for themselves and others. They will know and use the appropriate tools and technologies for safe and healthy food preparation.

NYC: A3a. Gather information to assist in completing project work. **A4a.** Learn from models. **A5a.** Work with others to complete a task.

Prerequisite Skills:

basic listening skills

Time Required:

Two-to three 45-minute periods

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. model/illustration of Food Guide Pyramid
2. student art supplies
3. teacher-made “What Am I Missing?” cards

Assessment Criteria:

1. Do students understand the roles of the six food groups in healthy eating?
2. Do students understand how different foods meet different nutritional needs?

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:

One year

Review Comments:

Check Web sites.