



National Nutrition Month activities for upper grades

National Nutrition Month is here! Select from among these language-learning activity ideas to make the most of March's focus on the science that deals with foods and their effects on health. You will strengthen your student's literacy learning and their knowledge of this important topic.

Introduce the topic by writing and saying the word nutrition. Discuss its meaning to assess what your students know about nutrition, using this level of knowledge to choose appropriate activities to expand their understanding.

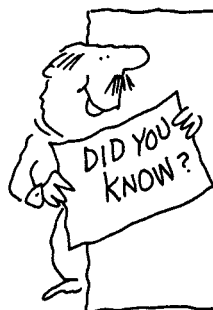
The suggested activities can be completed independently, in pairs, cooperative groups, or as a whole class. Results can be written, oral, or both. For all written work, have students pair up and proofread.

Food Group Activities

Various divisions have been proposed among the food groups, yet this classification may serve as a general guideline. Post each food group on a chart or section of the bulletin board. Discuss the kinds of foods found in each and how they relate to nutrition, or healthy eating.

1. breads, cereal, rice, pasta
2. fats, oils, sweets
3. fruits
4. meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, nuts
5. milk, yogurt, cheese
6. vegetables

- Students list foods they know. Then they work as a class to make a cumulative list of foods sorted by food group. Over time, more foods can be added to each of the displayed food groups.
- Students select foods from the food groups to construct nutritious meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Then they present their selections to the class orally and/or in writing. The class can vote on their choice for the most nutritious, tastiest breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Students make an advertising poster for one food in each food group extolling its nutritional value using descriptive, persuasive words.
- Students select a food group and describe in writing their favorite and/or least favorite food within that group. What makes one food a favorite and another food one that is currently disliked? Ask students to provide written reasons.
- Select one food group, such as fruits or vegetables, and explore one food within that group in depth. For example, in the fruit group, what can students learn about apples? They can research history, production, uses, varieties, folklore, and health benefits. Students report their findings orally and in writing.



China is the leading apple growing country in the world followed by the United States. Washington state leads the United States in apple production growing about 60% of the apples sold commercially-about a million boxes of apples a year. There are thousands of different varieties of apples, the red delicious being the most popular.

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Class Cooks

Get ready for Mother's Day! Students make a class cookbook for Mom of nutritional recipes for foods they like to eat. Some students can make illustrations to create covers. These cookbooks can go home for Mom on Friday, May 8th.

Grocery List Game

Discuss why people make grocery lists. Students at this level can learn to spell many of the words that routinely occur on such lists.

- Have students brainstorm a list of food items their families buy. Write the words on the board. Choose ten or so of these words and tell students that this is their grocery spelling list.
- For a variation, have everyone place their lists in a grocery bag. Students then draw out a list and quiz each other on the spelling of these words.

Word-Skill Fun with the Word *Nutrition* and Food Words

Letters and their sounds, syllables, rhyming words, homophones, and food names are the catalyst for word fun activities.

- Write and say the word *nutrition* and guide students to note that the word *nutrition* begins and ends with the letter *n*. Students find and write more words that begin and end with the letter *n* (i.e., *napkin*, *naturalization*, *negation*, *negotiation*, *neuron*, *nitrogen*, *nitroglycerin*, *nobleman*, *noblewoman*, *newspaperman*, *newspaperwoman*, *nomination*, *newborn*, *ninepin*, *navigation*, *narration*, *neon*, *nineteen*, *nonfiction*, *nonunion*, *nonpartisan*, *noon*, *notation*, *notification*, *notion*, *noun*, *nylon*, *nation*, *northern*, *northwestern*, *northeastern*, *Norwegian*, *newborn*, *nightgown*, *nullification*, *numeration*, *nun*).
- Guide students to identify the vowel sound in the first syllable of the word *nutrition*. Then students identify more words with the same vowel sound to discover the different ways the sound can be spelled. Work with students to sort the words by their spelling patterns (e.g., *ue* as in *blue*, *ew* as in *new*, *ou* as in *you*, *o* as in *do*, *ui* as in *fruit*). Conclude that the vowel sound can be spelled in more than one way.

The Word *Nutrition*

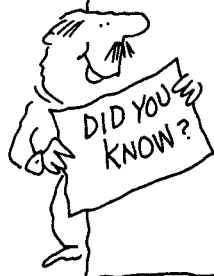
- How many forms of the word *nutrition* can students find and write? Have students brainstorm, then use dictionaries to find words such as *nutritious*, *nutritional*, *nutrient*, and *nutritionist*.
- Students select a food word then find and write words that rhyme with their word. Challenge students to write rhyming couplets to support their *nutrition* study.

Long and skinny—fresh green beans,
Will we eat some? By all means!
Good enough for kings for queens,
Food for our US Marines!
Please pass us more of those good beans,
A healthy food for smart preteens!

Food Words

- Help students identify food names that have homophone partners. Make an ongoing collection (e.g., *beet/beat*; *chili/Chile/chilly*; *meat/meet*, *steak/stake*, *sundae/Sunday*).
- Some food names are compound words. How many can students find and write? Make an ongoing collection (e.g., *strawberry*, *blackberry*, *blueberry*, *buttermilk*, *oatmeal*, *grapefruit*, *watermelon*, *meatloaf*, *milkshake*, *cornflakes*, *pineapple*, *shortbread*, *applesauce*, *fruitcake*, *cupcakes*, *popcorn*). Make an ongoing collection and add to it as students think of more.
- Challenge students to write food-word similes, e.g., this weather is as hot as a jalapeno pepper!

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An *eponym* is a word that became part of our language as a result of a person's name or the name of a place. A famous eponym is *sandwich* named for the 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718-1792). He liked playing cards and preferred not to interrupt his game to leave the game table to eat. Instead, he asked his servant to bring him cold roast beef between two slices of bread. His snack became known as a sandwich!

Encourage students to identify a food eponym. Then they report how the word came to be. Popular food eponyms include Granny Smith apples, Graham crackers, cheddar cheese, Brussels sprouts, Brazil nuts, sardines, hamburger, and bologna.

Nutritionist: A Career

Guide students to explore the role of a nutritionist.

- 📌 What is a nutritionist?
- 📌 Where do nutritionists work in our community?
- 📌 What are the requirements for being a licensed nutritionist in your state?
- 📌 Invite a nutritionist to visit the class to help students discover more!



Students can write and proofread what they learn about being a nutritionist.