



What's With Breakfast?



Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will explore why eating breakfast matters, what constitutes a balanced breakfast, and how MyPlate can help them make healthy eating choices. Engaging activities weave together two informational text articles, a video about the impact of breakfast on the body, an interactive application about breakfast customs around the world, and a project exploring students' eating habits.

TIME REQUIRED: Lesson activities are grouped into 3 sessions of 45 minutes, with a short warm up and wrap up.

SUPPLIES:

- Video projector
- Computers with access to the Internet
- Breakfast Myths Guide (p.5)
- SuperTracker:
<https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/>
- SuperTracker Reflection Handout (p.6)
- MyPlate Handout (p.7)

Lesson Structure

Each lesson is created like a “menu,” allowing you to pick and choose from a variety of learning activities designed to engage all children and all learning styles. Lessons also include video, interactive application, and challenges/ investigations developed specifically to promote engagement and exploration.

Subject Connections

English Language Arts, Geography, Social Studies

Key Vocabulary

Added sugars, antioxidant, climate, culture, custom, minerals, nutrients, refined grains, region, saturated fats, vitamin, whole grains, sodium

Transfer Objective

Students will be able to independently use their learning from these activities to:

- Increase the number of days they eat healthy breakfast foods.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the five food groups and explain how foods are grouped based on the nutrients they contain.

- Explain the benefits of eating a healthy breakfast.
- Describe different examples of a balanced breakfast.
- Identify small shifts that could ensure that breakfast meals include multiple food groups.
- Understand that differences in culture and geography influence what people eat for breakfast.

Enduring Understandings

- Eating a balanced breakfast gives you the nutrients you need to start the day.
- Eating a well-balanced breakfast contributes to your daily food group needs.
- Many schools in the U.S. provide a convenient, quick, and healthy breakfast each day.

Essential Questions

- *What influences my breakfast choices?*
- *Why is it important to eat breakfast?*
- *What are the breakfast customs of people around the world?*
- *What is a healthy breakfast?*

Warm Up (10 minutes)

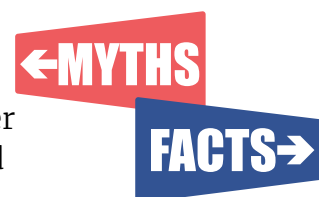
- 1. THINK-PAIR-SHARE:** Ask students to turn to a partner and discuss: *What influences my breakfast choices? How do I decide if and what to eat for breakfast?* Then ask for volunteers to report back to the whole group and record key ideas from student responses on a whiteboard or chart paper.

Students may be tempted to simply say, “I don't eat breakfast because I don't have time.” Prompt them to think about the whole range of influences on their breakfast choices: personal preferences, social influences like peer pressure, family and cultural influences, structural constraints like when school starts and when they have to leave the house, environmental factors like passing a fast food restaurant on the way to school or having access to school breakfast.

Optional: Create “If... Then...” statements from the brainstorm as a way to summarize key themes. For example, “If my friends eat breakfast, then I eat breakfast too” or “If I wake up late, I don't have time to make breakfast.”

Breakfast and My Body (45 minutes)

- 1. DISCUSS** breakfast myths. Conduct a “Human Barometer” activity exploring students' attitudes about breakfast. Label one side of the room “Agree” and the other side “Disagree.” Ask students to gather in the center of the room, read the statements on the **Breakfast Myths Guide** (p.5) , and instruct them to walk to the side of the room that represents their opinion. Choose a volunteer or two from each side to explain their point of view before moving on.
- 2. WATCH** “Start Smart with Breakfast” video (90 seconds). The video serves as an introduction to the entire lesson by showing students why eating a healthy breakfast is important, and providing quick, easy, and budget-friendly breakfast ideas. Discuss: *What does the video show us about the differences between nutritious and less nutritious breakfasts?*
- 3. INVESTIGATE.** Students will use the USDA's SuperTracker Challenges tool to explore their eating habits, deepen their understanding of MyPlate, and see how to eat a balanced, nutrient-dense meal that includes 3-5 food groups. Refer to the [SuperTracker Groups & Challenges User Guide](https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/Documents/SuperTracker%20Groups%20And%20Challenges%20User%20Guide.pdf) (<https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/Documents/SuperTracker%20Groups%20And%20Challenges%20User%20Guide.pdf>) for instructions on setting up a custom challenge.



SuperTracker Challenge: After setting up your account and creating your private group, create a custom challenge for a 2-day period. Select all five food groups for your challenge (Fruits, Vegetables, Protein Foods, Grains, and Dairy). After setting up the challenge, invite students to join. Assign students to enter the foods they eat for breakfast for a 2-day period. At the end, the following reports can be printed: Food Groups, Calories, and Nutrients. You can also run a group report to see on average what food groups were consumed for breakfast. You also have the option to see how individual students did and ensure all students participated in the challenge.



- 4.** At the end of the week, instruct students to fill out the **SuperTracker Reflection Handout** (p.6) to reflect on what kinds of breakfasts they ate.

MyPlate and Balanced Breakfasts (45 minutes)

1. **READ:** “Healthy Eating with MyPlate” informational text article. (30 minutes)

Answer reading comprehension questions, and discuss as a class.

2. **ANALYZE** your breakfasts using MyPlate as a guide. (15 minutes)

Preparation Note: Prior to the activity, obtain a copy of the school breakfast menu from the cafeteria or assign students to note what is offered in the 2–3 days before the activity.

Distribute the **MyPlate Handout** (p. 7) (or display the handout where students can see) and the **Breakfast at My School Worksheet** (p. 8). Have your class analyze one week of meals offered through your school’s breakfast program. Allow the students to work in small groups to discuss the meals and fill in the worksheet. After they have completed the worksheet, discuss their responses as a class, and ask each group to write their two ideas for school breakfast changes they would like to see on the board. See p. 4 for a hands-on extension to this activity.



Breakfast Around the World (45 minutes)

1. **READ:** “Breakfast Around the World” informational text article. (30 minutes)

Answer reading comprehension questions, and discuss as a class.

2. **EXPLORE:** “Let’s Break Breakfast” interactive application. (15 minutes)

Explore the interactive as a class or set students up on individual computers or tablets to work on their own. Students will examine breakfast in different countries around the world and identify which food groups are present. The goal of the activity is to visit all 8 countries.

Once students have finished, discuss as a group: Which meals looked the tastiest? If you could pick and choose foods from the different breakfasts, what would be your ideal breakfast? Does it include at least three food groups? As an optional homework extension, consider assigning a deeper research project on one country's breakfast customs.

Wrap Up (10 minutes)

REFLECT: Instruct students to write a reflection: *How will what you have learned about breakfast affect your breakfast choices? If you were to share one message from these activities with a friend, what would it be?* After students have reflected individually, ask for volunteers to share their responses with the class. Discuss as a group and record key ideas from student responses on a whiteboard or chart paper.

Changing My School Breakfast

Building off of the school breakfast analysis activity on p. 3, ask students to vote on their top 3 ideas for changes they would like to see in their school breakfasts. Decide who will present each of the top 3 ideas to your school nutrition manager and brainstorm as a class on effective ways to deliver specific and constructive feedback. Invite your school nutrition manager to the class to discuss the school breakfast program and to hear a short 5 minute presentation on your students' suggestions for making school breakfast even better for the students at your school. If time allows, facilitate a Q&A session between your students and your school nutrition manager.



Persuasive Writing

Students will write a persuasive essay encouraging a friend who doesn't usually eat breakfast to eat breakfast and/or to try out their school breakfasts options. In the essay, the students will explain the reasons breakfast is important, describe the benefits of various food groups, and give balanced breakfast ideas.



Breakfast Skits

Students will act out a skit showing how they would avoid unhealthy breakfast options and make healthier breakfast choices. Ask small groups of students to rehearse two scenes. The first scene shows why a student chooses an unhealthy breakfast option (this could be due to peer-pressure or to advertising or any other force that they can think of that sometimes causes them to choose less-healthy choices). The second scene shows an alternative ending to the skit. Small groups can rehearse the scenes in private and then present the scenes to the group. After each small group presents the first scene, the class discusses whether or not this is a common experience. Next, the group presents the second scene showing the solution and a positive outcome- a child enjoying a healthy breakfast. Teacher can debrief by asking groups to explain how they made healthier breakfast choices.



Breakfast Club

Students will create social media posts featuring their #MyPlateBreakfast (a breakfast with healthy choices from at least three MyPlate food groups) to share their healthy breakfast ideas and their positive reviews of healthy school breakfasts. This will encourage students to eat healthy breakfasts as a community, and allow them to share their ideas with other students across the country. It also will help them get new ideas for healthy breakfasts as they see what their peers are sharing.



Breakfast Myths Guide

Conduct a “Human Barometer” activity exploring students’ attitudes about breakfast. Label one side of the room “Agree” and the other side “Disagree.” Ask students to gather in the center of the room, read the statements below, and instruct them to walk to the side of the room that represents their opinion. Choose a volunteer or two from each side to explain their point of view before moving on.



It is hard to find time to eat breakfast.
Agree or disagree.

→ There are many ways to eat a quick breakfast, as we’ll see in the video we’re going to watch next.



Eating breakfast helps me focus in class.
Agree or disagree.

→ Eating a balanced, nutritious breakfast can help you concentrate in class (it’s hard to pay attention when you’re hungry!).



Eating breakfast gives me energy to be active.
Agree or disagree.

→ Eating a balanced, nutrient-dense breakfast can help you have energy (which allows you to move and be active).



Breakfast is a good time to eat fruits and vegetables.
Agree or disagree.

→ Fruit and vegetables can be important components of a balanced breakfast. Most middle school students in the United States don’t eat enough fruits and vegetables, and breakfast provides a way to include more of these foods in your diet.

SuperTracker Reflection

Follow your teacher's instructions to sign up for [SuperTracker](#) and join your class's group, either by email or with an access code. Enter all the foods you eat for breakfast into SuperTracker for 2 days. You may want to write down what you eat on a piece of paper and enter it on the computer later. Make sure to save your entries. When the challenge period is over, answer the questions below to see what you learned.



1. Were you able to eat at least three food groups for breakfast for 2 days?

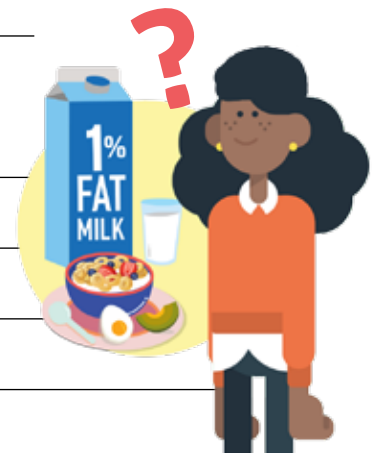
YES NO

2. Look at the Food Groups, Calories, and Nutrients Report. What food groups did you eat most frequently?

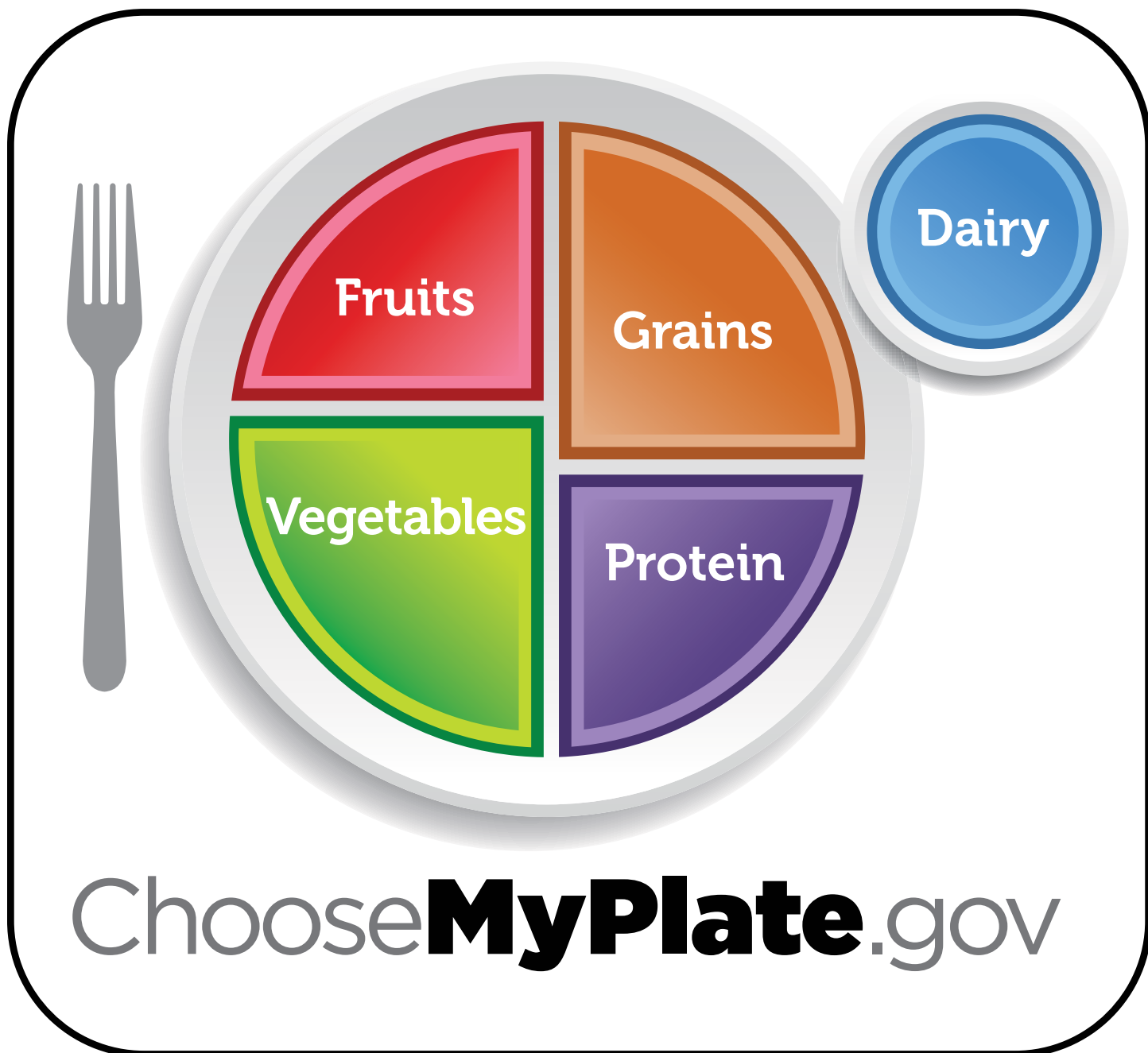
3. What did you learn about your breakfast eating pattern after using SuperTracker for 2 days?

4. How do you feel when you eat breakfast and when you don't?

5. Will this activity affect your breakfast choices in the future? How?




MyPlate Handout



Breakfast at My School WORKSHEET

What are your top 2 favorite breakfast meals from the menu? Why are these your favorites?



Breakfast Meal 1

Reason for choosing:



Breakfast Meal 2

Reason for choosing:

Take a closer look at meal 1 and meal 2 and match the foods in the meal with the MyPlate food groups.

MEAL 1	Fruits	MEAL 2	Fruits
	Vegetables		Vegetables
	Grains		Grains
	Dairy		Dairy
	Protein Foods		Protein Foods

What are 2 changes that could be made to the meals that are offered at your school that might make you or other students choose school breakfast more often? Be specific in your feedback. For example, instead of saying “We just don’t like the food” use a more specific statement like “The eggs are often cold and would taste better if they were served warm.”

1. _____
- _____
2. _____
- _____

