



MyPyramid for Kids

Lesson Highlights

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify food groups and how to get the right amount of food from each food group.*
- Review *MyPyramid for Kids* to learn how they should eat more from some food groups than others.

**MyPyramid for Kids* poster illustrates an 1,800-calorie diet. Some children may need more or fewer calories. To find the amounts that are right for an individual child, go to MyPyramid.gov.

Curriculum Connections:

Language arts, Art

Student Skills Developed:

- Listening comprehension
- Writing
- Thinking skills - categorizing

Materials Needed:

- *MyPyramid for Kids* classroom poster
- *MyPyramid for Kids* black-and-white handout for each student

Getting Started:

Hang the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster on the wall so all students can see it. Pass out the *MyPyramid for Kids* black-and-white handout to each student.

Note: A "kid-friendly" script without teacher comments is on the electronic blueprint.

Activity: A Conversation with Pyramid Pal

This activity introduces students to *MyPyramid for Kids* concepts in a fun way.

Read *A Conversation with Pyramid Pal* aloud. During the story, help students answer the questions based on the teacher's talking points.

A Conversation with Pyramid Pal

Pyramid Pal: Hi. I'm the kid climbing the side of the pyramid on the classroom wall. Did you notice that I'm running up the steps? That's because I've got lots of energy from eating right and exercising a lot. What do you do for exercise? On the steps (*of the black-and-white handout*), write the ways you stay active.

Pyramid Pal: Let's take a look at the *MyPyramid for Kids* I'm climbing, it's called *MyPyramid for Kids* because it's just for you.

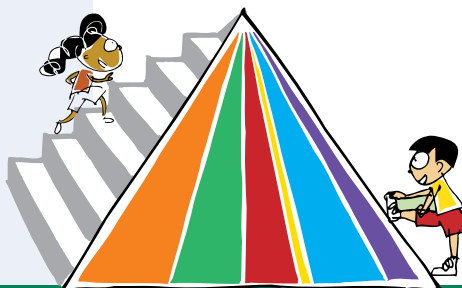
Pyramid Pal: Look at the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster on the wall. Now wave at me. Come on, wave. If I weren't stuck on this poster, I'd wave back. The poster shows how much food kids our age should eat.

Pyramid Pal: Do you know the food groups? Do you see the orange stripe next to the steps? That's the grains group! Do you know what grains are?

Teacher: Who can name the grain group foods illustrated on the poster? Write the word "grains" in the box under the grain stripe on your handout.

Pyramid Pal: Do you know what whole grains are?

Teacher: Whole wheat products are commonly eaten whole grains. Examples of whole-grain foods include: whole-grain cereal, whole-wheat bread, and oatmeal. Explain that just because a bread is brown, it's not necessarily whole wheat. The only way to tell is to look at the ingredient label. The first ingredient should read "whole wheat."



Pyramid Pal: My favorite whole grain is lowfat popcorn! Did you know it actually turns itself inside out when it pops? It's yummy!

Pyramid Pal: **The next color stripe is for vegetables.** Some kids don't get enough vegetables. Write the word "vegetables" in the box. It is important to eat dark green and orange vegetables. Come on, name a few.

Teacher: Before reading the examples, let the students name their favorite dark green and orange vegetables.

Pyramid Pal: I like broccoli, carrots, spinach, collard greens, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin.

Pyramid Pal: **See the red stripe?** That's for fruits! Write the word "fruits" in the box. I always put a fresh fruit in my backpack, and eat a piece of fruit as a snack every day. Dried, frozen, and canned fruits are great, too. Did you know there is a fruit snack made from dried grapes? Can you name it?

Teacher: Raisins

Pyramid Pal: **The blue stripe is the milk group.** Write the word "milk" in the box. Did you know that foods in this group include more than just the milk we drink? They are foods made from milk. Can you name a few?

Teacher: Yogurt, pudding, cheese. Explain that calcium is important for building strong bones. Students should consume the equivalent of three cups of milk or other calcium-rich foods each day, emphasizing choices that are lower in fat or fat-free.

Pyramid Pal: **The last stripe on the right is meat and beans!** Write those words in the box below the meat and beans group. Meat and beans provide protein, which is important in building muscles.

Teacher: Lean meat, chicken, turkey, fish, nuts, beans, peanut butter, and eggs are all from this group.

Pyramid Pal: **OK. We're done with the food groups.** No, you say? What's that skinny yellow line up there between the fruits and milk? Those are oils. Write the word "oils" in the long box. They are not a food group, but everyone needs some. I get mine from nuts and seeds.

Teacher: Other good sources are fish and liquid oils such as olive, corn, soybean, and canola oil.



Lunchroom Link:

Look at the lunch menu for today. Ask students into which food groups each of the items on the menu would fit. You may need to explain mixed foods, like hamburgers and pizza, which fit in several groups. (Pizza = grain, milk, vegetable, meat)



Pyramid Pal: Why are some of the food groups bigger than others?

The wider color stripes show that you should eat more foods from those groups and less foods from the groups with the narrower stripes. Put an "X" in each of the three widest food groups. Which groups are the widest?

Teacher: *Grains, vegetables, milk.*

Teacher: *Students should learn to eat healthier foods more often and foods such as candy, potato chips, or French fries less often. Moderation is represented by the narrowing of each food group from the bottom to top. The wider base stands for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars. These should be selected more often. The narrower top area stands for foods containing more added sugars and solid fats.*

Pyramid Pal: Now look closer for some MyPyramid for Kids secrets.

See how each of the color stripes is wider at the base of the pyramid and narrower at the top? That's to remind you (*and me, too*) that the healthier foods in each group are at the base of the pyramid. Those are foods low in fat and added sugar. We should eat mostly those foods. Can you name some?

Teacher: *Whole-grain cereal, fruit, vegetables.*

Pyramid Pal: See how the colored stripes are narrow at the top?

That's for foods that are high in fats and added sugars. These foods are for eating once in a while.



Pyramid Pal: Here is a Pyramid Pal example. In the grain group, a slice of whole-wheat bread is a healthy lowfat choice and is at the base of *MyPyramid for Kids*, while a donut is a high-fat and a high-added-sugar choice. I only eat these on special occasions. Then I run up and down the stairs of *MyPyramid for Kids* a bunch of times! Draw a slice of bread at the bottom of the grain group, and a donut at the top.

Pyramid Pal: Here's another Pyramid Pal example. In the vegetable group, a baked sweet potato is low in fat and added sugar and great for you any day. But French fries are high in fat. You should eat them only once in a while.

Pyramid Pal: Thanks, kids. Hope you enjoyed Pyramid Pal's tour of *MyPyramid for Kids*. I hope your teacher leaves me up here on the wall so you can see me every day.

Group Activity: Pyramid Pal Cartoons

Have students work in groups to create Pyramid Pal cartoons in which Pyramid Pal gives kids nutrition advice from *MyPyramid for Kids*. Students can use the poster on the wall as background information. Display cartoons around the room or in the lunchroom.





MyPyramid

Eat Right. Exercise. Have Fun.

MyPyramid.gov

