

Acknowledgments

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This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's *Network for a Healthy California* with funding from USDA SNAP, known in California as CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net.

Eating the Alphabet



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

- This lesson begins with a read aloud of *Eating the Alphabet*. On each page of the book is a letter and a fruit or vegetable starting with that letter.
- After reading the first few pages, students begin to make predictions about what fruit or vegetable will be on the next page.
- Students gain exposure to new fruits and vegetables and learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.
- As a class, students create their own versions of *Eating the Alphabet*. Each student will contribute one page about either a fruit or vegetable to the book.

LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Students practice identifying letter sounds, using describing words and labeling fruits and vegetables.

NUTRITION GOAL

Students understand the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and identify fruits and vegetables they would like to eat.

HOME COMPONENT

Students share their “Fruit and Vegetables I’d Like to Try” worksheets with their family. Using the role-play that they practiced in class, they ask their family for fruits and vegetables that they would like to try and plan when to try them at home.

STANDARDS AND SKILLS SUPPORTED IN THIS LESSON

• California’s Common Core Content Standards for English Language Arts

Kindergarten

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills

- 1d Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- 3b Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary or many of the most frequent sound for each consonant.
- 5b Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms).

Speaking and Listening Standards

- 4 Describe familiar people, places, things and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

• California Health Education Content Standards

Nutrition and Physical Activity – Kindergarten

Standard 1: Essential Concepts

- 1.1.N Name a variety of healthy foods and explain why they are necessary for good health.

Standard 4: Interpersonal Communication

- 4.1.N Explain how to ask family members for healthy food options.

Standard 7: Practicing Health-Enhancing Behaviors

- 7.3.N Choose healthy foods in a variety of settings.



CROSS-DISCIPLINARY SKILLS

- Making predictions
- Classifying and categorizing

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Elhert
- Copies of MyPlate (one per student or one color copy per class)
- “Eating the Alphabet” worksheet (one per student plus five as examples/challenge pages)*
- “Eating the Alphabet” sample page (one per class)
- Fruits and Veggies I Would Like to Try!” worksheet (one per student)
- MyPlate handout (one per student or poster to display for the class)
- Pencils (one per student)
- Crayons or markers (one box per four students)
- Chart paper with “Adjectives” written at the top (one piece)
- Stapler or book binding materials (one)

*Based on a class size of 20 students. If you have more or less students, increase or decrease the amount of pages you use as examples/challenge pages.

PREPARATION TIME

- 15 minutes

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

- Make color copies of MyPlate. If this is not possible, print one color copy to show to the class. MyPlate posters can be downloaded in PDF form from the Web site, <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/tipsresources/printmaterials.html> or alternatively, call the United States Department of Agriculture at 888-779-7264 or contact the California Healthy Kids Resource Center at 888-318-8188 for copies.
- Make copies of “Eating the Alphabet” worksheet and “Fruits and Veggies I Would Like to Try!” worksheet.
- Write the word “Adjectives” on the top of the piece of chart paper.

- To be done between day one and day two: Assemble the class created version of “Eating the Alphabet” book. Staple or bind the book together.
- To be done in advance: Prepare sample book pages.

ACTIVITY TIME

- 70 minutes
- This activity takes two class periods to complete:
 “Warm-Up” to “Activity” on day one (40 minutes)
 “Activity Results” to “Closing” on day two (30 minutes)



BACKGROUND

Fruits and vegetables are a critical component of good health. They contain essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that may help protect against chronic diseases. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides antioxidants, vitamins A and C, beta-carotene, fiber, potassium, and folic acid. Many young children do not consume the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that children ages four to eight consume 1 to 1½ cups of fruit plus 1 to 1½ cups of vegetables daily. The MyPlate recommendation is to make half of the plate fruits and vegetables at each meal and to include a variety of fruits and vegetables, including dark green and red and orange vegetables.

TEACHING TIPS

- It can be difficult to think of fruits and vegetables that begin with some letters of the alphabet. Use the most difficult letters (I, J, U, V, X) as example pages that you make with the class or as challenge pages for students who complete the assignment early. The letter Q has been used for the “Eating the Alphabet” sample page.
- Use the following Web sites as resources for ideas of fruits and vegetables that start with each letter: Harvest of the Month – <http://www.harvestofthemonth.com> and Fruits & Veggies: More Matters – <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>
- For English learners or students who need extra support, encourage students to write color words for their describing words. Post a color chart in the classroom or encourage students to use markers or crayons to find out how to spell color names.
- Students who are in need of an extra challenge can write a sentence describing their fruit or vegetable.

VOCABULARY

Adjective – A word that tells you more about something, for example the lemon is yellow and sour. The words “yellow” and “sour” are adjectives and tell you more about the lemon.

Fruits – The part of a plant or tree that has seeds and is usually sweet to eat, for example apples, peaches, strawberries, and melons.

Vegetables – The leaves, root, stalk or flower bud of a plant that is safe to eat, for example celery, lettuce, green beans, and squash.

Vitamins – A natural part of food that helps to keep our bodies healthy and protect us from getting sick.

STEPS FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

DAY 1 (40 minutes)

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

- Read *Eating the Alphabet* aloud to the class.

Before the Activity (10 minutes)

- Ask students why it is important to eat fruits and vegetables. Tell the class that fruits and vegetables are important to eat because they give us vitamins that keep our bodies healthy and help protect us from getting sick.
- Review the definitions for fruits and vegetables. Include a visual of a plant to show the parts of the plant that fruits and vegetables come from. Choose several of the more common fruits and vegetables highlighted in *Eating the Alphabet*. Have students show if they have tried each food by standing up or raising their hand (or leaning to one side if students can't remember if they've tried the food).
- Choose several of the more unusual fruits and vegetables highlighted in *Eating the Alphabet*. Briefly explain what each fruit or vegetable tastes like. Have students show whether they would like to try each food by standing up or raising their hand (or leaning to one side if students aren't sure if they would like to try the food).

Activity (20 minutes)

- Tell students that they are going to create their own "Eating the Alphabet" book.
- Show students the "Eating the Alphabet" sample page for Q. Explain that each student will be assigned one letter. Each student will need to think of a fruit or vegetable that starts with his/her letter. Students will work independently to fill in book page for their letters, complete with pictures and describing words.
- Ask students what a describing word is. Tell the class that another name for a describing word is an adjective. Ask students to repeat the word adjective back to you.
- Tell students that describing words can be words that describe colors, taste, texture, smell, etc. Point out the describing words on the example book page.
- Ask students to use adjectives to describe an apple. Record some of the students' answers on the chart paper labeled "Adjectives."
- Using one of the trickier letters (I, J, U, V, X), complete an example book page. If you can't think of another example, you can use "Jicama" for the "J" page.
- Explain to students that when creating their book pages they should try to think of a fruit or vegetable not mentioned in Lois Elhert's *Eating the Alphabet*. If students are really struggling to name a fruit or vegetable for their letter, have them brainstorm a list, or you can provide a few examples, with their help.
- Tell students that the really tricky letters are going to be available as challenge pages. If students finish their assigned book pages early, they can try to think of a new fruit or vegetable for another letter or try to think of a fruit or vegetable for a tricky letter. You may also encourage them to use any of the fruits and vegetables mentioned in Elhert's book for these letters. Alternatively, you can create book pages as examples for these letters.
- Assign a letter to each student. If they are in the reading corner or on the reading mat, have them return to their seats to work individually on their book pages.

DAY 2 (30 minutes)

Activity Results (10 minutes)

- Read *Eating the Alphabet* book out loud to the class.
- Ask students what adjectives they heard in the read aloud of *Eating the Alphabet*.

Nutrition/Language Arts Discussion (15 minutes)

- Distribute copies of the MyPlate handout or display a MyPlate poster for students. Explain that eating healthy includes choosing foods from a variety of different food groups.
- Ask students to identify the fruits and vegetables groups on the MyPlate picture. Explain the recommendation that children need to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. It is important to eat fruits and vegetables with each meal and include them as snacks that taste good and help us stay healthy.
- Ask students to name fruits or vegetables they would like to eat. Encourage students to choose a fruit or vegetable they have never tried or have rarely eaten. Write students' responses on the board.
- Model how to ask a family member for a fruit or vegetable. Use the sentence frame, "I would like to eat this fruit because _____." Ask students to use adjectives to describe the fruit or vegetable they would like to eat.
- Have students pair up and practice asking each other for a fruit or vegetable using the above sentence frame.
- Ask students to share some of the adjectives they used to describe the fruits and vegetables they asked for. Add their adjectives to your "Adjectives" chart.

Closing (5 minutes)

- Ask students if they learned about any new fruits and vegetables today. Have them turn to a partner and share at least one fruit or vegetable they learned about through this lesson.
- Have students fill out the "Fruits and Veggies I Would Like to Try!" worksheet. When they complete their worksheets have them practice asking each other for fruits and vegetables by reading what they wrote on their worksheets. Have students turn in their worksheets for review.
- Have students take their worksheets home and ask a family member for fruits and vegetables.
- Check-in with students in the next week or so to determine how many students tried a new fruit or vegetable. If students have not tried a new fruit or vegetable during this time, bring in new fruits or vegetables or have students practice asking family members for new fruits or vegetables.

Assessment

- Review the class "Eating the Alphabet" book pages. Assess whether or not students chose a fruit or vegetable that started with their assigned letter and if it was in Elbert's book. What kinds of adjectives did students use to describe their fruit or vegetable?
- Review students' "Fruit and Vegetables I'd Like to Try" worksheets. Notice whether or not students used appropriate adjectives and whether they spelled words independently or used words that were written on the chart paper.



IDEAS AND RESOURCES FOR EXTENDING THE LESSON

The activities listed below include resources that are available for free, four-week loan from the California Healthy Kids Resource Center (CHKRC). Additional nutrition and physical activity DVDs, curricula, references, and displays can also be borrowed. To order materials or for other resource suggestions, check the CHKRC Web site at <http://www.californiahealthykids.org> or call toll free (888) 318-8188.

Activity	Students categorize the vegetables and fruits they eat. They match foods with the plant part that is the source of the food and prepare simple recipes from vegetables. Have students write an adjective to describe the vegetable and recipe they taste. As homework, students keep track of how many vegetables they eat.	
Resource	<i>Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork</i> (CHKRC ID #8321) Lesson 3: Getting Ready to Cook Lesson 5: Food and Garden Discovery - Vegetables	
Standards	English Language Arts Foundational Skills 1b, 3b, 5b Listening and Speaking Standards 4	Health Essential Concepts Kindergarten 1.1.N Practice Health-Enhancing Behaviors 7.1.N

Activity	Encourage students to try new fruits and vegetables from seasonal produce through <i>Harvest of the Month (HOTM)</i> . Have students create individual “Eating the Alphabet” books as they try each HOTM fruit or vegetable. Students design their pages based on the class “Eating the Alphabet” book, including simple adjectives.	
Resource	<i>Harvest of the Month</i> (CHKRC ID #5798) Access other HOTM resources online at http://www.harvestofthemonth.com	
Standards	English Language Arts Foundational Skills 1d, 3b, 5b Listening and Speaking Standards 4	Health Essential Concepts Kindergarten 1.1.N Practicing Health-Enhancing Behaviors Kindergarten 7.3.N



RESOURCE WEB SITES AND REFERENCES

Elhert, Louis. *Eating the Alphabet*. New York: Sandpiper, 1994. Print.

Food Champs Organization – <http://www.foodchamps.org/>

This interactive Web site contains games, coloring sheets, recipes and activity pages for children. Students can navigate the Web site independently or resources can be printed for classroom use.

Fruits & Veggies: More Matters – <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>

This online resource features information about fruits and vegetables, including recipes, news and nutritional recommendations. This Web site also contains a section for children that includes resources and games.

Harvest of the Month – www.harvestofthemonth.com

This Network for a Healthy California Web site provides nutrition information about fresh California produce, as well as newsletters for educators, parents, and food service professionals.

MyPlate – <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>

This online resource, from the United States Department of Agriculture, features personalized eating plans, interactive tools, classroom materials, posters, brochures, and advice for making food choices from every food group.

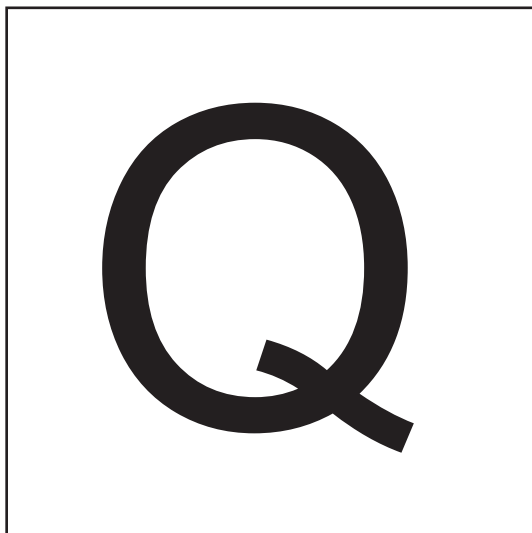


Eating the Alphabet

Sample Page

Name: Suzie

Letter



Drawing of a Fruit or Vegetable



Name of Fruit or Vegetable: Quince

Adjectives:

Yellow

Sour

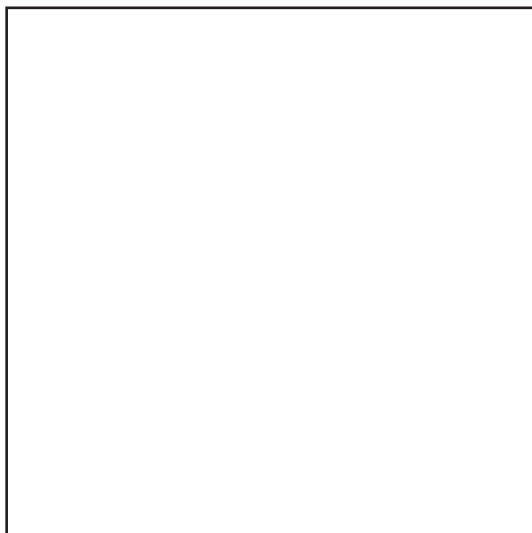
Pearshaped

Eating the Alphabet

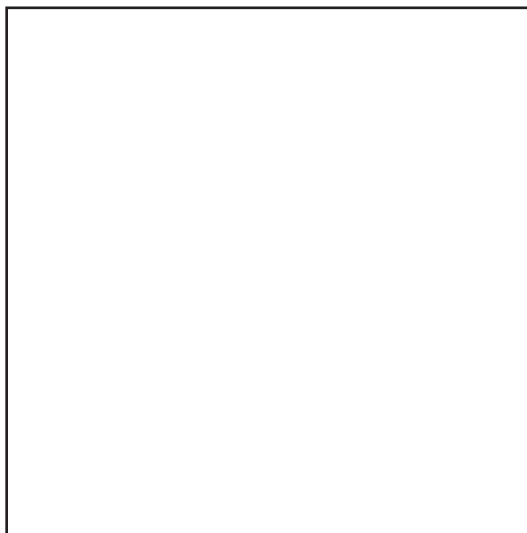
Worksheet

Name: _____

Letter



Drawing of a Fruit or Vegetable



Name of Fruit or Vegetable: _____

Adjectives:



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Fruits and Veggies I Would Like to Try!

Worksheet

Name: _____

Draw the fruit or vegetable that you would like to try.



I would like to eat _____

because it is _____



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