

# Wanted: A Balanced Plate

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## Standards of Learning

Health K.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1

## Objectives

Student will be able to:

- Explain the health benefits of eating a balanced meal featuring each section of the My Plate food guide

## Materials

- Computer with internet access
- poster board or large sheets of paper
- markers, colored pencils or crayons

## Background Knowledge

A well balanced diet is essential to good health. By learning to make good food choices early, students can begin habits that will prevent health problems later in life, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. When students choose nutrient rich foods from each of the 5 food groups they can fuel their bodies for healthy and active lifestyle. A person's age, gender, and level of physical activity determine how much of each food group they should eat.

Virginia farmers grow or raise food that belongs in each section of MyPlate. In "Protein" there is poultry, eggs, beef, and hogs as well as soybeans and peanuts. Additionally, Virginia farmers produce many dairy items for the "Dairy" sections. In fact, there are more than 100,000 head of dairy cattle in Virginia, making it the state's third largest commodity (behind chickens and beef, respectively). For the "Fruit" group Virginia growers produce an average of 8-10 million bushels of apples a year, as well as strawberries, grapes, peaches, cantaloupes and watermelons. Next, in "Vegetables," Virginia is the nation's third largest producer of fresh tomatoes. You will also find potatoes, green peppers, and snap beans, as well as many other fresh vegetables. Lastly, in the "Grains" group Virginia farmers produce corn as well as wheat.

## Procedure

1. Discuss the food groups and examples within each category. Ask students to share what they had for lunch. Write the foods included in the meal on the board and then have students sort them into the appropriate categories.
2. Discuss the importance of choosing foods from each of the food groups as well as healthy choices within each group.
3. Divide class into 5 groups, one for each of the food groups. Within each group, have each student choose a difference food.
4. Using <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/WhatIsMyPlate> and other applicable website, each student will research the nutritional value of their food and food group.
5. After doing the research, have students create a "Wanted" poster for their food. Include a drawing(s) and the research information.
6. Display the "Wanted" posters in your classroom, hallway or school cafeteria.



For more resources to connect children to agriculture visit [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).