

BREAKFAST LESSON THREE: GRADES 6-8

Feeling Healthy and Eating Breakfast



The GOALS of this lesson are to:

- help children develop an understanding of the reasons it is important to eat breakfast every day (SCIENCE, HEALTH)
- make observations about individual and class breakfast habits by completing and compiling the results of a class survey (SOCIAL STUDIES, MATH)
- identify reasons for skipping breakfast and solutions for eating breakfast every day (PROBLEM SOLVING)

This lesson has three components: an **ADVANCE ACTIVITY** in which students bring in pictures of people who are active and also respond to a class survey; a **DISCUSSION** centered around the results of the survey and the pictures they bring to class; and an **ACTIVITY** (selected from several options) that reinforces the discussion.



ADVANCE ACTIVITY

Have students bring in pictures of people who are active. Have them post pictures in an area that you have designated.

Print the following questions on a large piece of newsprint with columns for the responses “always or almost always,” “sometimes,” “never or almost never”:

- I exercise for at least 20 minutes every day.
- I get about 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.
- I eat three meals a day.
- I eat breakfast every day.

Print the following question with “yes” or “no” response:

- I ate breakfast today.

The day before the lesson, post the survey and ask each student to respond sometime during the day by placing a tally mark under the most appropriate response for each question. Prior to the lesson, total the responses for each question.



DISCUSSION

Introduce the lesson by sharing the total for each survey question students answered yesterday. Now, refer to the pictures that students brought in:
How do you think the people in these pictures would answer the survey? Why?

What gives these people energy to stay active and feel good?

How important is each of these items (listed in the survey) to feeling good and having energy every day? Have students rank by importance.

Why is breakfast so important?

Do kids your age need breakfast or is breakfast just for younger kids?

- regardless of age, breakfast is important
- gives us energy to start the day
- makes it easier to focus on learning
when we eat breakfast, we are more likely to get all of the nutrients we need
- every day
when kids miss breakfast, they generally don’t make up for the nutrients they miss through other meals and snacks during the day

NOTES

Have students focus on the results of the breakfast questions and draw some conclusions about breakfast habits of the students in their class. Compare with the results of a recent survey:

- *one survey showed that most 8- to 13-year-olds ate breakfast, but 58 percent of 12- and 13-year-olds didn't eat it every day.*

What are some reasons that kids your age skip breakfast? Possible reasons include:

- rather sleep late
- not hungry first thing in the morning
- don't want to take time to sit down at the table
- don't like the breakfast foods in the house

Divide students into small groups or pairs. Assign each group one of the reasons they listed for missing breakfast. First, have each group act out the assigned reason for missing breakfast. Analyze, then “rewind.” Next, act out how to get around that reason and fit in a nutritious breakfast sometime during the morning. Provide a stimulus question to help students focus:

What can Jane or Jason do to make sure they eat breakfast sometime during the morning?

Have students analyze each scenario presented. Be sure to include the following points and options during the discussion (or as a summary):

- breakfast doesn't need to take much time
- it's okay to eat foods that aren't traditional breakfast foods, as long as they come from the Food Guide Pyramid. Examples include pizza, burritos, sandwiches, leftovers from the night before
- try packing some foods in your back pack to eat on the bus or when you get to school (if allowed)
- check out the school cafeteria and the School Breakfast Program*
- try setting breakfast out the night before
- take breakfast to your room to eat when getting dressed (subject to parental approval!)

*If your school has a breakfast program, be sure that School Breakfast is mentioned as an alternative. School Breakfast is for all children who can't eat breakfast before leaving for school – whether they're simply not hungry when they wake up, they don't have time, or breakfast is not available in their home. Your school food service director can help you get information about the program to the children.



ACTIVITY

Select one or more of the following activities to reinforce the discussion:

Have students create a database and graph and display the results of the class breakfast survey using Hyperstudio® or a similar computer program available in your school.

Have children keep a breakfast journal for a week in which they record what they eat, where they eat, and how they feel after eating. At the end of each journal entry, have them decide whether they ate a nutritious breakfast and why it was nutritious. At the end of the week, have them draw conclusions about their breakfast eating habits and record any changes they plan to make as a result of keeping a journal.

NOTES

Make a “healthy breakfast” collage using magazine pictures.

Working in groups, develop a TV commercial that promotes the importance of eating breakfast every day. Draw a picture for each major scene in the commercial and the dialogue for each scene. If possible, work with the media department to produce the commercial and air it on the local cable channel for your city or town.

As a class, develop interview questions about the School Breakfast Program. Invite the food service director to the classroom and interview him or her using these questions. Use the interview results as the basis for writing a feature or news story for your local newspaper about the school’s breakfast program.

Develop the design for a breakfast Web site (on paper) for children. The design should include:

- a home page with a title, a logo and at least three topics that children can click on to get more information about breakfast. Click-on topics might include: information about School Breakfast, nutritious breakfast ideas, breakfast games or puzzles, or reasons for eating breakfast.
- at least one page that children would see when they click on each topic on the home page, including information they would read and pictures they would see when they view the page.

If possible, have the class choose a favorite design. Work with the technology department to post the design as a real Web site.

Design a puppet show or game (e.g. Breakfast Pictionary) that teaches young children about nutritious breakfast choices and the importance of eating breakfast. Present the puppet show to younger students in their classroom or at an assembly. Loan games developed to younger classes.

Design a logo and slogan that promotes breakfast. Have students vote for a class favorite. Present the winning logo to the food service director to use for promoting School Breakfast.

Invite the school food service director or school nurse to talk about the importance of eating breakfast every day.

As a community service project, have students develop and teach a breakfast lesson for preschool or primary-grade students. The lesson should involve the audience and teach about why it’s important to eat breakfast each day.