

Meal Planning Worksheet

Instructions

To plan a healthy, balanced meal, follow these steps.

1. Choose a meal and list the menu items that make up that meal.
2. Evaluate the balance of food groups.
3. Evaluate the balance of color, texture, and flavor.
4. Plan a new meal for your family following the guidelines for a balance of food groups, color, texture, and flavor.

Step 1: Choose a Meal

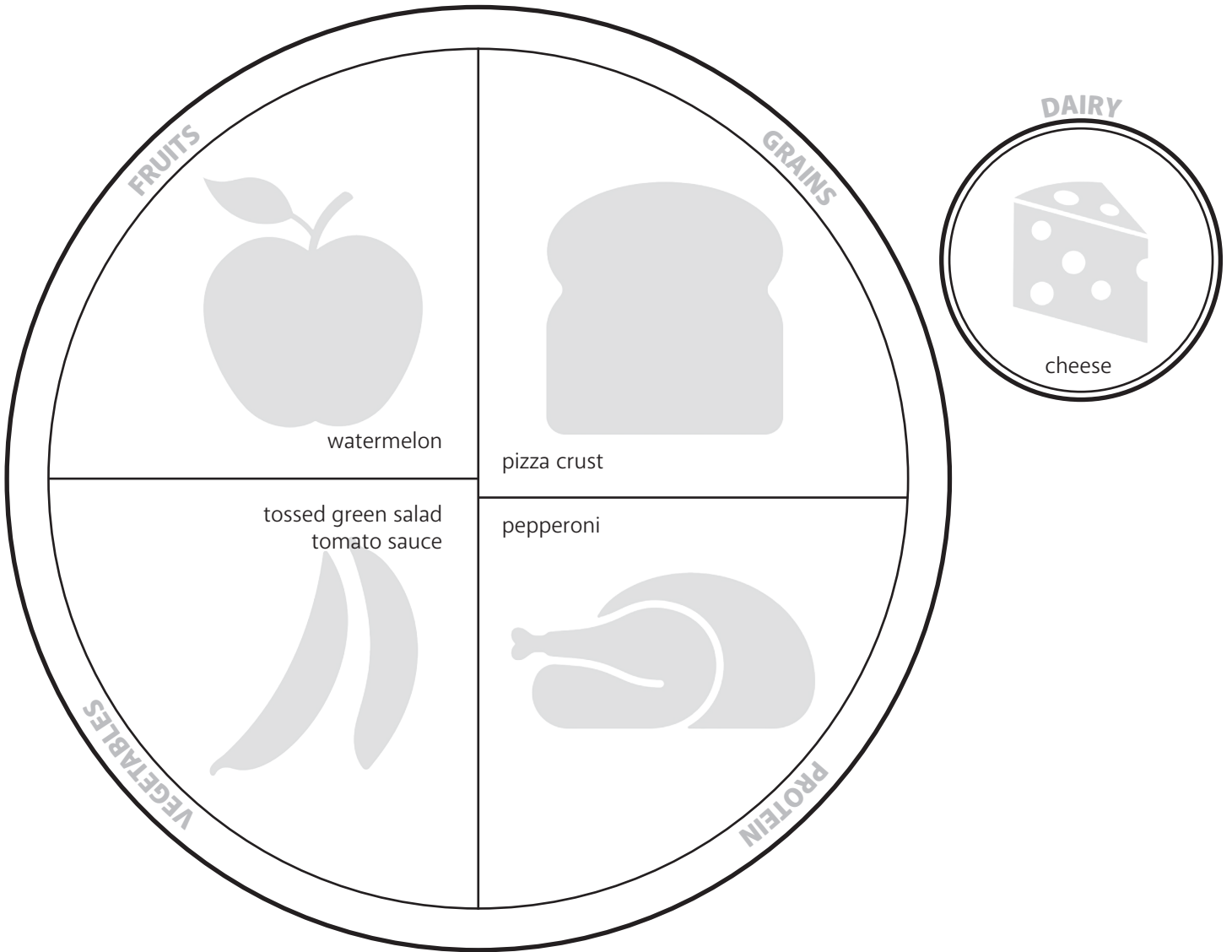
1. List the meal of your choosing.

2. List the menu items that make up this meal.

Step 2: Evaluate the Balance of Food Groups

1. Place the food ingredients included in this meal on the plate according to their food group. Write or draw on the diagram on the next page. An example is provided for you.
 - a. First, look at the menu items that make up the meal. If your meal includes a recipe that contains multiple ingredients, you'll need to list them separately. For example, if you're serving a tostada, the shell would go under grain; the beans, lettuce, and tomato would go under vegetables; and the cheese and sour cream would go under dairy. If you add chicken, beef, or pork, that would go under protein.

b. Second, add items that are not part of a recipe. Examples could be fresh fruits, steamed vegetables, rice, etc.

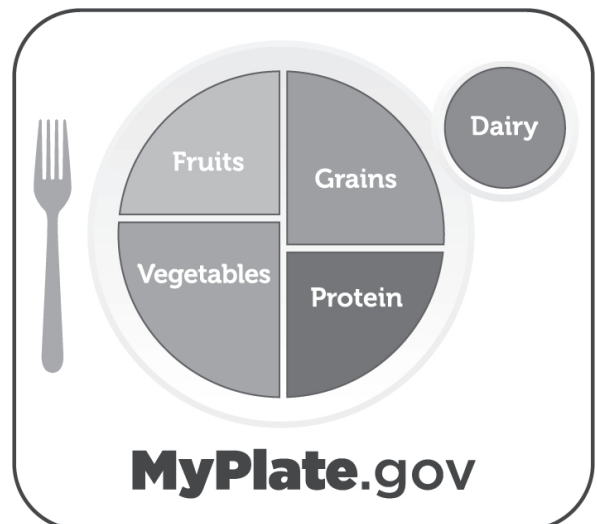


2. Evaluate the balance of food groups by comparing them to the MyPlate guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Are the food groups in this meal in balance?

Yes No

Use the table on the next page to help you evaluate balance.



FOOD GROUP	MY MEAL	MY PORTION SIZE	MyPlate GUIDELINES
GRAINS			1/4 OF PLATE
PROTEIN			1/4 OF PLATE
FRUITS & VEGETABLES			1/2 OF PLATE
DAIRY			USE SPARINGLY

3. If the food groups are out of balance, what can you do to remedy it? Write your suggestions below.

Step 3: Evaluate the Balance of Color, Texture, and Flavor

1. Look back at the meal you selected in Step 1. What are the colors, textures, and flavors? Write them on the table below.

INGREDIENT	COLOR	TEXTURE	FLAVOR (SALTY, SWEET, BITTER, SOUR, OR UMAMI)

2. Does this meal have a balance of colors, textures, and flavors?

Yes No

3. If you checked “No,” what changes could you make to the meal to improve the balance of color, texture, and flavor?

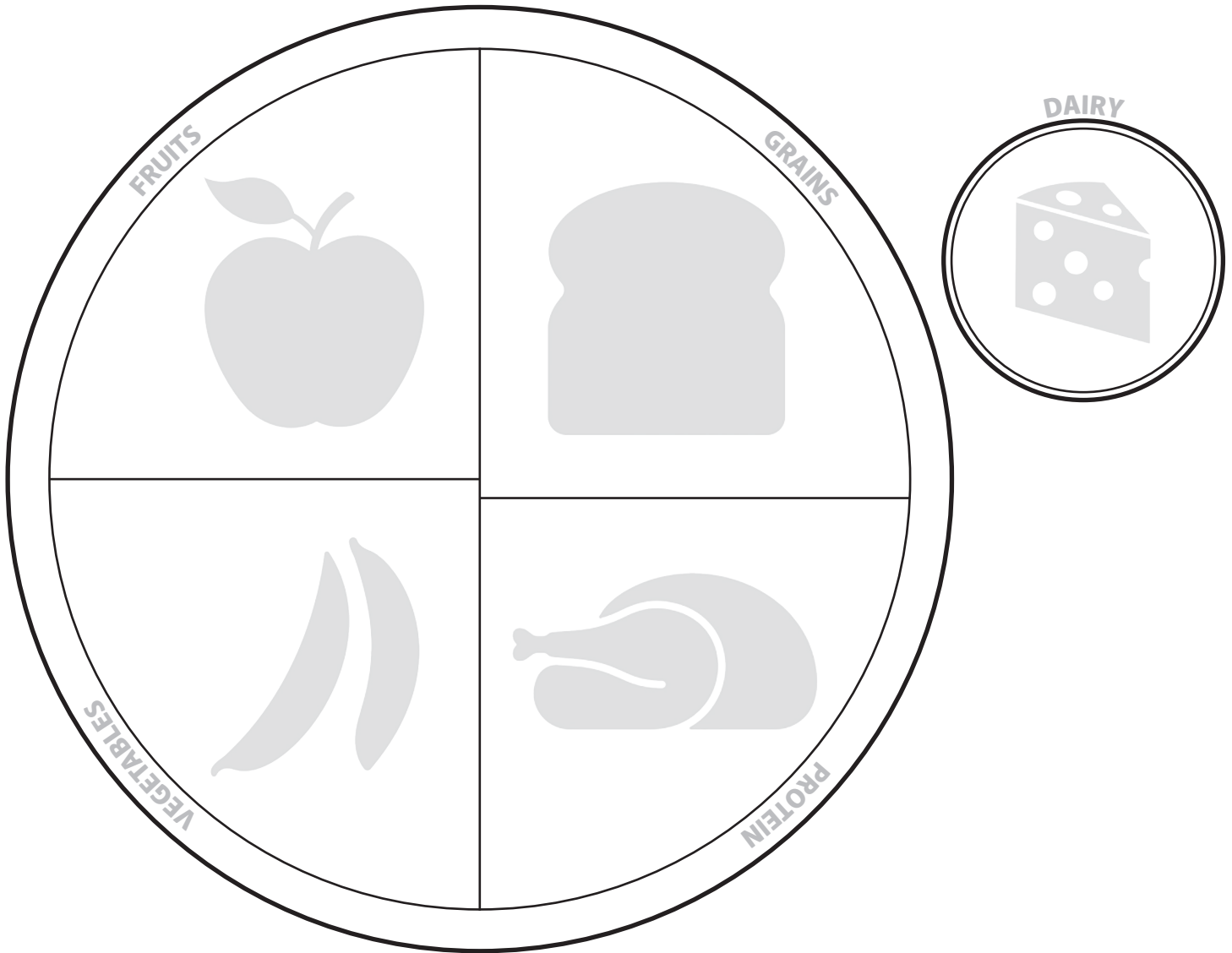
Step 4: Plan A New Meal

Using the information you’ve learned about balanced meals, plan a new meal for your family. You may choose breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a healthy snack.

1. List the meal of your choosing.

2. List the menu items that make up this meal.

3. Illustrate the balance of food groups by drawing or writing on the diagram below.



4. What colors, textures, and flavors are represented in this meal? Use the table below.

INGREDIENT	COLOR	TEXTURE	FLAVOR (SALTY, SWEET, BITTER, SOUR, OR UMAMI)

5. You've planned a balanced meal for your family. Think about making it for them! Use the table below as a guide.

MEAL PREPARATION TASK	PLANNING NOTES
a. Look ahead over the next month. When might be a good time to prepare this meal?	
b. Who in your family could help with shopping for the ingredients?	
c. Who in your family could help with preparation?	
d. Who in your family could help set the table and serve the meal?	
e. If you make this meal for your family, ask them how they liked it. Get some feedback on the balance of food groups, color, texture, and flavor.	

6. In the story, Saige's love of cooking led her to plan several meals. It also pointed to her specific interests, abilities, and aptitudes. She told her family that she wanted to be a chef someday and own her own restaurant.

What does this meal planning activity tell you about your own interests and abilities? Check one of the boxes below.

- I'm with Saige. I'd like to explore careers in the food service industry.
- I enjoy cooking, but my true interests and abilities lie elsewhere.
- I'll stick with cooking for my family, thank you.
- Maybe an occasional party? I could offer something more balanced than chips and dip.
- I love to eat, but I'm happiest when someone else does the cooking.
- Cooking? Ha! May I please just eat out?

Turning the Page to More Balanced Meal Planning

If you could do one thing to improve meal planning for our family, what would it be and why?
