



## The Whole Food Experience: Observing and Discussing Foods with Descriptive Adjectives

Lesson Plan by Service Members Kirsten Gerbatsch & Daniel Marbury, Michigan

**Theme:** Nutrition/Health

**Grade Level:** K-2; 3-5; 6-8

**Subject Area:**

- English, Language Arts
- Science

**Summary:**

This is a basic exercise for describing and reflecting on foods using sensory adjectives. The activity engages students in imagining and describing their favorite one dish meal with words related to color, taste, texture, smell, etc. It concludes with a sampling of seasonal produce to give students the opportunity to practice observing and describing foods with a newfound vocabulary. As a class students will share observations and adjectives to form a class word bank. This vocabulary will guide students' tasting experience at the end of this lesson. Additionally, you can expand this word bank with future food and science activities to encourage students to continue to practice an objective approach to asking questions and trying new things.



**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to identify and distinguish different aspects of their experience of food, including flavor, temperature, texture, smell, color, etc.
- Students will taste and observe the flavors and other characteristics of healthy food choices.
- Students will expand their vocabulary of new descriptive adjectives.
- Students will be able to use adjectives to describe their memories and observations about foods.
- Students will learn about the cultivation and nutrition of several local and seasonal fruits and vegetables.
- Students will practice communicating their observations to others in pairs or small groups.
- Students will practice listening closely to their classmates.
- Students will learn the importance of being respectful of their classmates' differences.



**Prep Time:** 15 minutes for food preparation

**Teaching Time:** 30 minutes (Grades K-2); 45 minutes (Grades 3-8)

**Materials:**

- Selection of local, seasonal fruits and vegetables (2-3 unique produce items with several varieties, i.e. three different varieties of tomatoes)
- Knives, cutting board, napkins, small serving plates
- Poster, chalk board, or white board for word bank

**The Plan:**

**For Grades K-2**

**Part 1. The Perfect Meal (10 min)**

1. Introduce activity by asking students to imagine their perfect meal.
2. Have 3-4 students volunteer their favorite food item in their meal.
3. As a class, develop descriptive adjectives for each food item. Try to develop at least 2-3 words that describe color, taste, texture, smell etc. Come up with as many as you can.
4. Record these new vocabulary words in your class word bank. You may choose to include illustrations for younger students. Keep this word bank somewhere visible in the classroom.

**Part 2. Tasting and class discussion (10 min)**

1. Introduce the tasting activity. Explain the guidelines for classroom tasting and the “No Thank You” bite rule. Remind students to raise their hands before sharing thoughts about the foods. Reinforce the idea of using descriptive words, not words such as “good,” “bad,” “eww,” or “gross.”
2. Distribute serving plates of one produce item at a time. As the food is being passed out, use this time to describe fun gardening or nutritional facts about the fruit or vegetable.
3. Sample the food item all together as a class. Allow several moments for chewing and silent reflection. Ask students to raise their hands when they are ready to share words to describe their experience.
4. Throughout the sharing, encourage students to use words from the word bank and additional creative, descriptive words.
5. Repeat with each food item.
6. Clean up and encourage students to try using these words in the lunchroom and at home.



## For Grades 3-5

### Part 1. The Perfect Meal (10 min)

1. Introduce activity by asking students to imagine their perfect meal.
2. Have students illustrate their favorite one plate meal using the paper plates or worksheets.
3. Before students share their drawings with the class, you may use the sample role play conversation to demonstrate how the class will be talking about food today. Also explain the “Don’t Yuck My Yum” concept.

#### *Role Play Example*

A: “Why is this your favorite meal?”

B: “Because it tastes good.”

A: “‘Good’ is not a word that describes the food to me because everyone has a different idea of taste. What are other words that describe the food? Is it spicy? Sweet? Hot? Cold? Crunchy?”

B: “OK. Then I would say this is (enter adjectives).”

A: “And how does it look? How does it smell? What is the texture like? Is it soft? Crispy? Rough? Goey? Salty?”

B: “OK! I get it now! (Improvise description of meal).”

#### *Explain: “Don’t yuck my yum”*

*Ask students what they think the phrase “Don’t yuck my yum” means. Discuss that every person’s individual food preferences are shaped by their family, traditions, background, and culture. It is OK to like some foods but not others. However, it is not OK to be disrespectful of other people’s food choices. Let’s be respectful and we won’t ‘yuck anyone’s yum.’*

4. Ask 3-4 students volunteer to present their favorite food item in their meal to the class. Briefly discuss new, descriptive and creative vocabulary words.
5. Divide class into groups of partners (2 or 3 students per group). Ask students to describe their favorite meal to their partners. Students should record sense words that describe the meal (color, taste, texture, temperature, smell).
6. Regroup as a class to share new descriptive vocabulary words. Ask small groups to present their words with the class.
7. Record these new vocabulary words in your class word bank. You may choose to include illustrations for younger students. Keep this word bank somewhere visible in the classroom.



## **Part 2. Tasting and class discussion (20 min)**

1. Introduce the tasting activity. Explain the guidelines for classroom tasting and the “No Thank You” bite rule. Remind students to raise their hands before sharing thoughts about the foods. Reinforce the idea of using descriptive words, not words such as “good,” “bad,” “eww,” or “gross.”
2. Distribute serving plates of one produce item at a time. As the food is being passed out, use this time to describe fun gardening or nutritional facts about the fruit or vegetable.
3. Sample the food item all together as a class. Allow several moments for silent reflection. Ask students to raise their hands when they are ready to share words to describe their experience, OR have students work in partners or small groups to describe the food items.
4. Throughout the sharing, encourage students to use words from the word bank and additional creative, descriptive words.
5. Repeat with other foods. Discuss the importance of foods of different varieties and colors.
6. Clean up and encourage students to try using these words in the lunchroom and at home.

## **For Grades 6-8**

### **Part 1. The Perfect Meal (10 min)**

1. Introduce activity by asking students to imagine their perfect meal.
2. Have students illustrate their favorite one plate meal using the paper plates or worksheets.
3. Before students share their drawings with the class, you may use the sample role play conversation to demonstrate how the class will be talking about food today. Also explain the “Don’t Yuck My Yum” concept.

#### **Role Play Example**

A: *“Why is this your favorite meal?”*

B: *“Because it tastes good.”*

A: *“Why don’t you try saying it like a real chef?”*

B: *(Dons mystical chef hat) “(Presents a detailed and vivid image of meal with chef persona)”*.

A: *(Standing ovation!)*

*Explain: “Don’t yuck my yum”*

*Ask students what they think the phrase “Don’t yuck my yum” means. Discuss that every person’s individual food preferences are shaped by their family, traditions, background, and culture. It is OK to like some foods but not*



*others. However, it is not OK to be disrespectful of other people's food choices. Let's be respectful and we won't 'yuck anyone's yum.'*

4. Have 3-4 students volunteer to present their favorite food item in their meal to the class. Briefly discuss new, descriptive and creative vocabulary words.
5. Divide class into groups of partners (2 or 3 students per group). Ask students to describe their favorite meal to their partners. Students should record sense words that describe the meal (color, taste, texture, temperature, smell). Explain to students that they will be sharing and adding new words to the class food word bank.
6. Regroup as a class to share new descriptive vocabulary words. All small groups present their words with the class.
7. Record these new vocabulary words in your class word bank. You may choose to include illustrations for younger students. Keep this word bank somewhere visible in the classroom.

## **Part 2. Tasting and class discussion (20 min)**

1. Introduce the tasting activity. Explain the guidelines for classroom tasting and the "No Thank You" bite rule. Remind students to raise their hands before sharing thoughts about the foods. Reinforce the idea of using descriptive words, not words such as "good," "bad," "eww," or "gross."
2. Distribute serving plates of one produce item at a time. As the food is being passed out, use this time to describe fun gardening or nutritional facts about the fruit or vegetable.
3. Sample the food item all together as a class. Allow several moments for silent reflection. For each tasting, ask several students to share their descriptions.
4. Throughout the sharing, encourage students to use words from the word bank and additional creative, descriptive words.
5. Repeat with other foods. Discuss the importance of foods of different varieties and colors.
6. Clean up and encourage students to try using these words in the lunchroom and at home.



Sample Word Bank

Sweet

Zesty

Juicy

Fragrant

Mealy

Flavorful

Bitter

Firm

Squishy

Sour

Crunchy

Zippy

Sharp

Tough

Acidic

Healthy

Spicy

Earthy

Ripe

Tangy

Rich

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Tasting Chart**

<b>Name of Fruit or Vegetable</b>				
<b>Look</b>				
<b>Smell</b>				
<b>Feel</b>				
<b>Taste</b>				
<b>Sound</b>				

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Tasting Chart**

<b>Name of Fruit or Vegetable</b>				
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Word Bank and Tasting Chart from *Got Veggies?* a publication by Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens. Available in PDF form online at:

[http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf\\_files/GotVeggies.pdf](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/GotVeggies.pdf)

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

and this is my perfect meal!

