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School lunches: A world of choice

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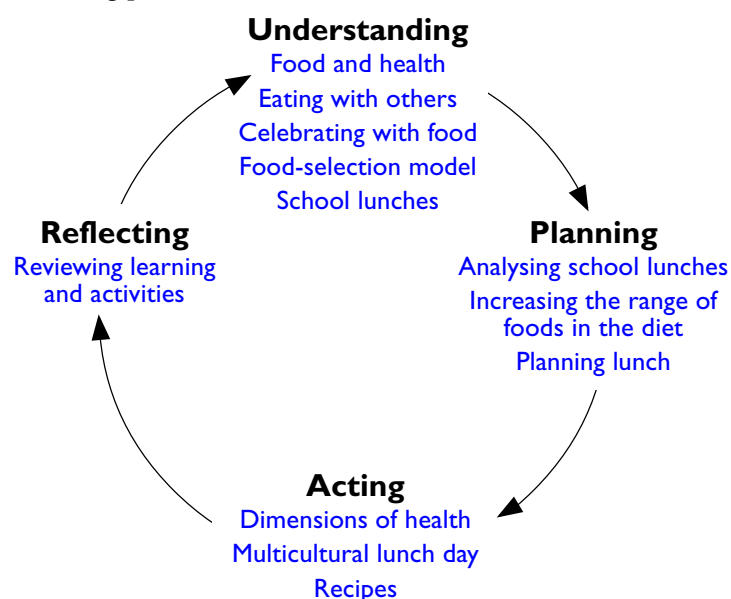
Promoting the Health of Individuals and Communities

Purpose

Students learn about food as a basic need for health. They explore the role of food in health and use a food-selection model as a guide for making healthy food choices. Students develop an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of foods from which they can make healthy choices for school lunches. They identify ways of increasing the range of nutritious foods in their diets and demonstrate making healthy food choices from a selection of foods from different cultures.

Overview of activities

Activities in this module are based on a learner-centred approach with an emphasis on decision making and problem solving. As the following diagram shows, activities are sequenced in **understanding**, **planning**, **acting** and **reflecting** phases.



Core learning outcomes

Promoting the Health of Individuals and Communities

This module focuses on the following core learning outcomes from the Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Syllabus:

- 2.1 Students describe and demonstrate actions they can take to promote the different dimensions of the health of themselves and others.
- 2.2 Students explain the benefits of eating a variety of nutritious foods and plan ways to increase the range of nutritious foods in their diets.

Core content

Promoting the Health of Individuals and Communities

This module incorporates the following core content from the syllabus:

- factors influencing health, including nutrition, society, culture, environment, and individual and group actions;
- relationship between food, growth and development and health, in particular, choosing nutritious foods.

Assessment strategies

Promoting the Health of Individuals and Communities 2.1, 2.2

The following are examples of assessment tasks that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the core learning outcomes identified in this module. Other activities in this module provide opportunities for teachers to gather evidence about students' demonstrations of outcomes for assessment purposes.

- **Students work in small groups to develop a radio, television or magazine advertisement that promotes healthy lunches and explains the social benefits of enjoying meals in the company of others. The advertisement should include examples of three healthy school lunches.**
 - Can the student use a food-selection model to choose nutritious lunch foods?
 - Can the student describe how eating nutritious meals promotes the physical dimension of his or her own health and that of others?
 - Can the student describe how sharing meals with others can contribute to the social dimension of his or her own health and that of others?
- **Students explain the benefits of eating a variety of nutritious foods and plan ways to increase the variety of foods in their school lunches.**
 - Can the student explain the benefits of eating a variety of nutritious foods?
 - Can the student plan ways to increase the range of nutritious food in his or her diet, particularly lunches?

Background information

Food and health

Food is a basic health need and contributes to the five dimensions of health — physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual. Food contributes to:

- physical health by providing nutrients for the body;
- mental health by supplying energy for the brain to function;
- emotional health as people enjoy and gain pleasure from eating and by its capacity to modify moods;
- social health as people socialise as they eat together;
- spiritual health as part of religious ceremonies, rituals or celebrations.

It is important that children develop an understanding of, and a positive attitude towards, healthy eating from an early age.

Foods from different cultures

People of different cultures grow and prepare foods and dishes that are unique to their culture or a region of their country. The many cultures within Australian society provide opportunities for us to experience foods from all over the world. Many Australians eat a variety of foods from different cultures, such as curries, kebabs and noodles.

In recent years, nutritionalists have compiled information about the use and nutritional value of 'bush foods'. Some restaurants now serve meals containing bush foods traditionally eaten by Aboriginal people living in the bush.

Culminating activity

This module involves students in activities that build upon their prior knowledge and experiences. It culminates in a multicultural lunch day involving parents/carers and other members of the school community. Alternatively, students could have a multicultural lunch once a week over a period of time. They could taste food from a different culture each week. In a small school this could extend to a whole-school project or event. Ensure that the timing of such an event does not coincide with cultural/religious activities of groups within the community as this could influence the ability of some students to participate. The seasonal availability of some food should also be considered.

Terminology

Activities in this module involve use of the following language in the context of Health and Physical Education:

bread	exercising	manners
celebrations	food groups	multicultural
cereals	food pyramid	nutrition
cultures	food-selection model	social interaction
dairy products	fruit	soya beans
different	growth and development	'sometimes' foods
diverse	legumes	vegetables
energy	lentils	

School authority policies

Teachers need to be aware of and observe school authority policies that may be relevant to this module, particularly those policies relating to food handling.

Social justice principles

This module provides opportunities for students to increase their understanding and appreciation of diversity and supportive environments. It includes activities that encourage students to:

- recognise and accept the social and cultural diversity of their community;
- respect and appreciate the difference and diversity within diets;
- demonstrate concern for others;
- work collaboratively to achieve a goal.

Students with disabilities or learning difficulties may require some activities to be modified to optimise their participation and their ability to demonstrate the outcomes. Teachers should consult with parents/carers and specialist support staff to determine whether modification is necessary.

Support materials and references

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Activities

Understanding

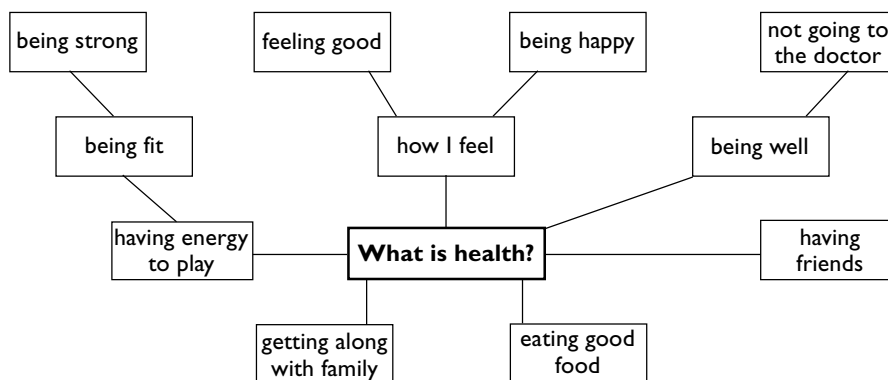
FOOD AND HEALTH

Exploring the relationship between food and health

► Students individually consider what they understand ‘health’ to mean. They share their ideas with the class and record their responses as a concept map on a chart or board.

Focus questions could include:

- What do you think health is?
- How do you become healthy?
- When do you feel healthy?
- What makes you feel healthy or unhealthy other than the way you look and how well your body works?



► Students discuss and list what people need to be healthy. They refer to the concept map during the activity.

Teaching consideration

Sleep, exercise, love, care, friendship, shelter, a varied diet, clean water, clothing and a clean and safe environment are some of the main things necessary for good health.

► In a ‘think, pair, share’ activity, students share their understandings of what food is and why it is important for health.

Focus questions could include:

- What is food?
- Where does it come from?
- Why do we need food?
- What happens to food when we eat it?

Teaching considerations

Food is anything eaten that the body can use.

Food comes mainly from plants or animals. Some food comes from other sources — for example, salt comes from the sea or the ground.

Food builds strong bones and teeth, helps heal wounds and broken bones, keeps the body and its muscles working properly, provides the body with energy, and keeps blood and skin healthy. This can be summarised by the slogan, 'Food helps us grow, go and glow'.

When food is eaten, the body breaks it down into substances that different parts of the body can use.

► Students brainstorm what they think the term 'nutritious foods' means and then use a dictionary and/or nutrition resources to check their understanding.

Teaching considerations

By definition, all foods are 'nutritious' (that is, they contain nutrients) but some, such as milk, contain a lot of nutrients whereas others, such as lollies, provide energy but not many nutrients.

It is important to eat a variety of foods to supply the body with all the important substances it needs. A healthy diet includes foods from the different food groups, which are:

- breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles;
- vegetables, legumes;
- fruit;
- milk, yogurt, cheese;
- lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes.

These food groups are introduced to students during the module.

EATING WITH OTHERS

Eating with family and friends

► Students discuss where, at what times and with whom they eat meals, including special occasions. They discuss the different responses given by class members and the possible reasons for these.

Focus questions could include:

- What meals do you eat daily?
- At what times during the day do you eat meals? Why?
- Which is your main meal for the day? Why?
- Where do you eat? Why?
- With whom do you eat? Why?
- What do you enjoy about eating with them?
- What do you learn by eating meals with other people?

Teaching considerations

Encourage class discussion and identify daily eating patterns such as eating breakfast alone or with family, lunch with school mates, and dinner with family or friends. Explain the importance of eating at various times during the day.

Highlight the importance of the social aspects of meal times, such as talking to others over a meal, learning table manners, and experiencing new foods and foods from other cultures.

Explain that different families eat their main meals at different times (being aware of different cultural etiquette). For example, some people may eat their main meal in the middle of the day, while breakfast is the main meal for others. People in a family group where members work at night or do shift work may have a different pattern for eating meals.

Although exploring the different times at which people eat can help develop students' understanding and appreciation of diversity, they should be aware that all people need to eat throughout the day.

CELEBRATING WITH FOOD

Celebrating special occasions

► Students identify special occasions celebrated by different cultures during the year. They suggest why food usually plays an important role in these celebrations. Students research and identify the different foods served at some of these celebrations. Examples of special occasions include weddings, birthdays, Chinese New Year and religious celebrations, such as Easter, Christmas, Ramadan and bar mitzvahs.

Focus questions could include:

- What are some special occasions or celebrations that people hold during the year?
- When are these held?
- Is food an important part of the celebrations? Why?
- Which foods are served? Are they different from foods eaten every day?

Teaching considerations

Groups of students could research different special occasions in which food plays a role.

Preparing, serving and eating food on special occasions and at celebrations contributes to the social dimension of health as well as to the physical dimension. Having meals with others provides people with the opportunity to talk. It also helps provide a sense of belonging and feelings of being accepted by a group and of being loved. It also can provide opportunities for new experiences. As such, it contributes to an individual's identity and emotional wellbeing.

**FOOD-SELECTION
MODEL****Understanding a food-selection model**

► Students view the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating food-selection model on the Resource Sheet that shows a plate divided according to the type and amount of foods that should be eaten daily. As part of a discussion about the model, students offer suggestions as to why we need to eat more of some foods than others.

Focus questions could include:

- Why should you eat more of the foods from the large sections of the plate (that is, the vegetables and legumes, fruit, and bread, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles sections) than others?
- Which of these foods help you to 'grow, go and glow'?
- Would you 'grow, go and glow' if you ate the same foods at every meal?
- What do you think would happen if you only ate food from one section of the plate?
- Which foods are not shown on the plate? Why do you think these foods are not shown? When do we eat these foods?

Teaching considerations

Other food-selection models, such as the Healthy Eating Pyramid, could be used for this activity.

Highlight the need for a balance of healthy foods and physical activity for growth and development.

Students with intolerance to particular foods may identify different foods/food combinations they require to stay healthy.

Draw attention to the need for everyone to drink plenty of water to replace body fluids.

**SCHOOL
LUNCHES****Gathering information about the variety of foods eaten for lunch at school**

► Students individually list the foods that they eat as part of a typical school lunch. They develop a class list of school lunch foods and display it on a board or chart.

Teaching considerations

Lunch makes an important contribution to physical and social health.

Some students may not bring lunch to school or may go home for their lunch. Where this occurs, it may be appropriate to have students develop the list of lunch foods as part of a group.

► Students identify and discuss foods from other cultures. They suggest which people may eat these foods and reasons why these foods may be different from those produced locally.

Teaching considerations

A country’s climate and geography influence the types of foods grown. Different countries produce and manufacture different foods.

Although different cultures have different customs and beliefs about food, there are many similarities in the types of foods eaten across cultures.

Migrants have introduced Australians to many different foods.

Due to advances in food technology, Australia now produces foods previously only available overseas, such as curry, spices and pasta.

- ▶ Students view the Nutrition Australia poster ‘School lunches: A world of choice’ (see ‘Support materials and references’). They discuss the foods included in the various lunches highlighting those that are different from foods eaten by members of the class. Students begin a class list of foods that are unfamiliar or that the majority of students have not tasted.

Teaching considerations

If the Nutrition Australia poster is unavailable, students could use other resources including fiction and non-fiction books, magazines and the World Wide Web to gather the information necessary for this activity.

Ensure students understand that unfamiliar foods provide the nutrients the body needs to ‘grow, go and glow’ just as well as familiar foods.

- ▶ Students form small groups with each group selecting a country to research. They locate the country on a world map, draw its flag and find the name of the country’s capital city and the languages spoken there. They list some of the foods eaten in the chosen country. Students prepare a poster containing this information to display in the classroom.

Teaching considerations

Students may be interested in gathering other information about the country.

The teacher-librarian can help identify appropriate resources for student use.

The ‘Support materials and references’ section at the beginning of the module lists a number of texts to support this activity.

Planning

ANALYSING SCHOOL LUNCHES

Sorting lunch foods into food groups

- ▶ Using the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating food-selection model as a guide, students design their own plate of healthy school lunch foods. They use the categories from the food-selection model to classify the school lunch foods the class listed in a previous activity. They draw or paste pictures of the lunch foods from the list onto the appropriate sections of a paper plate or circle of cardboard. They also include the foods from lunches from other cultures on their plate.

Teaching considerations

There is a blank diagram of the food-selection model in the booklet *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating: Background Information for Nutrition Educators*, which is part of the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* kit (see ‘Support materials and references’).

Other food-selection models could be used for this activity.

INCREASING THE RANGE OF FOODS IN THE DIET

Investigating ways to increase the range of nutritious foods in the diet

► Students suggest how they can increase the amount of vegetables, fruit, breads and cereals in their lunches by introducing unfamiliar foods from other cultures.

Teaching consideration

This module encourages students to increase the range of nutritious foods in their diets by trying foods from other cultures. Alternative activities that may better suit particular locations include tasting:

- bush foods that could be included in school lunches (ensuring that students are aware of which foods are edible and which are poisonous and remembering that the availability of ‘bush tucker’ is seasonal);
- different types of bread;
- different raw and cooked fruits and vegetables.

► Students identify foods they will attempt to add to their diet to increase the range of nutritious foods they eat. They create a mobile of their lunch plate by punching holes in the perimeter of the plate and attaching pictures or drawings of these new foods to the appropriate section of the plate.

PLANNING LUNCH

Planning a class multicultural lunch day to enjoy a variety of nutritious foods with peers and parents/carers

► Students organise a multicultural lunch day for the class and invited guests. They select the format for the day and plan details such as the date, venue, groups, guests and various jobs to be done. They record these on a display board or chart.

Focus questions could include:

- When will you hold the multicultural lunch day?
- Where could you have the lunch?
- Who should you invite? Why? How will you do this?
- What things other than food will you need?
- How will you present the food?
- What utensils will you need?

► Students use a ‘think, pair, share’ process to suggest the types of food to include on the multicultural lunch day menu. They refer to the lists of foods and their countries of origin prepared in a previous activity.

Focus questions could include:

- What multicultural foods could you serve on our special lunch day?
 - Which countries do your suggestions come from?
 - Are there other foods from different countries or cultures that you could include on the menu? What are they?
 - Are breads and cereals, fruit and vegetables included?
 - What else do you need to include in your lunch menu?
- ▶ Students plan how to prepare, store and serve the food for the multicultural lunch day.

Focus questions could include:

- How will you prepare the food? Will you make it yourselves?
- What extra help will you need?
- Who else could you ask to help you?
- What will you need to buy? Where can you buy it?

Teaching considerations

Organise parent/carers and community members to help prepare food on the day, if necessary.

Some foods may be difficult to obtain in certain areas.

Local restaurants or food suppliers may be willing to help.

Inform parents of the multicultural lunch day activity and request that they advise of any foods that are inappropriate for their child/children.

- ▶ Students discuss correct food preparation and safety practices for the multicultural lunch day — for example, keeping food cool, covering food, washing hands before handling food, washing fruit and vegetables, and using specific utensils to serve each food.

Focus questions could include:

- What should you do before preparing food?
- What other safety practices should you follow to keep the food free of germs?
- Which utensils will you need an adult’s help to use?
- How will you ensure that everyone can help prepare the food?

Teaching consideration

If appropriate, prepare some foods prior to the day to ensure the activity runs to schedule.

- ▶ Students write and illustrate invitations to guests outlining the arrangements for the day and the menu.

Acting

DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH

Describing and demonstrating actions to promote physical and social health

► Students work in small groups to develop an advertisement for their multicultural lunch. The advertisement should promote healthy lunches and explain the social benefits of enjoying meals in the company of others. It should also include examples of three healthy lunches, some of which contain multicultural foods, that can be eaten at school.

Teaching considerations

The advertisement could be for the school noticeboard or school newsletter, radio, television, magazine or school website.

Allow students time to research and discuss the type of advertisement they intend to develop.

The advertisement could be included in the school newsletter or submitted to a local newspaper.

If appropriate, set criteria for the three lunches in the advertisement — for example, one lunch should include food from a different country and one should be developed from the tuckshop menu.

MULTICULTURAL LUNCH DAY

Demonstrating appropriate interactions and food choices at a multicultural lunch day with their peers and others

► Students prepare and serve the multicultural lunch. Groups of students are supervised by an adult to ensure safety and correct handling of food. When presenting the food, students label each dish with its name and its country of origin or the country's flag. They could also display a world map marked with the various countries represented. Various stages of the day are videotaped or photographed for students' reflection.

► Students select and eat their meal choosing foods from various food groups.

RECIPES

Writing recipes for multicultural lunch ideas

► Students work in small groups to write and illustrate their multicultural lunch recipes. These can be collated into a recipe book of lunch suggestions.

Focus questions could include:

- What are the main ingredients in your recipe?
- Does your recipe have food from each of the main food groups? To which food group does each of the ingredients belong? Which food groups are not represented? Why?

Teaching considerations

Have students gather a range of healthy lunch ideas.

Ensure that suggestions for lunches are healthy and well balanced.

Reflecting

REVIEWING LEARNING AND ACTIVITIES

Reflecting on what has been learnt about nutrition and foods from different cultures

► Students write and illustrate an account of the multicultural lunch day. They comment on the various foods, the different people they socialised with and the activities.

Focus questions could include:

- Did your group work well together to prepare the lunch? Why?
- What did you talk about while preparing the food and eating it?
- How did you choose foods that will help you to 'grow, go and glow'?
- Which foods did you eat that were 'sometimes' foods?
- What did you enjoy most about the multicultural lunch day?
- What have you learned that you can use when choosing and preparing food at home or when preparing and choosing your lunch?

Teaching consideration

Use photographs and/or a video of the preparations and the multicultural lunch to initiate discussion.

► Students compose thankyou letters to those people who helped them with their multicultural lunch. They include brief comments about some of the things they learnt about nutrition and food from other cultures.

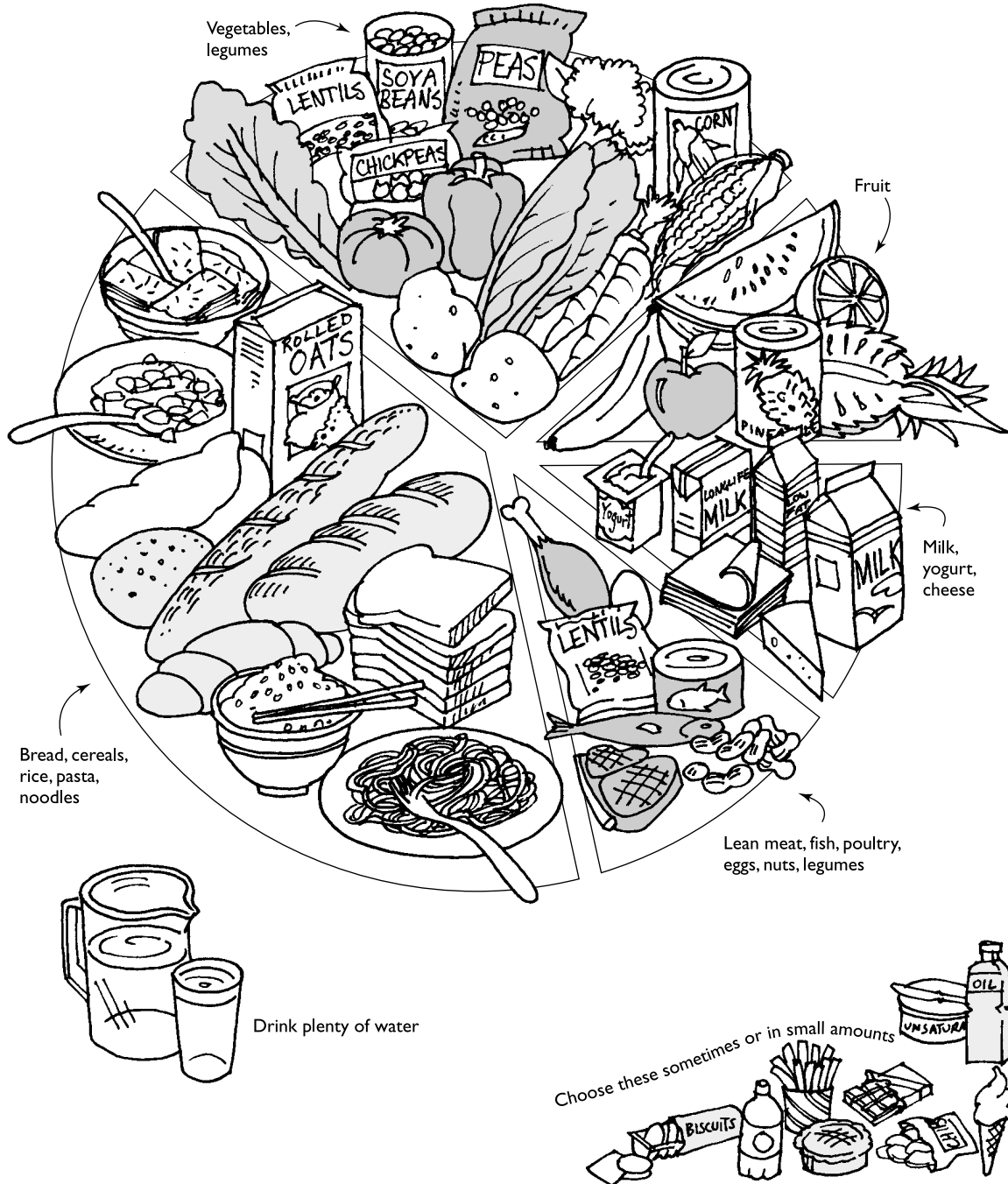
► Students reflect upon what they have learnt about the range of foods available in their community and identify foods or styles of food they would like to try in the future.

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating



Resource Sheet

SCHOOL LUNCHES: A WORLD OF CHOICE • LOWER PRIMARY



Source: Adapted from Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services 1998, *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*, kit, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the following organisation for granting permission to use copyright material:

Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services (1998) for material from *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* (Commonwealth of Australia copyright reproduced by permission).

The contribution of Nutrition Australia to the development of this module is also acknowledged.

This sourcebook module should be read in conjunction with the following Queensland School Curriculum Council materials:

Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Syllabus

Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Sourcebook: Guidelines

Health and Physical Education Initial In-service Materials

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