

## Pyramid Pile Up Classroom Activity 1 Ancient Food Pyramid History

### Instructions

#### Learning Objective

Students will be able to discuss the history of food groups, food guides, and food pyramids in the United States. Students will be able to describe the differences between the original Food Guide Pyramid of 1992 and the latest 2005 MyPyramid version. Students will be able to read and interpret the new MyPyramid format.

#### Materials

1. "Ancient Food Pyramid History" worksheet
2. Encyclopedias, books, Internet

#### Teacher Preparation

1. Print one copy of the "Ancient Food Pyramid History" worksheet for each student.
2. Ensure that students have access to research resources. Book the school library or computer lab for your class. You can also check out books on the Food Pyramid or encyclopedias ahead of time to make them available for your students in class.

#### Instructions

1. Give each student a copy of the "Ancient Food Pyramid History" handout and research tools.
2. Read the directions aloud. Emphasize that students must fill out every square in the table that is blank. Some of the squares are already filled in.
3. Students can work individually or in pairs. For younger students, we recommend that teachers read the "History of the Food Pyramid" passage aloud or together as a class.

#### Sources

For more information about the history of U.S. food guides and the Food Pyramid, see the USDA's MyPyramid website at <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.

Background information on the development of the USDA's Food Guide is available at [http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/MyPyramid/OriginalFoodGuidePyramids/FGP/FGPBBackgrounAndDevelopment.pdf](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/MyPyramid/OriginalFoodGuidePyramids/FGP/FGPBackgroundAndDevelopment.pdf).



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### Student Worksheet

#### Directions

Read the passage below. Fill in the chart using information from the passage and other resources provided by your teacher (Internet, encyclopedia, books).

#### History of the Food Pyramid

A nutrition scientist at the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** first recorded important information on food in 1894. In 1916, **food groups** were created, and the USDA published its first official food guide which grouped similar foods together.

When the Great Depression hit families in the 1930s, the USDA showed people how to shop for healthy foods so they got the most for their money. The Great Depression food tables were divided into four cost levels. The tables told families which foods were the least expensive and most nutritious like cereals, potatoes, and dry beans.

During World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt told the USDA to create a new food plan for families that would help them eat nutritious meals even though many foods like fruits and vegetables were scarce. The USDA came up with the **Basic Seven** plan, which divided foods into seven groups. This plan did not talk about serving sizes because many foods in each group were hard to find.

The government thought the Basic Seven plan was too complicated for the public so the Basic Four plan was made. The **Basic Four** plan divided foods into four groups: milk, meats, grains, and fruit and vegetables. This plan was used for over 20 years!

In the 1970s, many people began to die of heart disease and stroke. The USDA decided to create a new plan that told families about unhealthy foods. This created a fifth group of foods called **fats and sweets**. The USDA told families to only eat these kinds of foods in moderation or not very often.

By the 1980s, it was clear that many people did not know about the five food groups created by the USDA. People were still not eating balanced meals with nutritious food. The USDA decided to make a picture that represented the groups so the public would better understand portion size and nutrition.

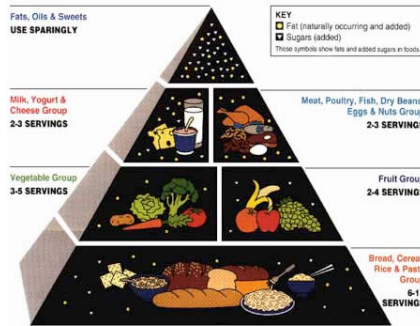
The **Food Guide Pyramid** was released in 1992. The pyramid shape was used to show families that they should eat more of certain foods (those closer to the bottom of the pyramid) and less of others (those closer to the top of the pyramid). The Food Guide Pyramid emphasizes serving size and eating oils, fats, and sugars sparingly.

In 2005, the USDA created **MyPyramid**, a guide with food groups organized into stripes from left to right. It has a staircase along one side to remind families to be active. MyPyramid encourages families to eat whole grains, a variety of fruits and vegetables, and healthy oils like olive oil. The new pyramid is interactive and made specifically for the Web.

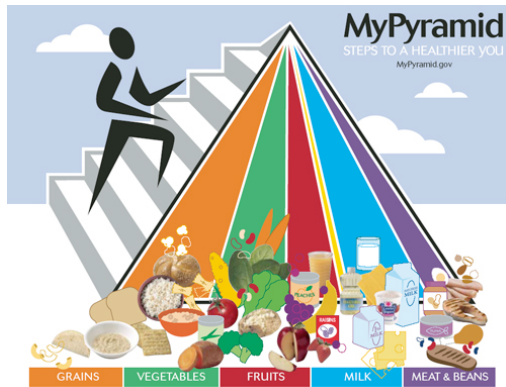


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**Food Pyramid Guide (1992)**



**MyPyramid (2005)**



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**Student Worksheet**

Characteristic	1992 Food Guide Pyramid	2005 MyPyramid
Number of Food Groups		
Name of Food Groups		-- Grains -- Vegetables -- Fruits -- Milk -- Meat and Beans -- Oils
Structure	Pyramid with food groups arranged from top to bottom	
Goal		Educating people about eating a more balanced diet from a greater variety of foods without counting calories
Serving Size		
Variety		
Whole grains	Not discussed	
Fats, Oils and Sugars	Use sparingly	
Physical Activity		Represented by a gray staircase on the left side



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**Answer Sheet**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>1992 Food Guide Pyramid</b>	<b>2005 MyPyramid</b>
<b>Number of Food Groups</b>	Six (6)	Six (6)
<b>Name of Food Groups</b>	--Bread/Cereal/Rice/Pasta --Fruit --Vegetable --Milk/Yogurt/Cheese --Meat/Poultry/Fish/Dry Beans/Eggs/Nuts --Fats/Oils/Sweets	-- Grains -- Vegetables -- Fruit -- Milk -- Meat and Beans -- Oils
<b>Structure</b>	Pyramid with food groups arranged from top to bottom	Pyramid with food groups arranged from left to right
<b>Goal</b>	Center diet around foods at the base of the pyramid	Educating people about eating a more balanced diet from a greater variety of foods without counting calories
<b>Serving Size</b>	Includes suggested number of servings for everyone	Personalized with serving size recommendations for different groups of people
<b>Variety</b>	Not discussed	Eat a variety of foods including different colored fruits and vegetables
<b>Whole grains</b>	Not discussed	Half of all grains consumed should be whole grains
<b>Fats, Oils and Sugars</b>	Use sparingly	Most fat should be from fish, nuts and vegetable oils; limit solid fats; keep saturated fats/trans fats low; choose foods low in sugar; eat low- fat or fat-free dairy products; eat lean cuts of meat; avoid frying
<b>Physical Activity</b>	Not discussed	Represented by a gray staircase on the left side

