

**NOVEMBER**

# SWEET POTATO

**ROOT VEGETABLES**

**GRADE  
K-1**

<b>RECOMMENDED BOOK</b>	<p>“Oliver’s Vegetables” by Vivian French                  “The Vegetables We Eat” by Gail Gibbons                  “Strega Nona’s Harvest” by Tomi de Paola</p>
<b>NEEDED SUPPLIES</b>	<p>MyPlate poster and coloring page                  Sweet potatoes (raw or cooked) for tasting, knife and cutting board                  Whole sweet potato, other root vegetables                  Picture of potato sack races</p>
<b>NEEDED RESOURCES</b>	<p>MyPlate teaching and sweet potato slip instructions</p>
<b>21ST CENTURY SKILL</b>	<p>Students will learn the importance of vegetables in a healthy diet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice preventive health behaviors.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>K-1: Identify healthy foods.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will learn that sweet potatoes are part of the vegetable group.</li> <li>Students will learn the importance of sweet potatoes in a healthy diet.</li> <li>Students will learn how to recognize and eat sweet potatoes.</li> <li>Students will learn to try a new vegetable.</li> </ul>
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b>	<p>“Potato Sack Races” (adapted from Team Nutrition Sweet Potato Hill)                  Show children the picture of a sweet potato sack race. Have children line up on one side of the room in rows and pretend they are in a sack. Ask one row of students to hop to the other end of the room and wait for rest of class to come across. Hop back if time allows.</p>
<b>RECAP FROM LAST LESSON</b>	<p>How many of you ate pears at home after our lesson last month? How did you eat them? What did you tell your grown-ups about pears? Did you ask for pears? What did you say? Your family wants you to eat healthy foods, like pears.</p>
<b>FUN FACTS ABOUT SWEET POTATOES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Native Americans were growing sweet potatoes when Columbus came to America in 1492. By the 16th century, sweet potatoes were being grown in the southern states.</li> <li>North Carolina is the top-producing state of sweet potatoes. They produce 50 percent of the nation’s annual crop.</li> <li>Sweet potatoes are “cured” (placed in a newspaper-lined box) after harvest for about two weeks. During this time, the sweet potato starch changes to sweet sugar.</li> <li>Sweet potatoes are different from yams. Most “yams” labeled in the U.S. are actually sweet potatoes.</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SWEET POTATOES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sweet potato grows underground; it is the root of the plant. Because it grows under the ground, we scrub the outside to remove soil and germs before we cut it open.</li> <li>It is very hard when harvested; when you cook it, it becomes soft.</li> <li>Sweet potatoes can be long and thin or short and fat, but always taper at the ends.</li> <li>Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry, well-ventilated container. Do not store in the refrigerator as it will produce a hard center and unpleasant taste.</li> <li>Sweet potatoes are usually the size of regular white potatoes. The smooth, thin skin can be eaten. Choose firm sweet potatoes with no signs of decay. Look for uniform shape for even cooking. Some sweet potatoes grow in Iowa.</li> <li>Find them in the grocery store fresh, canned or frozen.</li> </ul>

**ROOT VEGETABLE  
FEATURED TASTING:  
SWEET POTATO**



**ALTERNATIVES:  
CARROT**



**RADISH**



**JICAMA**



**POTATO**



<b>HEALTH CONNECTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sweet potatoes are part of the red/orange group in the MyPlate vegetable group. This group is important for our eyes and skin as it has a lot of Vitamin A. Reinforce with super goggles. (Use your fingers to make goggles for your eyes.)</li> <li>Sweet potatoes have a lot of Vitamin C, which is important to help cuts heal and keep us healthy. Reinforce with the Vitamin C shield by crossing arms in front of chest.</li> </ul>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<p>What do you think it means to be healthy? What do you think it means to eat healthy? (Allow students to respond individually or in groups and report out. Write answers on board.) To be healthy, it's important to eat healthy and be physically active each day. One way to be healthy is to eat from the five food groups. The sweet potato is in the vegetable group.</p> <p>Sweet potatoes grow differently from other vegetables that grow from a seed. The sweet potato starts from a slip that grows from the "eyes" of the sweet potato. Show students the eye of the sweet potato. The sweet potato slip is eventually planted in the ground. The sweet potato grows underground but the leaves grow above ground.</p> <p>Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw but are usually cooked (boiled, microwaved, baked, mashed or fried). Cook and eat or add them to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Find them in the grocery store, fresh, canned or frozen.</p>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<p>Pass around a whole sweet potato. Discuss how it looks, feels and smells. What does the inside look like? Cut the sweet potato and observe. Next, pass around a "mystery bag," which contains other vegetables that grow underground – root vegetables (e.g., radish, parsnip, jicama, white potato, beet, rutabaga, carrot). Allow students to pull out a vegetable and guess what it is.</p> <p>Use the MyPlate poster and coloring page. Point out that fruits and vegetables should fill half your plate. Where do you see this poster? (lunchroom, doctor office, grocery store, classroom, food packages). Discuss the other food groups as described in USDA's Grow It, Try It, Like It! Book 4.</p>
<b>SENSES CONNECTION</b>	<p><b>See:</b> What shape is it? (oblong, like a squished ball) What color is the sweet potato? (light to bright orange)</p> <p><b>Touch:</b> How does the outside of it feel? (bumpy) How does the inside feel? (smooth) Is it light or heavy? (heavy like a baseball) Is it soft or hard? (hard)</p> <p><b>Smell:</b> Does it smell? (no smell or smells musky like soil) How does the inside smell when cut? (sweet)</p> <p><b>Taste:</b> How does it taste? (like a white potato?)</p>
<b>TASTING</b>	<p>Taste sweet potatoes raw or cooked. Students will vote with thumbs as to how they like sweet potatoes: thumbs up = I like it, thumbs sideways = it's okay, thumbs down = no thanks.</p>
<b>CLOSING DISCUSSION</b>	<p>What is the vegetable we tried today? How does a sweet potato grow? Who wants to eat sweet potatoes again? How can you eat sweet potatoes at home? Did you know you can cook sweet potatoes in the microwave? Tell your grown-ups that you like sweet potatoes. Ask your grown-up if they eat sweet potatoes.</p>
<b>TAKE-HOME MATERIALS</b>	<p>Pass out "Ask me about...sweet potatoes" stickers. Send home the parent newsletter.</p>

**REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

- [Click here](#) Discover MyPlate Kindergarten Student Workbook
- [Click here](#) USDA MyPlate Resources
- [Click here](#) MyPlate My State Resources and teacher toolkit
- [Click here](#) SNAP-Ed Connections: Sweet Potatoes
- [Click here](#) California Harvest of the Month: Sweet Potato
- [Click here](#) Spend Smart. Eat Smart. Produce Basics: Sweet Potatoes
- [Click here](#) USDA Grow It, Try It, Like It Sweet Potato Hill
- [Click here](#) North Carolina Sweet Potatoes

**OTHER WAYS TO EAT SWEET POTATOS**

Mashed, microwaved, baked, George Washington Carver dip, sweet potato chips/stick, raw, crockpot with seasoning (cinnamon, salt & pepper, cumin), sweet potato fries, roasted cubes, creamy cooked with milk, soup, hash browns, sweet potato pie, sweet potato biscuits.



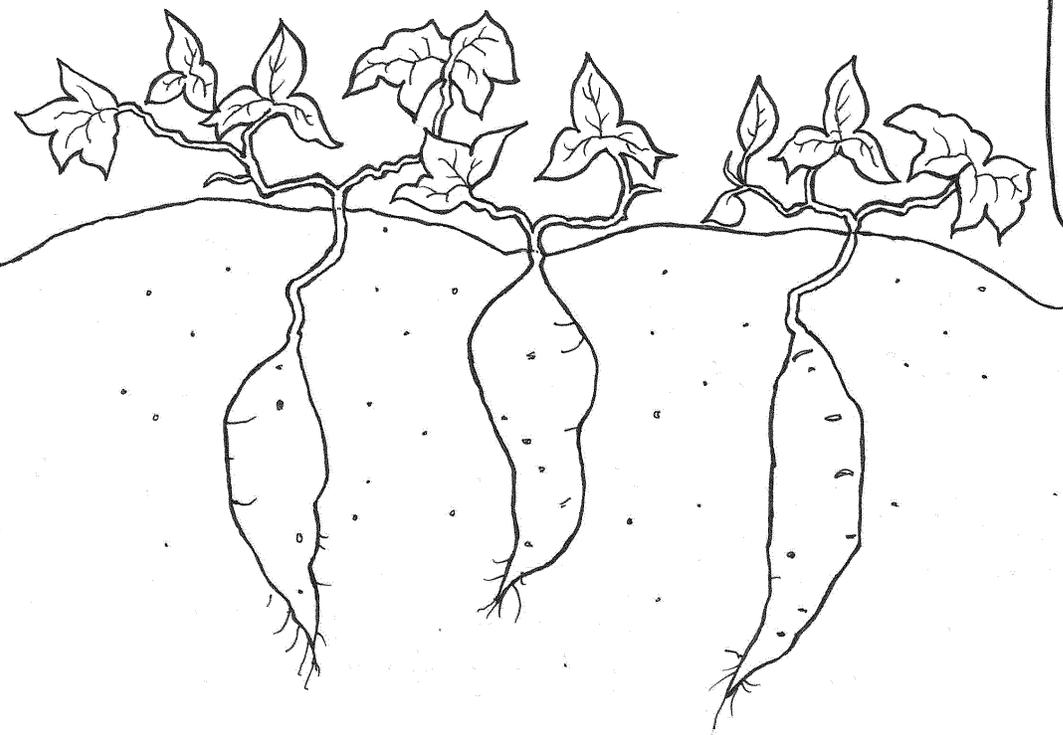


# Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes

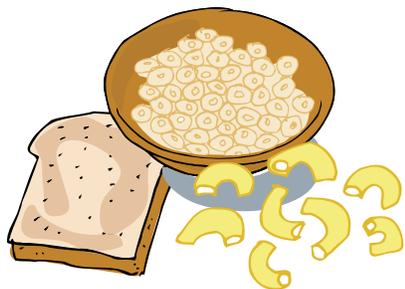
## Dear Parents and Guardians:

Your child has been learning about sweet potatoes. Talk with your child about how sweet potatoes grow while he or she colors the drawings below. Sweet potato plants grow from the eyes (buds) on sweet potatoes. The plant grows above the ground and the actual sweet potatoes grow in the ground.

A farmer plants slips in the ground to grow more sweet potatoes. You can start a sweet potato slip at home by suspending a sweet potato in a jar of water; see the directions on the other side of this page. In a few weeks, leaves and roots will grow from the sweet potato.



## Grains



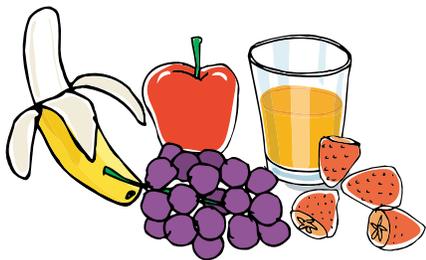
- Point to the orange band of color on the poster and ask the children to name the color (orange). Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains group represented by the orange color band. Point to the bread and the cereal in the Grains group on the orange band of the poster and state that bread and cereal give us energy to play. Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food, and state that \_\_\_\_\_ (the food named) and other foods from the Grains group also gives us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, and pasta.

## Vegetables



- Point to the green band of color on the poster and ask the children to name the color (green). Tell the children that foods from plants called vegetables are in the Vegetables group represented by the green color band. Point out the sweet potato in the Vegetables group on the green band of the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (sweet potato). Ask the children to name a sweet potato's color (orange or yellow/orange). Explain that eating a yellow/orange-colored vegetable, like a sweet potato, often is a way to be healthy. Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable on the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that \_\_\_\_\_ (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetables group also help keep us healthy.

## Fruits

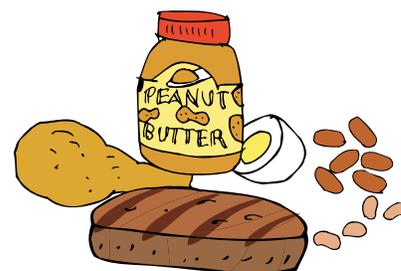


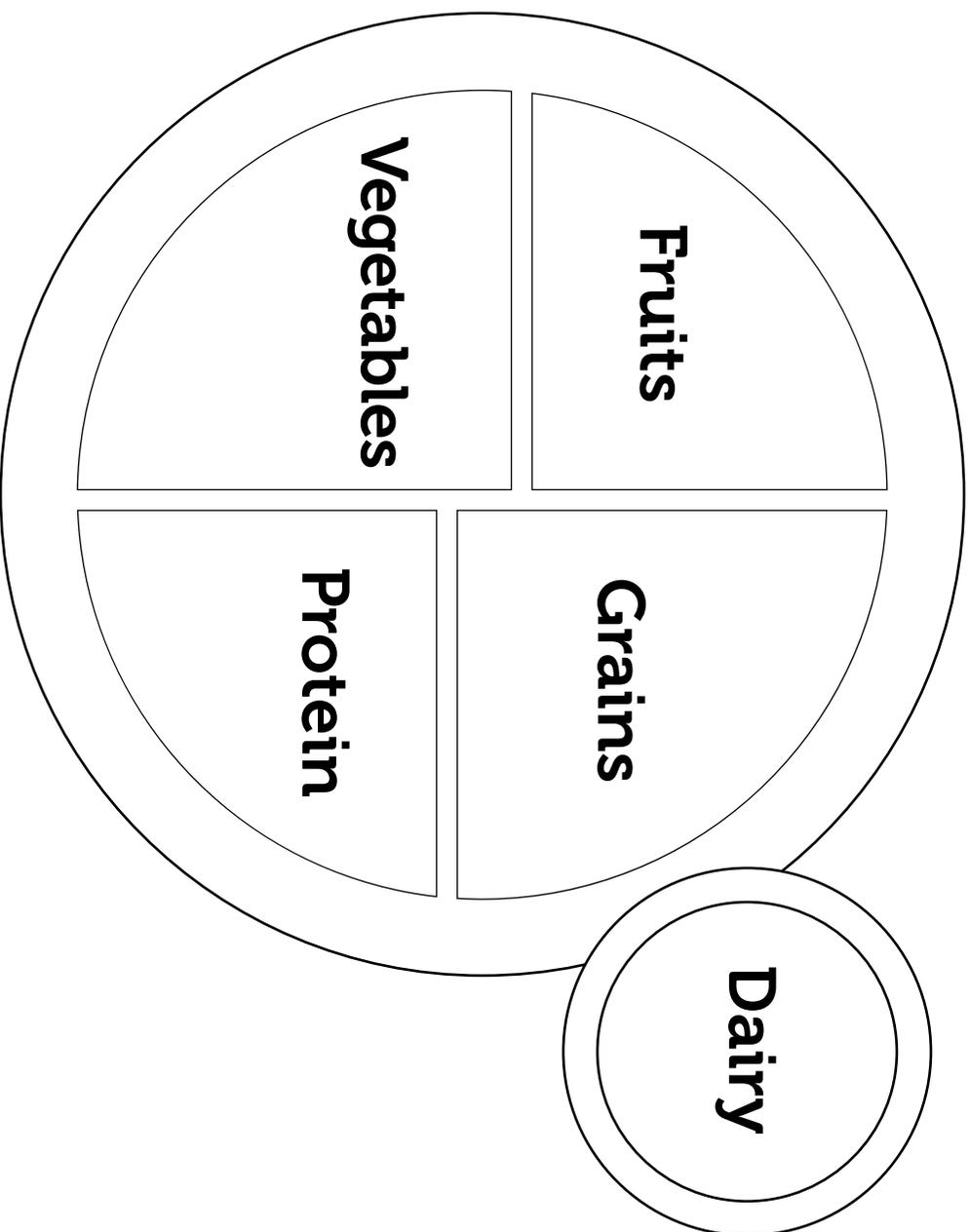
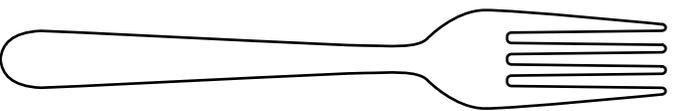
- Point to the red band of color on the poster and ask the children to name the color (red). Tell the children that foods from plants called fruits are in the Fruits group represented by the red color band. Point to the peach and strawberry shown in the Fruits group below the red band of the poster and state that peaches and strawberries help keep us healthy. Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit, and state that \_\_\_\_\_ (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruits group also help keep us healthy.

- Point to the blue band of color on the poster and ask the children to name the color (blue). Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy group represented by the blue color band. Point to the milk and yogurt in the Dairy group below the blue band and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones. Tell the children that it is good to choose low-fat and fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese when given a choice. Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food, and state that \_\_\_\_\_ (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy group also help us build strong bones.



- Point to the purple band of color on the poster and ask the children to name the color (purple). Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein foods group represented by the purple color band. Point to the meat, fish, egg, beans and peanut butter in the Protein foods group below the purple band and state that they help our muscles grow. Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food, and state that \_\_\_\_\_ (the food named) and other foods from the Protein food group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it.)





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