



Lesson: Mindful Bites

Duration: One 40-minute session

Note: *This lesson incorporates the use of food and food tasting to achieve the noted objectives. Due to policies currently in place to reduce the risk of disease transmission, we invite educators to adapt this lesson to best suit school policies and needs. Please also note that this lesson can be adapted to a remote setting with minimal requirements and/or offered in coordination with the [New Bedford Fresh Fruit and Veggies Program](#).*

Section 1: Framework

Essential Questions

- How does the way we consume food affect our experience of food?
- How do mindful habits affect our mind and body?
- How can we incorporate mindfulness into our everyday lives to promote well being?

Lesson Objectives

- Students will be able to describe the foods they eat using sensory words.
- Students will be able to describe the effect that mindful eating has on them, in terms of the way that they feel.
- Students will be able to evaluate the impact that expressions of gratitude have on themselves and others.
- Students will be able to identify when they might utilize mindful habits to promote well being.

Context

Food is essential to life; we encounter it regularly. How often do we stop to really experience the foods we eat, though? What impact does it have to our minds and bodies when we slow down and appreciate food with our senses, bite for bite? How can food create a powerful link between our minds and bodies to support wellness? In this lesson, teachers will have the resources required to engage students in a mindful eating exercise. Student participants will not only get to taste-test food; they will learn valuable techniques to support mindful practice, healthy eating, and appropriate expression of gratitude.

Standards

PRIMARY

Massachusetts Health Standard 5.2: Through the study of feelings and emotions students will apply methods to accommodate a variety of feelings in a constructive manner in order to promote well being.

Section 2: Activities

PART A

Materials

- Script: Mindful Bites Activity Narration
- Audio: Mindful Bites Activity Narration
- Google Slides: Mindful Bites
- Handout: Mindful Bites Worksheet
- Food for Mindful Bites Activity (recommended 2 slices, bites, or units of food per student, plus)
- Writing utensil
- Optional: crayons, markers, colored pencils

Lesson Preface

Purpose. Today the class will be engaging in a mindfulness exercise that involves tasting food, or mindful eating. This exercise is designed to strengthen the mind-body connection in support of well-being.

Delivery. As the teacher, you will guide students through the exercise with the aid of a Script and Google Slides. It is recommended that you review these resources ahead of time; the more familiar that you are with them, the better able you will be to guide students with your tone, words, and actions.

We are also providing you with an audio recording. You may choose to review this audio recording ahead of time so that you can hear an example of how this script may be delivered effectively in class. If you want to make adjustments or employ this audio in another way, feel free to follow your intuition. You may, for example, wish to play the audio for students rather than read the script aloud. Note, however, that the audio is recorded without wait time and does not include a few additional instructional notes which should be stated aloud. Please be sure to pause and allow adequate time for students as they move through each aspect of the mindful exercise.

Physical Space. With mindfulness activities, setting is important. It is recommended that the group take a few minutes to ensure the classroom environment is free from clutter and distraction and that students have only the items required for this lesson at their workspace.

Food Safety. Today's lesson involves tasting food. Prior to the start of the lesson, ensure that you have adequate food for each student, that personal hygiene is

considered, and that the foods being consumed do not pose a health risk to students or personnel with food allergies. We recommend having available *at least* 2 slices, bites, or units of food per student.

Recommended Foods: Apple, Carrots, Clementines, Cheerios

1. Setup (5 minutes)

Take a moment to let students know that today they will be trying out a Mindful Bites Activity that involves food. Students will use food to practice being present and noticing - these skills help us to connect our minds and bodies. Let students know that there will be time for discussion at the end of the activity; and inform students that they should NOT eat their food before instructed to do so in the activity.

Now is a good time to make sure hygiene needs are met, the classroom environment is well-arranged for this exercise, and that all students have the materials needed for today's lesson. (Be sure to remind students to NOT eat their food right away; it should be saved for the Mindful Bites Activity).

2. Mindful Bites Activity (20 minutes)

Please refer to the accompanying Script and Google Slides to guide you through this activity.

3. Recognizing Our Food Producers (10 minutes)

Refer to the second page of the Mindful Bites Worksheet. As a group or individually, encourage students to think about the different people who may have had a role in producing the foods that students ate today. Students are encouraged to list these people in the space provided. Examples of the people involved in food production include the people who planted the seeds, watered the plants, picked the plants, washed them, packaged them, delivered them, prepared them, etc.

Once students have completed the listing process, they are invited to select one person (for example, the seed planter) and to use their creativity to draw this person in the space provided.

4. Giving Gratitude and Application (5 minutes)

Giving Gratitude. Gather students together. Discuss: *Who are some of the people who we have listed on our worksheets?* After sharing, encourage students to close their eyes and say 'thank you' to the person they've imagined there - the seed grower, the person who waters, etc.

If students are not likely to be comfortable with the abstract nature of this, you can instead invite students to thank someone they know who has provided them with food (family member, cafeteria worker, teacher, friend, etc.).

Lastly, ask students to reflect and share: *How does it feel to say thank you? How does it feel when someone says thank you to you?*

Application. To close, invite students to consider how they felt as they took part in the Mindful Bites Activity and in Giving Gratitude. Encourage students to share: *How did these activities make them feel, emotionally or physically?*

To close, ask students to think about when they might try these activities again. Discuss: *Will they try this Mindful Bites activity again? What about giving gratitude, or saying “thank you”? How might doing these things make them feel?*