

# Food for Thought: Nutrition Quest

# Foodtopia

## Teacher Guide

Food for Thought:  
Nutrition Quest is an  
online learning game  
for Year 5 – 6 students  
to learn about nutrition  
through gamification.



**This teacher guide includes:**

- ✓ Guidance on using positive, inclusive language around food
- ✓ An overview of the game and its learning goals
- ✓ Tips for integration of the student workbook with the digital content ("**SW Tip**")
- ✓ Discussion prompts around the activities
- ✓ Answers to workbook activities

Refer to [website FAQs](#) for further guidance.

## Using Positive Language Around Food in the Classroom

Our approach to nutrition education is built on **encouraging curiosity, fostering positive discussions around food, and helping children understand how different foods support their bodies**. We focus on **inclusivity, balance, and practical learning**, ensuring that children develop a lifelong, healthy relationship with food.

**This includes:**

- ✓ Learning about **food groups** and how they fuel our bodies.
- ✓ Recognising the role of **both everyday and sometimes foods** in a balanced eating pattern.
- ✓ **Acknowledging cultural and dietary needs** when discussing food choices.
- ✓ Aligning with the **Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines** for nutrition education.
- ✓ Understanding the roles of both **kids and adults** in children's nutrition choices e.g. adults decide what foods, where and when; and children decide how much they eat.
- ✓ Using **food labels as a learning tool**, including opportunities for Maths practice.
- ✓ **Avoiding** black-and-white language such as "good/bad", "healthy/unhealthy", or "junk/treat" when talking about food.

Children are still forming their understanding of nutrition, and the way we talk about food plays a powerful role in shaping that understanding. By using positive, non-judgmental language, we can help students develop a balanced view of eating; one that is free from guilt, fear, or shame, especially when food choices and the availability of food may be out of their control.

# Why Positive Language Matters

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1

## Encourages a Healthy Relationship with Food

When food is labelled as “good” or “bad”, children may begin to feel guilty about their food choices. Instead, we want to encourage curiosity about food and teach that all foods have a place in a balanced diet.

Instead of: *“Chips are bad for you.”*

Try: *“We can enjoy chips sometimes, along with other foods that help our bodies grow. What do you think makes the chips crunchy?”*

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2

## Reduces Fear and Anxiety Around Eating

Children who hear restrictive messages about food, like “You shouldn’t have junk food in your lunchbox” or “You should always choose healthy options”, may start to worry about what they eat. Over time, this can lead to food anxieties or even disordered eating patterns.

Instead of: *“That’s not a healthy snack.”*

Try: *“That snack gives quick energy! What else can we add to help you feel full for longer?”*

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3

## Promotes Body Positivity and Self-Awareness

When food is linked to weight or appearance, children may begin to see food choices as something that affects how they look, rather than how they feel. It can also increase body dissatisfaction and preoccupation with body weight. Instead, we want to encourage students to think about how food supports their energy, focus, and overall well-being.

Instead of: *“Eating too much [of a certain food or sugar or fat] will make you fat.”*

Try: *“Eating a variety of foods helps our bodies work well and feel strong!”*

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4

## Respects Food Preferences and Cultural Differences

Food is personal, and every child’s experience with food is different. Some may have food allergies, dietary restrictions, or cultural traditions that influence their meals. Positive language helps create an inclusive environment where all students feel respected.

Instead of: *“That food looks weird!”* (if a student says this)

Try: *“That food might be new to you! Let’s learn about it together.”* Another helpful phrase is: *“Don’t yuck someone else’s yum!”*

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## 5 Teaches Critical Thinking About Nutrition

Rather than teaching strict or binary food rules, we want to encourage students to think about how different foods help their bodies in different ways. This helps them build a lifelong understanding of nutrition instead of relying on “good” vs. “bad” food labels.

Instead of: *“Always choose the healthiest option.”*

Try: *“Different foods help our bodies in different ways. Let’s think about what will give us lasting energy and keep us feeling focused.”*

## How to Reinforce Positive Language in the Classroom

- **Model food-positive talk** in your own discussions about food.
- **Encourage curiosity** by asking students how different foods make them feel rather than focusing on “healthiness.”
- **Redirect negative comments** about food by emphasising variety, cultural appreciation and personal preference.

It can also be OK to not say anything about food sometimes – talking about other conversation topics during meal and snack times can help reduce any feelings of pressure around food.

By fostering a classroom environment that supports a positive relationship with food, we help students feel confident in their choices and develop lifelong healthy habits.

### Some helpful resources if you’d like to know more:

 [www.dietitians4teachers.ca](http://www.dietitians4teachers.ca)

 [www.heartfoundation.co.nz](http://www.heartfoundation.co.nz)

- plenty of educators’ resources, including ‘Connecting with Kai’

 [www.theembracehub.com](http://www.theembracehub.com)

 [www.kidseatincolor.com](http://www.kidseatincolor.com)

- including their resource ‘How to Talk to Kids about Weight and Health’

## Resources you will be using to support the learning

- This teacher resource
- Optional student participant workbook
- Optional Foodtopia Completion board to track student progress
- Online games with a link to the online programme and a short URL for learners who cannot access the link directly

## How to set up the learning

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- If using the Foodtopia Completion board, print it out and set it up in the classroom where the students can access and view it easily.
- Printing the student workbooks is optional, as the programme can be completed entirely online. However, having the workbook on hand offers extra activities and opportunities for discussion. *Tip: Print this in booklet format to save on paper.*
- Share the link to the programme with your learners. If this is not possible, you can write out the short URL on the board.

### For online content:

- If all students have access to a device and headphones, they can watch the animated educational videos. **For best practice, we recommend setting up a screen for students to view the animated videos as a class.**
- Have the students set up their personal device to access the interactive games, or set them up into small groups to share a device.
- Let them navigate to the digital programme via the link or by typing in the URL on the board

## How to complete the learning

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Each island has an animated educational video, plus two activities and a quiz. After visiting each of the food group islands, there are three final challenges and a quiz to complete the quest.

If using the optional student workbook, this can be completed alongside digital learning to reinforce messages and track student competition and progress.

As students complete each activity, this can be marked off on the Foodtopia Completion Board.

# Game structure

The great Wizard's food transportation device has been sabotaged, and its tokens have been stolen by the mischievous Sneaky Snail! If the food transportation device is broken, the people of Foodtopia will not be able to access the food and nutrients they need to thrive.



To help the Wizard, our young adventurers must travel to the four Food Group Islands – Fruit and Vegetables Island, Grains Island, Milk Products Island and Protein Island. On each island, they will learn about the different types of food and complete fun challenges to earn tokens from the island's characters.

Once they have collected all the tokens, the adventurers will head to Foodtopia Castle for the final showdown with the Sneaky Snail. There, they will face a series of quizzes and activities to defeat the Snail and restore the Wizard's transportation device!

**This online learning is broken down into six sections:**

1

Welcome

4

Milk Products Island

2

Fruit and Vegetables Island

5

Protein Island

3

Grains Island

6

Foodtopia Castle

Students can retry all activities and quizzes as many times as they like





# Meet the Foodtopia characters and the activities

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Each food group island has the following learning activities:

## Animation video

Each island begins with a short, animated video narrated by the island's character. The content from each video will provide the necessary nutrition knowledge to assist the learner on their journey.

**Best Practice:** The video could be played on a larger screen for the students to watch as a group, followed by a class discussion of the key points from the video. Students can then complete the challenges on their own or in small groups. They can skip the video on their device and go straight to the island's activities. *Alternatively, if learners wear headphones, they can watch these individually on their devices.*

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## Supermarket Shopper

The learner will explore an interactive supermarket map to learn about the island's products from different sections of the shop. Learners will add five items to their cart using the "Add to cart" button. The learner is given instructions on how to get maximum points in their cart.

Encourage students to share their strategies and insights on what they think are everyday and sometimes foods for Milk Products Island, Protein Island, and Grains Islands.

**SW Tip:** *In the workbook, students will record their supermarket shopper answers and add up points. They will also be asked to write or draw their favourite everyday and sometimes food for each island.*

**Be aware in the Fruits and Vegetables Supermarket Shopper there are six possible colours to choose from but only five products can be selected for this activity, so the colour orange has been excluded.**

## Mental Workout Challenge

This is where the learner will apply their learning through a quiz with the objective of beating the Sneaky Snail and collecting the island's token.

There are five questions per island, and the learner must get all the questions correct to collect the token. The learner can retry as many times as they need to get all the questions correct. Answers are all in the animation videos, so it is recommended students rewatch the videos if needed.

These activities are not in the student workbook, however, the learning is reflected in the Final Challenge activity.

**SW Tip:** Once students have passed the quiz they can colour in the token in their workbook.

## Other learning activities on each island:

### Fruit and Vegetables Island

#### Guess the colour

The learner will learn how the different colours of fruits and vegetables benefit the body. The box for each colour must be clicked through to reveal their benefits before proceeding.

The Sneaky Snail has mixed up the fruit and vegetables and removed all the colours – it is up to the learner to drag and drop the item into the correct colour box. There are 24 items to sort in this activity.

From the animation video, it is explained that the colour of the item is determined by the part of the produce that is eaten – for example, bananas are yellow but the part that is eaten is white so it would be put into the white category.

For produce that comes in more than one colour, the item can be put into multiple categories.



Character:  
Cassy Rootshine



For example, the grapes can either be sorted into either the green or blue and purple category.

The learner can retry as many times as they need to get all the questions correct however this is not a pass/fail activity.

**SW Tip:** In the student workbook, the learner will colour in the fruits and vegetables on the page and write the benefit of that colour of food.





**Character:  
Toastina  
Grainheart**

## Grains Island

### How Well Do You Know Your Grains?

In this activity, the learner will learn about processing; changing the natural state of the grains into something new and how processing, although can be helpful in making a food safer to eat, cooking it or last longer, can often change an everyday food into a sometimes food e.g. if sugar, salt and fat are added.

The learner will drag and drop the food items on a scale from least processed to most processed for oats and corn.

Learners will get immediate feedback as they drag foods along the processing scale. They can move items as many times as needed until the final product is placed. This is not a pass or fail activity.

*This activity is not in the student workbook. Answers and explanations to this activity are in the FAQ section on the [teacher portal](#).*

**Character:  
Milk Knight**

## Milk Products Island

### Milky Choices

The learner will sort out the milk products into two categories – animal products and plant products, also known as milk alternatives. The learner will drag and drop images of the products, putting them into their correct basket.

The learner can retry as many times as they need to get all the questions correct however this is not a pass/fail activity.

**SW Tip:** *In the student workbook, this activity has been changed from drag and drop to a sorting activity. The student is presented with food items from Milk Products Island and required to sort them into the “Milk Product” or “Alternative” basket. An example for both baskets is provided.*

## Milky Choices answers for student workbook



Character:  
Eggbert  
Braveyolk

## Protein Island

### Protein Sorter

In this activity, the learner will learn about processing, just like Grains Island – changing the natural state of the protein into something new, and how some processing can change an everyday food into a sometimes food.

The learner will drag and drop the fish, beef, and chickpea-based food items on a scale from least processed to most processed for fish, beef, and chickpeas. The learner can retry as many times as they need to get all the questions correct. This is not a pass/fail activity.

*This activity is not in the student workbook. Answers and explanations to this activity are in the FAQ section on the [teacher portal](#).*



## Foodtopia Castle

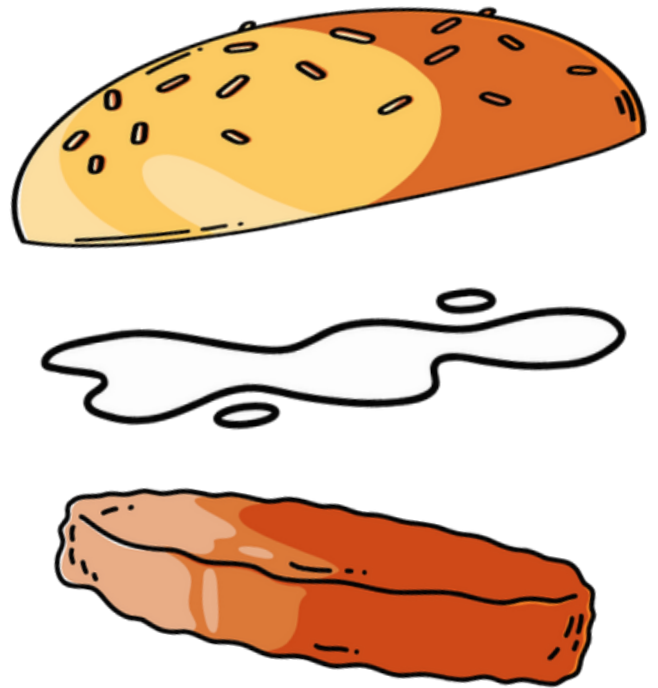
### Meal Madness

In this game, the learner will create two meals for the people of Foodtopia and one meal for themselves. The challenge includes dietary preferences and/or intolerances, and ingredients are marked as 'V' (vegetarian) or 'GF' (gluten free).

The learner will drag and drop each item to create the meals, and they have the opportunity to add up to six ingredients to each of meal. There are no specific requirements for the final burger/wrap challenge – the learner can add whatever they like.

An animation of the burger/wrap they create will appear after they press the 'Cook' button.

Some aspects of the meal creation for the first two meals may be marked as incorrect if they have not followed the order instructions but there is no pass/fail requirements in order to progress.



**SW Tip:** In the student workbook, there is a drawing/colouring activity so they can create their own burger with their favourite ingredients. The students are asked which food groups are on their creation and the benefits of the foods they selected.



## Food Group Sorter

The Sneaky Snail has mixed up all the foods and it is up to the learner to drag and drop the food item into the correct food group – there is also a fifth group called ‘Sometimes foods’. If a product can fit into two categories (for example a doughnut is made primarily from grains (wheat flour) but it is also a sometimes food because of the added fat, salt, and sugar) so the learner would put it into the sometimes food group.



There are three rounds of this game to defeat the Sneaky Snail. For each round, the learner will sort 15 food items into their correct food groups. While each round is scored out of 15, there is no pass/fail and learners can continue without a perfect score, but they have the option to try again.

**SW Tip:** In the student workbook, this activity has been updated to a sorting activity. Students now sort and write each food into the appropriate category box. While the activity isn't scored, teachers are encouraged to prompt discussion, helping students explain their choices and understand why some foods are considered “sometimes” foods. See the FAQs on the [teachers' portal](#) for more guidance.

## Food Group Sorter Answers

Grains	Fruit and Vegetables	Protein
<div>White rice</div> <div>Gluten free pasta</div>	<div>Frozen berries</div> <div>Carrot</div> <div>Canned tomatoes</div>	<div>Canned beans</div> <div>Chicken breasts</div> <div>Eggs</div>
Milk Products	Sometimes Foods	
<div>Almond milk</div> <div>Milk powder</div>	<div>Sausages</div> <div>Ice cream</div> <div>Chocolate muesli bar</div> <div>Cream</div> <div>Bacon</div> <div>Chicken nuggets</div>	

## Sugar Sorter Gameshow

In this activity, learners will explore the sugar content of popular drinks through an interactive sorting game, followed by a mathematical challenge. **This is the most complex game in the series**, so some learners may require additional, scaffolded support. **Completing the activity as a teacher-led lesson or in small groups is recommended before completing the online maths activity**, especially for those who need extra support with Maths.

**Note:** The sugar sorting is not in the student workbook, and there is a separate printout for the mathematical challenge, you will find this on the [teacher portal](#).

There are three opportunities to correctly order the drinks, therefore, an explicit teaching cycle (I Do, We Do, You Do) is a suggested approach to help guide learners through the activity and support understanding. For example:

### Round One (I Do): Introduction and Demonstration

- Start by introducing the concept of sugar content in drinks; and why it's important to be aware of it. Please see the [FAQs](#) for more information.
- Demonstrate how to play the sorting game:
  - Drag and drop a few drinks into order based on their sugar content.
  - Point out how hovering over a drink reveals its name in the top bar.
  - Explain that the game will save correct answers and give learners another chance

### Round Two (We do): Guided Practice

- Work together as a class or in small groups to sort some of the drinks.
- Encourage discussion and reasoning (e.g., "How can we guess which drink has more sugar? Which drinks taste the sweetest?").
- Provide feedback and support as needed.
- Adjust the level of guidance depending on learners' confidence and understanding.

### Round Three (You Do): Independent Practice

- Allow students to complete the sorting game independently or in pairs on their device from the beginning of the game.
- If students struggle, pair them with a peer or provide additional support.
- Reassure learners that they can retry if they don't get it right the first time, and it is more of a fun guessing game, as they aren't given specific information to enable them to figure out the answers. However, if students hover over a drink after the final order they will find some extra information.



## Mathematical Challenge

*Optional – If you feel your learners may struggle with this activity, feel free to skip this activity completely and move on to The Final Challenge, or you may like to complete this as a full class teacher-led activity using only the online game.*

***Best practice: Print the corresponding separate Sugar Sorter Activity Book from the teacher portal and complete the activity using the I Do, We Do, You Do approach.***

Learners will understand how many teaspoons of sugar are in common drinks by learning how to convert grams of sugar to teaspoons, and where to find information on a nutrition label:

- Model how to do the calculation step by step in Round One (I Do).
- Work through Round Two and/or Three together in the activity book (We Do).
- Allow students to practice independently in their activity book on the remaining rounds (You Do).
- For learners who find this challenging, consider providing extra scaffolding or pairing them with a more confident peer.
- There are multiple drinks in the activity book to practice; however, not all need to be completed before moving to the online component.

## Review

- Learners will review how to read a drink's nutrition label.
- The teacher can provide guidance and examples, and point out key information (e.g., grams of sugar per 100 mL, the size of the drink bottle).
- The activity book includes practice questions on reading the drink label, and the learner is guided step by step through the mathematical challenge that is also in the digital game.
- It is recommended that students practice the mathematical challenge in their activity book before participating in the digital game.
- This is not a pass/fail activity — learners can continue without a perfect score, but they have the option to try again.

## Reflection and Discussion

- Wrap up with a class discussion about the sugar content in drinks.
- Ask reflective questions like, "What surprised you most?" and "How might this change your choices?"
- Encourage students to share their strategies and insights.





## The Final Challenge

This is the final challenge – a quiz against the mischievous Sneaky Snail. To complete the game, learners must achieve a perfect score (5 out of 5). The questions are based on their learning from the Food Group Islands.

- If a learner scores 100%, they will be directed to the Castle, where they'll be welcomed by the Great Wizard. Learners will then drag and drop their island tokens into the correct transportation device slots to power it up.
- If a learner does not achieve a perfect score on their first attempt, they will be prompted to retry the quiz until they complete their quest.

**SW Tip:** All the quiz questions are in the student workbook for students to complete along with the option to colour in the tokens on the transportation device.

## Answers below

**Q:** What is a benefit having milk products or their alternatives?

**A:** Increases the calcium you get

What is a benefit of having protein in your diet?

Repairing and growing muscles

You need at least 5+ fruit and vegetables a day. How many should be fruit?

Two

How do carbohydrates help the body? (You can select more than 1 answer)

1. Helps your brain to stay focused

2. Gives you energy

Other than grain foods, what is the other food group that provides us with fibre?

Fruit and vegetables

