

The Basic Elements & Parts of a Meal Lesson

Part I

Intro: Have you ever looked at a picture of food that was so well plated that it actually made you hungry, whet your appetite or made your mouth water? Why does that happen?

For many it's in the meal planning considerations known as the meal appeals. The cook, chef or stylist has done such a great job combining the basic elements of a meal that we can't help but be enticed.

Think about the effort, time and attention to details that are put into choosing clothes, decorating a house, planning a trip or playing a ball game; they also need to be considered when planning/plating meals.

Activity: Break students into groups of six and give each group one of the topics included in the resource (cut each section apart and use as an informational resource for the poster). Students are to create a poster illustrating/presenting the important info as it pertains to their topic. The topics include: color, shape, texture/consistency, arrangement, garnish and dinnerware. The poster should include:

- Title (Topic Assigned)
- Description
- Picture Examples that Represent Info

Students will present this information to the class and take notes on the meal planning considerations.

Discuss: When or why would this information be important? It would be important for presentation purposes, when you need something to be attractive, for a contest or competition. For most cooking show competitions or restaurants it's all about the presentation just like someone's appearance is important for a job interview. Take a food stylist's job who wants their work to be featured in a publication or a restaurant who wants to keep their customers coming back...it's the extra details that make the difference.

View: Two short YouTube clips on the meal appeal elements, plating and presentation to reinforce and visualize this information.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=no1RRfaUOLM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YBnczqiHI>

Part II

Intro: Make a list of the parts of the meal you know? Share...this will give you a good idea of what students know about the topic.

Discuss & Notes: When planning a menu it's important to know the parts of the meal. They include

- **Appetizers**: Light food/beverage that begins a meal. It's designed to stimulate the appetizer. May include fruit/vegetable juice, raw fruits/ vegetables (crudites), soup, seafood like shrimp cocktails, finger foods, etc.
- **Main Dish**: Primary/foundation of meal...usually a protein food, but not always. May include meat, seafood, poultry, omelet, pancake or casserole.
- **Accompaniments**: Items served that go with or compliment the main dish. May include vegetables, breads, rolls, sauces, relishes, etc.
- **Salad**: Combination of raw and/or cooked ingredients usually served with a cold dressing. May include tossed vegetable, coleslaw, fruit/gelatin, etc.
- **Desserts**: Usually a sweet food to close a meal. May include cakes, cookies, pies, puddings, fruits, etc.

Activity: Plate Analysis

This activity is for students to practice applying the information on meal planning considerations as well as the parts of the meal. Choose 4-6 pictures from the PPT (depending on class size) to place at various stations around the room. Students will work in small groups to analyze and apply their class notes. They must rotate through each station and complete the following with each picture.

- Write down the station # and Menu
- Label the foods on the menu as to the parts of the meal they would be categorized as. Refer to your notes if necessary and if one for the parts is not represented in the meal, please write the word NONE behind the heading.
- Write as many sentences as you can about how the "appeals" are demonstrated on the plate. Include all that apply and be sure to identify the food or part of the meal you are referring to in your explanation.

Discuss: Show meals on the screen and discuss all the parts and elements as a class to be sure students understand concepts.

Final Assessment:

Choose one picture (not used in the station activity) to project on the screen for students to analyze for a grade. Students must identify the parts of the meal, and write down all of the meal appeals that apply in sentence form.

Optional Extension Lab:

Using an ordinary recipe for homemade chicken rice-a-roni as a main dish, have students plan/prepare the remaining parts of the meal, incorporating the meal appeals as a final lab project. Students are to bring in their own dinnerware, tablecloths, etc. to “plate” and present the meal. Students will then photograph, share, and critique each other’s presentations. Use photographs and comments as a bulletin board. Use the Cooking Showcase Template from TPT as a base.

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/SewingCooking-Showcase-Mini-Poster-1705676>

Homemade Chicken Rice-A-Roni

serves 4

- 2 oz. vermicelli, broken into half inch pieces (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 cup long grain rice (not instant)
- 4 tsp chicken bouillon
- 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp dried parsley
- dash garlic powder
- 2 3/4 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. butter

In a large skillet, melt 2 Tbsp. butter. Add broken pasta and rice. Cook until lightly brown.

Add water and seasonings. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cover.

Cook 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until water is absorbed.