

OVERVIEW

Planting the Seeds for a Successful Educational Journey

There are many features that help make the **Dig In!** curriculum engaging, motivating, and easy to use. We invite you to review the 10 lessons to see how they can best fit into your class schedule and meet the needs of your students.

While each lesson offers connections to the garden, learning activities can be done with or without a large garden in place. You can also teach lessons in sequence or split them up over the course of the school year (for example, teaching some lessons in the fall and the others in the spring).

In addition to elements found in a basic lesson plan – such as learning objectives, essential questions, time required, and supplies and preparation – each lesson features the following elements to make it easier to incorporate into your existing curriculum.

STANDARDS:

Each lesson meets education standards in one or more of the following subjects:

- Science (National Academy of Sciences)
- English Language Arts (Common Core State Standards Initiative)
- Math (Common Core State Standards Initiative)
- Health (American Cancer Society)

See **Dig In! At a Glance** on pp. 6-11 for a look at specific learning objectives and standards met in each lesson.

KEY MESSAGE(S):

The key nutrition messages children should hear and remember are identified at the beginning of each lesson. These takeaways are written in a way that appeals and makes sense to 5th and 6th graders. Repeat these messages often throughout the instruction.

TIMING/PACING GUIDE:

Each lesson plan notes the estimated time required to complete it from start to finish. Note that every lesson features several learning activities, some of which may take longer than one class “period.” We’ve included suggestions for how to break longer activities into shorter “sessions,” if needed.

While each lesson and its learning activities may be taught independently, **Dig In!** works best as a unit, as each lesson builds upon prior knowledge. Certain topics are covered in several lessons; in such cases, you’ll see references to earlier lessons.

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ADDITIONAL PACING RECOMMENDATIONS

Lesson 1

It is recommended that you begin with the first lesson. Many recurring components (such as **Garden Journals** and **Garden Teams**) are explained here. It also introduces necessary background knowledge for your students about how fruits and vegetables are grown.

Lesson 10

The Harvest Celebration is a culminating event that will showcase what your students have learned throughout the unit and will allow them to share the garden and harvest with the rest of the school, families, and your local community.

You will see a 🦋 icon throughout Lessons 1-9 noting activities or assessments that can be shared during the Harvest Celebration. See Lesson 10 on p. 62 for celebration ideas – from simple to more involved multiday events – as well as suggestions to help you plan ahead.



DIG IN! FEATURED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

Note: Some of the featured fruits and vegetables appear in more than one lesson. If they are not available from your school garden, you may purchase these fruits and vegetables from a grocery store or market.

Lesson 1

Chickpea (garbanzo bean), broccoli, zucchini, celery, leaf lettuce, carrot

Lesson 2

Spinach, leaf lettuce, kale

Lesson 3

Black bean

Lesson 4

Broccoli

Lesson 5

Red and orange bell pepper

Lesson 6

Chickpea (garbanzo bean)

Lesson 7

Carrot, tomato, sweet potato

Lesson 8

Strawberry

Lesson 9

Cantaloupe

Lesson 10

Any and all fruits and vegetables

TASTING AND FOOD PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

Children and teachers alike report that the tasting and food preparation experiences were among their favorite activities in these lessons. These hands-on activities are fun, positive, and also important in changing attitudes about fruits and vegetables.

In order to successfully implement these activities, we encourage you to seek help from your school district's Food Service Director (or School Nutrition Director), local chefs, dietitians, an area Cooperative Extension agent specializing in Family and Consumer Sciences, or parent volunteers. Depending on your school and resources, you may choose to do these activities in the classroom or the school cafeteria.

Featured Fruits or Vegetables: The fruits and vegetables featured in each lesson are those recommended to grow in your school garden (see pp. 96-99 of the **Gardening Guide**). They are also easily accessible if you need to purchase them from a store or market. Talk with your school's parent organization and Food Service Director for help with food supplies or about nutrition education grants that may be available.

Tasting Etiquette: Lesson 1 (p. 13) recommends that students come up with food "tasting rules" that will be used throughout the unit. Remind students of these guidelines each time they try new foods.

FOOD SAFETY

In every lesson that features a tasting or food preparation activity, it is important to follow the proper hand-washing and food preparation guidelines. You can find these on pp. 4-5 as a reproducible. Print them out and display them in a visible location in your classroom for you, your students, and adult volunteers to follow. Additional information about preparing foods safely is available at <http://www.foodsafety.gov>.

ALLERGIES

Before you begin any tasting or food preparation activity, be sure to gather information on any allergies your students may have. We recommend that you obtain this information from parents in writing at the start of the unit. Food tasting and preparation activities will include handling of fruits and vegetables, in addition to other food ingredients.



GARDENING GUIDE:

Dig In! is designed to be accessible for the novice gardener and will work in a variety of climates and in small or urban spaces. The **Gardening Guide** (found on pp. 91-107) provides important information and resources, a planting schedule, gardening tips and techniques, and advice on growing, maintaining, and harvesting a school garden. Throughout the curriculum, you will be referred to this **Gardening Guide** for more information. Look for the green leaf icon. 🌿

Dig In! at Home:*

This colorful booklet shares information with parents and caregivers about what their children are learning in class and should be sent home at the start of the unit. It is designed to reinforce the lessons at home by providing conversation starters (“Ask About...”), recipes, ideas for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, and time and cost-saving tips. In addition, it provides important nutrition information, an explanation of **MyPlate**, and a weekly menu planner for parents to work on with their children.

Dig In! Posters:*

These six “mini-billboards” visually express the theme of the **Dig In!** unit – namely, the world of possibilities found in growing and eating fruits and vegetables. Display them in your classroom, the school cafeteria, and other places throughout the school to motivate students to choose more fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks. (**Note:** A list of all vegetables pictured in the poster can be found at: http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/dig_in.html.)

Eat Smart To Play Hard With MyPlate Poster:*

This is a colorful two-sided poster showing the **MyPlate** icon and foods in the five food groups (used in Lesson 1). The blank **MyPlate** icon on the reverse can be used as a tool to assess students’ understanding.

* Schools participating in Child Nutrition programs (such as the **National School Lunch Program**) can order parent booklets and posters for free at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>.

