# Give Foods Catchy Names!

## A Lesson Plan for Engaging Students in the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

## EDUCATOR INFORMATION

**Smarter Lunchrooms Background:**
This lesson plan will help students increase the selection of nutritionally balanced meals by using creative, flashy, and fun menu names in the school lunchroom. This will be done by using 1-6 behavioral economics concepts from the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.

**Smarter Lunchrooms Process:**
This lesson follows the 4-Step Path to Building a Smarter Lunchroom. This lesson plan should be used after Step 1 of the 4-Step Path has been completed by one or more persons in the school where this lesson will be taught. Step 1 includes completion of the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard, taking 25-30 photos as indicated on the photo checklist, and reviewing the photos. By assessing the cafeteria and service lines, students can identify opportunities to make certain foods more appealing through naming strategies that will nudge choice and consumption.

**Please review these resources:**
> Smarter Lunchrooms Handbook

> Montana Smarter Lunchrooms Success Stories

> **Montana Educational Standards**

**LESSON TIMEFRAME:**
This lesson requires 2 (50-minute) class periods to complete.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

**Students will:**
- Identify how the school lunchroom environment influences behavior and food-related decisions through enhancing taste expectations.
- Analyze the results from the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard and discuss ways that the school lunchroom could increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, or targeted foods through the use of catchy and fun names.
- Develop and describe a plan for changing names of menu items in order to enhance the taste expectations that students have when selecting foods.
- Discuss ways to measure the success of using creative naming in the lunchroom in order to verify that the use of catchy names increases selection.
- Discuss ways to work cooperatively with school staff to create new, catchy names for menu items served in the school cafeteria.

## LESSON MATERIALS, PREPARATION, & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**For this lesson, the following items will be needed:**
- Equipment to show YouTube videos if possible (internet, screen, speakers)
- Completed Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard displayed for students via projector and photos from the photo checklist
- A photo presentation of photo checklist results displayed through a PowerPoint
- Pens and lined paper

- Personal whiteboards and Expo markers for students (one for every four students) OR an easel with paper (per every four students)

**Helpful hints and further resources:**
- Consider providing extra credit to students who eat a school meal in the lunchroom during this lesson, as it provides opportunity for hands-on observation.

- Creative, fun and descriptive names (word bank) from Smarter Lunchrooms
- Print your own signage and labels from Smarter Lunchrooms
- The Smarter Lunchroom Name Game Activity Worksheet
- An example of a menu with creative naming from Crave Burger
- A Team Nutrition Michigan video on themed meals and unique naming strategies
- Activity for creating fun food names from the Extension website written by Lauren Gabuzzi
- Fun fruit and vegetable names and fruit and vegetable naming contest from Washington State's Smarter Lunchrooms toolkit
- Fruit and vegetable naming cards from Ohio State's Smarter Lunchrooms toolkit

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## 🍎 Introduction to the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

Say: **"Today we are going to look at ways we can make small changes to encourage students to select, eat, and enjoy healthier foods in school without eliminating their choices."**

**Questions for students:**
- Why do you think eating healthy foods is important?
- How do you think food choices impact our health?
- We make food choices every day. What do you think influences the food-related decisions that we make on a daily basis?
- Do you think our school environment impacts our food decisions? If so, how?
- Do you think there are ways we can improve our school lunchroom environment or the lunch line itself to encourage healthier choices?

Say: **"Today I'm going to introduce to you the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, which is a project that works to promote healthy eating in the lunchroom, without adding cost for schools or taking away choices for students."**

Introduce the Smarter Lunchrooms project. Consider reviewing or showing the Smarter Lunchrooms Makeover video.

Say: **Let's look at how Behavioral Economics influence behavior and choice in the cafeteria.**

Summary of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement: https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/documents/SLM-Flyer-Inkjet.pdf

## 🔍 Step 1: Spot

Say: **"Today we are going to talk about how using catchy names for menu items can have a positive effect on choices that students make in the lunchroom. The goal of this lesson is to use Smarter Lunchrooms techniques to help students choose and eat healthier foods."**

**Questions for students:**
- When a menu uses creative names for food, does it make the food seem more appealing?

- Have you ever been to a restaurant that has catchy names on the menu? Give an example from menus from your favorite restaurants.
- Do you think that renaming fruits and vegetables in your lunchroom would make them more appealing?
- Would you rather choose a plate of "spinach" or "Super Snazzy Spinach"?

Say: **"Promoting healthy food items through the use of creative names can be a very effective way to influence the decisions that students make in the lunchroom."**

Introduce the idea of "catchy names" by reviewing or showing the following video(s) and links:

- An example of a menu with creative naming from Crave Burger
- A Team Nutrition Michigan video on themed meals and unique naming strategies
- Creative, fun, and descriptive names (word bank) from Smarter Lunchrooms

Say: **"The Smarter Lunchrooms project consists of completing four simple steps. Those steps are Spot, Plan, Do, and Prove. Let's start with the 'Spot' step and evaluate our lunchroom to see if using 'catchy names' will positively influence food choices."**

**Review 'Spot' Findings - the** Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard **and the** photo checklist**.**
The Scorecard and photos may have already been completed by a school food staff member, parent, or community member. If not, a teacher and several students should complete this task together, asking the Food Service Director for information as needed.

Using the completed Scorecard and photos, share with students the photos and the unchecked areas of the Scorecard that indicate a need for more fun and catchy food names in the lunch line. The goal is to influence students' taste expectations to nudge them to make a healthy choice.
- Have students evaluate all sections of the Scorecard while putting emphasis on the "Lunchroom Atmosphere" section along with the "Student Involvement" and "School Community Involvement" sections.
- Have students individually list specific strategies from the Scorecard that could be addressed through the use of catchy naming for menu items.
- Have students use this list in order to identify which strategies are already being addressed in the lunchroom and which strategies offer opportunity for change.

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## Step 2: Plan

Say: **"Now that we have reviewed how our lunchroom did on Step 1, 'Spot,' let's start the 2nd step – 'Plan.'"**

**Information for educator:**
Creating catchy names for menu items can be done using the following techniques and strategies. The goal is to increase selection and consumption of healthy food. Many of these strategies fall under multiple categories on the Scorecard. Choose naming categories that are appropriate for the target audience and will help them engage in the activity.
- Choose items on the menu that are often passed up by students and focus on these items first.
- Use alliteration or figures of speech to create catchy names for foods.
- Name foods after famous athletes, superheroes, cartoon characters, etc.
- Pick themes and create a menu that incorporates the theme in every item.
- Increase school spirit by naming menu items after a mascot or by incorporating school colors into the names.
- Think about your favorite characteristic of the food item and use it in creating a fun name.
- Look up nutrition information about the specific food or drink and add this benefit into the fun name or statement to entice students. An example could be "X-ray Vision Carrots" because carrots are good for eye health.

**Class discussion:**
As a class, discuss different ways of naming food items that would help increase their appeal.

**Use the following questions as a guide to stimulate creativity and help students come up with ideas:**
- What are some behavioral economic strategies for naming menu items?
- How can nutritional information be incorporated into names?
- What movies, TV shows, cartoons, books, celebrities, athletes, or historical figures could you incorporate into food names?
- How could we increase school spirit using food names?
- Do you think that themes would be a fun way to tie foods together and make them more fun?

## Step 3: Do

Say: **"Now let's move towards the 3rd step in the Smarter Lunchrooms Path – which is to 'Do' the work necessary to rename menu items in the school lunchroom."**

Say: **"First we are going to make a list of common food and drink options that are available in your [our] cafeteria. See how many items you can remember."**

If they don't remember many items, provide a copy of their school lunch menu.

Have students raise their hands and tell you examples of healthy food and drink items that are served in their cafeteria. Record on the whiteboard. Examples include:
- Steamed broccoli
- Whole apples
- Turkey sandwich
- Whole grain pasta
- Milk

**Interactive game:**
Now lead an interactive game to spark creativity and give students naming ideas for items listed on the whiteboard. Instructions are as follows:
- Break students up into groups of 3-4 and spread the groups out around the classroom. Give each group leader a whiteboard or piece of large easel paper/poster board and Expo marker.
- To work on naming: State the name of a food or drink and have groups brainstorm as many descriptive words that they can in 30 seconds (words that make the food seem appealing).
- After 30 seconds, see which team has the most words and check the words for appropriateness.
- The winning team will receive a point! Play until a team earns five points.
- Depending on time, the game rules can be changed to have students make up names that have to do with school spirit, movie stars, alliteration, nutritional benefits, etc. Switch up the theme of the game several times in order to get students thinking.

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## ☆ Step 4: Prove

Say: **"Great job coming up with catchy, fun, and enticing names for menu items in the cafeteria. The 4th and final step of the 4-Step Smarter Lunchrooms Path is 'Prove.' To wrap up our lesson we will talk about how we might do that, and what our final steps would be if we actually want to start to create changes in our lunchroom** (if applicable)**."**

### Information for educator:
The success of this marketing intervention can be measured in several ways:
- Record the number of students that are selecting a specific healthy menu item before and after renaming it.
- Plate waste for a specific menu item can be recorded before and after renaming to see what is being consumed.
- Sales or production data can be used to determine if sales for specific menu items have increased after the intervention.
- Create a comment box for students to share their opinions about the new names or propose new ones.
- Have students vote on names for certain food items on a monthly or quarterly basis so that they are involved and engaged in their lunchroom.

Say: **"Once we make a change, it is important to find out if it is actually increasing the number of students making healthy choices, so using the ideas we came up with, we are going to try and 'Prove It.'"**

Review with the students that in order to prove something, information or data must be collected before and after the change(s).

### Questions for students to respond to as a class:
- How can we monitor the effect of the menu naming changes that we make in order to see if they are affecting food choice in the cafeteria?
- Is there a way to measure if students are actually consuming more of the healthier foods instead of just choosing them?
- Can you think of a way to get the student population involved in the process of naming menu items?
- How often do you think it would be appropriate to rename food items in the cafeteria so that students remain excited about them?
- Do you have ideas on who to work with (classroom teachers, school food service, librarian, etc.) to create catchy names and make simple signs or name plates for the service line? Who would write the names on the daily menu board?

> Assessment Tools