MINDFUL MUNCHERS

Teachers Toolkit Volume 2

New classroom activities, cross-curricular ideas, and student projects.

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About This Toolkit

This is the second Teachers Toolkit from Mindful Munchers. It includes entirely new discussion prompts, hands-on activities, and project ideas, designed to complement Volume 1 rather than repeat it.

New Classroom Discussion Prompts

For Middle School (Grades 6-8)

1. Look at the school vending machines. What do they sell? Who benefits from those choices being there?
2. If healthy food is better for us, why do you think it's sometimes harder to find or afford?
3. Have you ever eaten something because you were stressed or bored, not hungry? What was that like?
4. If you could change one thing about your school lunch, what would it be and why?

For High School (Grades 9-12)

1. Research shows that sleep deprivation increases hunger and cravings for junk food. What does this suggest about health policy in schools?
2. Many low-income neighborhoods have far more fast food restaurants than grocery stores. Who is responsible for fixing this? Individuals, companies, or governments?
3. GLP-1 medications like Ozempic can produce significant weight loss. Should they be covered by all insurance plans, including for teens?
4. Ultra-processed foods are engineered to maximize cravings. Does that change who is morally responsible for overeating them?
5. Design a public health campaign to reduce teen soda consumption in your school. What would you do?

New Classroom Activities

Activity 1: 24-Hour Food Recall + Analysis (45 min)

Students write down everything they ate in the last 24 hours (no judgment, this is anonymous). Using a simple nutrient database (USDA FoodData Central is free), they calculate approximate totals for:

- Total added sugar consumed vs. daily recommended limit
- Fiber intake vs. recommended 25-38g per day
- Number of ultra-processed vs. whole food items

Class discusses aggregate findings (without identifying individuals). What patterns emerge? What surprises students?

Activity 2: Ad Deconstruction (30 min)

Show students 3-5 food advertisements (TV commercials, social media posts, cereal boxes). For each, students identify:

- What health or lifestyle claim is being made?
- What emotional appeal is being used (happiness, fitness, family, coolness)?
- Who is the target audience?
- What does the nutrition label actually say vs. what the ad implies?

Discuss: How does advertising shape what we think is healthy or desirable?

Activity 3: Build a Public Health Infographic (60 min)

Students choose one nutrition myth (from the Mindful Munchers blog) and design a one-page infographic to debunk it. Requirements:

- One clear myth stated at the top
- At least two pieces of evidence disproving it
- One practical takeaway for the reader
- Designed to be shared on social media or posted in school

Display finished infographics around the school or submit to a school newspaper.

Activity 4: Food Policy Debate (60 min)

Divide the class into teams and assign positions on a controversial food policy question. Example topics:

- Should sugary drinks be taxed like cigarettes?
- Should fast food marketing to children under 12 be banned?

- Should schools be required to provide free breakfast to all students?
- Should the government subsidize fruits and vegetables instead of corn and soy?
- Each team researches and presents their argument. Class votes on the most persuasive case.

Activity 5: Student-Led Nutrition Audit (90 min, can be split across days)

Students conduct a real audit of their school's food environment:

- Map all food sources in the school (cafeteria, vending, school store, fundraisers)
- Document what is sold and at what price
- Survey 20 classmates about what they eat and why
- Write a one-page report with 3 recommendations for improvement
- Present findings to school administration or a teacher panel

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Cross-Curricular Integration Ideas

Subject	Nutrition Connection
Math	Calculate percent daily values; graph food cost vs. nutritional value
English / ELA	Analyze food advertising language; write persuasive essays on food policy
Biology / Science	Study digestion, hormones (insulin, leptin, ghrelin), and metabolism
Social Studies	Map food deserts; research agricultural subsidies and food policy history
Economics	Examine supply chain, food pricing, and market incentives in ultra-processed food
Art	Design nutrition education posters or public health infographics

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Assessment Ideas

- Nutrition myth-busting essay: Choose a diet trend and evaluate it using at least 3 sources
- Community food environment report: Research and present on food access in a local neighborhood
- Reflective journal: 2-week food and mood journal with weekly written reflections
- Policy brief: Write a 1-page policy recommendation to improve school food environment
- Peer teaching: Student-led 5-minute presentation on a nutrition topic of their choice

All Mindful Munchers resources are free at mindfulmunchers.org! Bookmark it and share it with colleagues/students.