

BOOK 1: WELCOME TO THE LAND OF GRUB ACTIVITY GUIDE: AGES 8-12

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

1. Food Journal Experiment

What You Need: Notebook, pen

What To Do:

- For 3 days before reading, keep a simple food journal
- Note: What you ate, when, and how you felt 1 hour later
- Rate your energy: 1 (very tired) to 10 (very energetic)
- After reading, look for patterns

Learning Goal: Self-awareness about food-energy connection

2. Sugar Detective Challenge

What You Need: Food labels from your pantry

What To Do:

- Find 5 different food labels
- Look for "Added Sugars" (in grams)
- Convert to teaspoons: 4 grams = 1 teaspoon
- Compare to the recommended 25 grams (6 teaspoons) daily
- Which foods were surprising?

Learning Goal: Understanding hidden sugars and reading nutrition labels

Where Food Becomes Adventure and Nutrition Becomes Fun!

DURING READING ACTIVITIES

3. Character Analysis Chart

What You Need: Paper divided into columns

What To Do: Create columns for each character: Brunch, Linner, Snax

For each, note:

- Their special tool and what it represents
- A mistake they made or lesson they learned
- Which character are you most like?
- What would YOUR magical tool be and why?

Learning Goal: Critical thinking and self-reflection

4. Scientific Diagram: The Sugar Crash

What You Need: Large paper, colored pencils

What To Do:

- Create a graph with TIME (0-60 minutes) on bottom
- ENERGY LEVEL (1-10) on the side
- Draw two lines:
 - RED LINE: Simple sugar cookie (sharp spike, sharp crash)
 - GREEN LINE: Whole grain snack (gentle rise, sustained energy)
- Label the "insulin response" and "blood sugar levels"

Learning Goal: Visual understanding of physiological processes

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

5. The Moderation Experiment

What You Need: Your favorite treat, timer, journal

What To Do:

Day 1: Eat a small portion (2-3 cookies)

- How satisfied do you feel? (1-10)
- How does your stomach feel 30 minutes later?
- Do you feel good or regretful?

Day 2: Eat a larger portion (6-8 cookies)

- Same questions
- Compare the two experiences

Learning Goal: Personal discovery of moderation principle

6. Whole Grain Recipe Makeover

What You Need: A favorite cookie or muffin recipe

What To Do:

- Identify ingredients that could be healthier
- Research substitutions:
 - White flour → Whole wheat flour or oat flour
 - Sugar → Reduce by 1/4 and add fruit/vanilla
 - Butter → Replace half with applesauce or mashed banana
 - Add-ins → Include nuts, seeds, or shredded vegetables
- Create your "upgraded" recipe
- Try baking both versions and compare

Learning Goal: Practical application of nutrition knowledge

7. Create a Land of Grub Map

What You Need: Large poster board, markers, creativity

What To Do:

- Draw a map showing all the destinations mentioned in Book 1
- Illustrate each location based on the name
- Add paths connecting them
- What do you think you'll learn at each place?

Learning Goal: Anticipation and creative thinking

8. The Economics of Healthy Eating

What You Need: Grocery store flyer or online grocery site

What To Do:

- Compare prices:
 - Package of regular cookies vs. ingredients for whole grain cookies
 - Soda vs. milk or water
 - Fast food meal vs. homemade meal with similar foods
- Calculate cost per serving
- Which is actually more economical?
- Create a budget for a week of balanced snacks

Learning Goal: Critical thinking about food choices and economics

9. Body Awareness Meditation

What You Need: Quiet space, comfortable seat

What To Do:

- Sit comfortably before a meal
- Close eyes and take 3 deep breaths
- Scan your body from head to toe
- Notice: Am I truly hungry? Where do I feel it?
- Rate hunger: 1 (starving) to 10 (stuffed)
- Eat until you reach 6-7 (comfortable)
- Practice this at every meal for one week

Learning Goal: Mindful eating and body awareness

10. Write Your Own Land of Grub Adventure

What You Need: Paper, imagination

What To Do:

- Create a new location in the Land of Grub
- What food is it based on?
- What lesson would kids learn there?
- Write a short story (1-2 pages) about visiting this place
- Include: A challenge, a lesson, and what Brunch, Linner, and Snax would do

Learning Goal: Creative writing and deeper comprehension

RESEARCH PROJECTS

11. Sugar Throughout History

Research Questions:

- How much sugar did people eat 100 years ago vs. now?
- When did sugar become common in everyday foods?
- How has childhood obesity changed over the same period?
- Create a timeline showing the correlation

12. Global Food Traditions

Research Questions:

- How do other cultures view treats and everyday foods?
- What are traditional "sometimes foods" in different countries?
- Create a presentation about one culture's food traditions

13. The Science of Taste

Experiment:

- Research how tastebuds work
- Why do we crave sweet foods?
- What happens in the brain when we eat sugar?
- Create a scientific poster explaining your findings

Where Food Becomes Adventure and Nutrition Becomes Fun!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Ages 8-12)

Comprehension:

1. Explain in your own words what happens during a "sugar crash."
2. What are the three rules of the Land of Grub, and why is each important?
3. How does the Moderation Bridge work, and what does it teach?

Analysis:

4. Why did Brunch's compass point to "Caution" but he ignored it?
5. Compare Linner's approach to Brunch's approach. Which worked better?
6. Why do you think Snax, the youngest, often seems the wisest?

Application:

7. How would you apply the Moderation Bridge concept to screen time or other activities?
8. If you created a fourth rule for the Land of Grub, what would it be?
9. How can you use Grandmother Cookie's lessons in your real life?

Evaluation:

10. Do you agree that treats are "special because they're occasional"? Why or why not?
11. What's the strongest argument against eating cookies every day?
12. Should schools teach this kind of nutritional education? Why?

Synthesis:

13. Design an experiment to test whether whole grain snacks really provide longer-lasting energy.
14. Create a public health campaign for kids about sugar consumption.
15. Write a letter to Grandmother Cookie with additional questions.

STEM ACTIVITIES

Blood Sugar Simulation

What You Need: Clear jar, water, food coloring, sugar, coffee filters

What To Do:

1. Jar = your bloodstream
2. Sugar = well, sugar!
3. Add a LOT of sugar quickly (simple carbs)
4. Stir vigorously = insulin response
5. Try to filter it out quickly = your body working hard
6. Now add sugar slowly, bit by bit (complex carbs)
7. Much easier to manage!

Discuss: Why is steady better than spikes?

ENERGY GRAPHING CHALLENGE

What You Need: Graph paper, data from your food journal

What To Do:

- Plot your energy levels throughout the day
 - Mark what foods you ate and when
 - Look for correlation between food types and energy patterns
 - Present your findings
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CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES

The Marketing Analysis

What To Do:

- Watch 5 commercials for children's foods
 - Analyze the messaging:
 - Do they mention nutrition?
 - What emotions do they appeal to?
 - Are claims about health accurate?
 - Write a 1-page analysis of advertising tactics
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Debate: Should Schools Ban Certain Foods?

What To Do:

- Research both sides
 - Prepare arguments for and against
 - Consider: freedom of choice, health, parental rights, school responsibility
 - Hold a class debate or write a persuasive essay
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ADVANCED COOKING PROJECTS

The Great Cookie Experiment

What You Need: Kitchen access, adult supervision

What To Do: Make 4 batches of cookies with different ratios:

1. 100% white flour, lots of sugar (simple)
2. 50/50 white/whole wheat, reduced sugar
3. 100% whole wheat, fruit-sweetened
4. Your own creative "healthy but delicious" recipe

Conduct a taste test:

- Which tastes best?
- Which provides the best energy?
- Which is the best balance of taste and health?

JOURNALING PROMPTS

1. Write about a time you ate too much and felt sick. What did you learn?
2. If you could give advice to Brunch before he ate the cookies, what would you say?
3. Describe your relationship with treats. Is it healthy? How could it improve?
4. What does "balance" mean to you beyond just food?
5. Write a letter to your future self about the food choices you want to make.

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Healthy Snacks for Community

What To Do:

- Research local food banks or after-school programs
- Create a proposal for providing healthy snacks
- Organize a fundraiser or food drive
- Include educational materials based on what you learned
- Present your project to the class or community

MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS

Create a Book Trailer

- Script a 1-minute video promoting the book
- Include key scenes, characters, and lessons
- Use video editing software or apps
- Share with younger students

Podcast Episode

- Record a 10-minute "book club" discussion
- Interview friends about their thoughts
- Include a segment on real nutritional science
- Edit and publish (with permission)

PARENT/EDUCATOR NOTES (*Ages 8-12*)

This age group can:

- Understand more complex nutritional science
- Make more independent food choices
- Analyze advertising and food marketing
- Conduct experiments and research
- Apply lessons to broader life contexts

Encourage them to:

- Question sources and think critically
- Connect nutrition to sports performance, academics, mood
- Take ownership of their food choices
- Become advocates for health in their communities

Avoid:

- Making this about weight or appearance
- Creating anxiety or orthorexia around food
- Rigid rules that backfire
- Shame-based approaches

The goal: Empower kids with knowledge and skills to make informed choices that support their health, happiness, and wellbeing for life.