

DIRECTIONS

This Thanksgiving Menu Planning activity gives students a hands-on way to practice budgeting and meal planning while putting together a holiday dinner for family and friends.

Working with a set budget, they'll choose main dishes, sides, desserts, and drinks, and will need to account for special dietary needs of surprise guests. Students will look up prices and make thoughtful choices to stay within their budget and meet everyone's needs.

This activity brings real-life skills into the classroom with a fun holiday theme, helping students use math in a practical way while thinking creatively. It's a great way to keep students engaged with math and planning skills as the semester winds down, and it connects with CCSS and TEKS standards, too.

To complete this activity, follow these steps:

1. Print enough guest cards for each student to have 2-3 cards, depending on the level of challenge you prefer. Shuffle the cards, then have each student draw one set number to reveal their surprise guests with dietary needs.
2. Give each student a menu planning sheet and a budget sheet. Set a budget amount (e.g., \$100) and have them write it on the designated line of the menu planning sheet.
3. Provide local grocery store flyers or grant access to online grocery prices. Students will use these resources to research costs for their menu items.
4. Students will plan a meal menu that meets their guests' dietary needs, then calculate the cost of each ingredient on the budget sheet. They may need to revise their menu to stay within budget while meeting all requirements.
5. For added fun, students can design a decorative menu with their selected dishes. They can present it to the class and share the reasons behind their menu choices and budgeting strategies.

THANKSGIVING MENU PLANNING SHEET

You're planning a Thanksgiving dinner for 10 family members and friends. Your budget of \$_____. Your menu needs to include 2 main dishes, 4 side dishes, 3 desserts, and 3 beverages. Use grocery store flyers or online prices to estimate each item's cost.

But there's a twist—some unexpected guests are joining! Be sure to adjust your guest count and account for their specific dietary needs as you finalize your menu plan.

Student name: _____
Guest count (including surprise guests): _____

Category	Menu Item	Quantity Needed	Does it meet guest's dietary needs?
Main Dish 1			
Main Dish 2			
Side Dish 1			
Side Dish 2			
Side Dish 3			
Side Dish 4			
Dessert 1			
Dessert 2			
Dessert 3			
Beverage 1			
Beverage 2			
Beverage 3			

Guest	Dietary Requirement	Menu items that meet their needs

THANKSGIVING MENU BUDGET SHEET

Student name: _____
 Total budget: \$ _____
 Total Spent: \$ _____
 Amount remaining (or over): \$ _____

Budget Breakdown

Category	Total Cost for Category	Remaining Budget
Main Dishes (2)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Side Dishes (4)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Desserts (3)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Beverages (2)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total for Menu	\$ _____	

Summary and Adjustments

Total spent on items for surprise guests' dietary restrictions _____
 Additional expenses for extra guests _____

Reflection

- Did you stay within your budget? Yes ☐ No ☐
- If yes, how much is left? \$ _____
 - If no, how much did you exceed? \$ _____

Which items or dietary restrictions cost the most to accommodate?

Did you select items that satisfy each guest's dietary needs? _____

What adjustments, if any, did you make to meet the surprise guests' needs?

UNCLE HENRY

Uncle Henry has celiac disease. He can only eat foods that are **gluten-free**.

AUNT ROSA

Aunt Rosa is lactose intolerant. She can only eat foods that are **dairy-free**.

COUSIN LEO

Cousin Leo just turned vegan. He doesn't eat any **animal products**.

GRANDPA JOE

Grandpa Joe has high blood pressure. He can only eat foods that are **low-sodium**.

BESTIE LILY

Lily is a pescatarian. She doesn't eat meat, but she eats **fish only**.

AUNT SARAH

Aunt Sarah is on a sugar-free diet. She can only eat foods that are **low-sugar**.

MR. PARKS

Mr. Parks has a severe nut allergy. He can only eat foods that are **nut-free**.

TIM

Tim is allergic to shellfish. He can only eat foods that are **shellfish-free**.

CCSS COVERED BY THIS LESSON:

Grade 6

- **6.NS.B.3:** Fluently add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimals using the standard algorithm for each operation.
- **6.RP.A.3:** Use ratio and rate reasoning to solve real-world and mathematical problems, including unit pricing and financial literacy.
- **6.EE.B.7:** Solve real-world problems by writing and solving equations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
- **6.SP.B.5:** Summarize and describe distributions, connecting to interpreting financial data.

Grade 7

- **7.NS.A.1:** Apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers.
- **7.RP.A.2:** Recognize and represent proportional relationships between quantities, using them to create a budget or estimate costs.
- **7.EE.B.3:** Solve multi-step real-life and mathematical problems posed with positive and negative rational numbers in financial contexts.
- **7.SP.B.4:** Use data from a random sample to draw inferences, connecting with evaluating choices in budgeting.

Grade 8

- **8.EE.B.5:** Graph proportional relationships, interpreting the unit rate as the slope of the graph, useful in analyzing cost and budgeting.
- **8.F.A.1:** Define, evaluate, and compare functions, applying understanding to budgeting and spending costs.
- **8.SPA.4:** Use functions to model relationships between quantities, such as in personal budgeting scenarios.

CCSS COVERED BY THIS LESSON:

Grade 6

- **6.3:** Add, subtract, multiply, and divide positive rational numbers fluently.
- **6.4:** Apply mathematical process standards to represent and solve problems involving proportional relationships, including ratios and rates.
- **6.12:** Represent numerical data graphically, including dot plots, stem-and-leaf plots, histograms, and box plots.
- **6.14E:** Solve real-world problems involving numerical data in various contexts, including personal financial literacy, budgeting, and spending decisions.

Grade 7

- **7.3B:** Apply mathematical process standards to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers fluently.
- **7.4A:** Represent constant rates of change in mathematical and real-world contexts, including financial literacy.
- **7.13A:** Calculate sales tax, tips, and discounts, making connections to budgeting and spending.
- **7.13B:** Solve real-world problems related to budgeting and financial literacy.

Grade 8

- **8.1:** Understand the concept of a function in real-world scenarios, including budgeting applications.
- **8.4B:** Solve problems involving proportional and non-proportional relationships, connecting them to budgeting contexts.
- **8.12D:** Apply mathematical process standards to solve financial literacy problems involving simple budgeting and financial transactions.