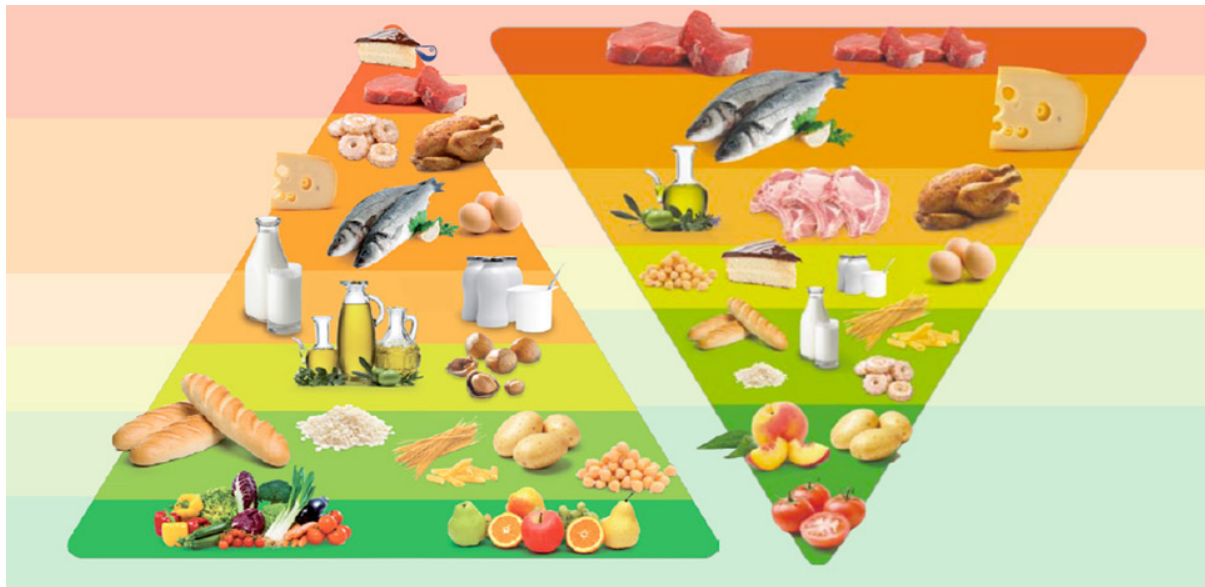


IT'S BETTER IF... I RESPECT THE PLANET!

FOR YOU: in this paper you will discover how often you should eat different foods to grow strong and healthy, but also respecting our planet. Imagine a pyramid but... made with food, not with bricks (now look at it, it's here below!).



Look carefully at the pyramid on the left side. It is the *nutritional pyramid*, an image used to teach the frequencies of consumption of each food group. Talk about the nutritional pyramid with your teacher and classmates: which are the foods at the base? And which are at the top? Which foods we should eat every day, more times a day? Which are the foods we should avoid?

Then think about your diet. Are you eating according to these rules? Do you think you should change “position” to some foods into your diet?

Did you know that... the *nutritional pyramid* was designed to let everybody know how to eat in a balanced, varied and nutritious way?!

Now, look at the pyramid on the right side of the figure. This is the *environmental pyramid*. It explains which foods are better for the health of the planet and which foods we should avoid to preserve the environmental resources.

You can easily notice that the two pyramids are similar but inverted. It might seem amazing but... the foods that are good for us are also good for the planet!

The *nutritional* and the *environmental pyramids* are good friends and they are called *double-pyramid*!

Talk about the double pyramid with your teacher and classmates, trying to think about possible solutions for improving your eating habits.

HOW IS THE NUTRITIONAL PYRAMID MADE?

The *nutritional pyramid* is composed of 6 floors. Each step is associated to one or more food groups, with foods that are similar to each other, made with similar ingredients. At the base of the pyramid are the foods you can eat every day, while at the top are the foods that is better to avoid. Each floor, from the bottom to the top, is smaller than the one before (it's a pyramid!). That's because the foods in the smaller floors should be consumed less frequently.

THE FREQUENCY OF FOOD CONSUMPTION

Have you ever heard the word “frequency”? If you ask: “How often do you play sport?”, the answer could be: “Three times a week”, a frequency!. The meaning is the same if we talk about “frequency of food consumption”. If we say that the food group of cereal products should have a “daily” consumption frequency, it means that we should eat pasta, bread, rice and the other product of this group every day (not all of them!!). There are food groups (such as meat, fish, eggs, cheese) that have a “weekly” consumption frequency, so we can eat them 3 or 4 times a week, alternating them. Other food groups, such as red meat, sweets and sugary drinks, have a “monthly” frequency of consumption, i.e. 1 or 2 times a month.

Let's discover the foods that are in the pyramid!

First floor (the base): fruit and vegetables. They must be consumed at least 5 times a day!

Second floor: cereals and cereal-based products, potatoes and legumes. In this step you can find rice, spelt, barley, oat, mile, corn, and all the foods made with cereals or flours, like pasta, bread. Potatoes are there, too, as they can't be considered vegetables because, from a nutritional point of view, they are more similar to cereals... Finally, there are legumes, as lentils, beans, chickpeas, peas, soybeans. All these foods could be eaten every day.

Third floor: oils and nuts. These foods could be eaten every day but in very small quantity.

Fourth floor: milk and yogurt. These foods could be consumed every day!

Fifth floor: white meat, fish, cheese, and eggs. These foods give us proteins. They could be consumed every day, but in rotation!

Sixth floor: red meat, cured meats, butter, snacks, and sweets. Red meat, cured meats, butter could be consumed 1 or 2 times a week, while snacks, and sweets as chips, chocolate bars, cakes or cream, should be consumed only in special occasions!

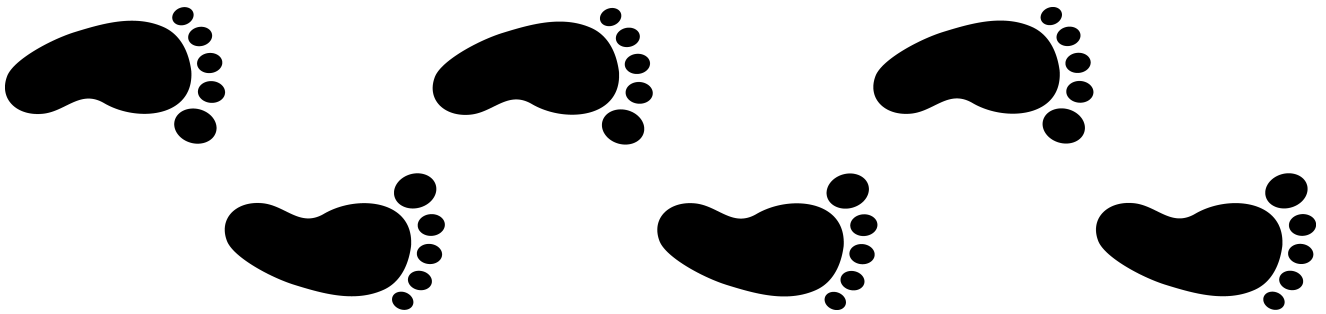
THINK BEFORE EAT! Have you ever thought that cheese doesn't "grow" as cheese, but it needs a "process" to become cheese? The farmer gives water and feeds to the cows, and they make some milk. The milk is delivered to a cheese factory to be transformed in cheese. Once cheese is made, it is transported to a market, where you can buy it.

Have you seen how many steps are needed to make cheese available to you?

Every single food has its own life-cycle to arrive to your table. Each product grows, gets transformed, packed, transported, processed and then consumed. This long life-cycle requires a lot of environmental resources. Some foods need more resources, other ones less.

WHAT IS THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT? If you walk on the beach with a friend, you will see that both of you are leaving footprints on the sand. Your footprints will be less deep than your friend's if he is heavier than you.

The same thing happens when a food is produced: the life-cycle of a food leaves a “footprint” on the planet, that could be more or less deep depending on how many resources have been consumed to produce it.



For example: a farmer who wants to produce tomatoes must cultivate the land, sow the tomato seeds, irrigate. He could use some agricultural machines to work faster, collect the product and carry it to the market for selling it. A farmer who wants to produce a sausage must cultivate and collect or buy the hay and the forage to feed the animal. He should take care of the animals and wait them to grow enough. Then, he has to move the animals to a slaughterhouse. Later, the meat has to be transformed in a sausage, packed and carried to the market. Again you can discover a lot of subsequent steps to obtain a simple food!

With those two examples, you can understand how the life-cycle of a tomato has a less deep ecological footprint than a sausage, because it needs less resources from the planet. To define a food's impact on the environment a lot of factors have to be considered, like:

- How much *water* is needed for the production;
- How much *ground* surface is used;
- How many *pollutant gases* are released in the air.

WHAT DOES THE ENVIRONMENTAL PYRAMID TEACH? Environment has its pyramid too! The *environmental pyramid* explains how different foods have a different impact on nature. At the base, you will find foods with a lower environmental impact (in fact the floor is smaller), while the foods with a bigger environmental impact are at the top.

WHAT CAN YOU NOTICE COMPARING THE TWO PYRAMIDS? If you look at them carefully, you will notice that the foods at the base of the *nutritional pyramid*, the ones you should eat every day, have also a smaller environmental impact. If you eat the foods that you can find at the base of the *double-pyramid*, you will help your health, but also the planet!

My comments/What I think:

DO IT WITH YOUR TEACHER AND CLASSMATES!

The week pyramid game

This activity is recommended for 12-14 years old children.

Objective: Understanding an adequate food intake.

How to do it:

Children take note of what they have eaten every day in each occasion of food consumption during a week (7 days).

At the end of the week, children draw on a paper or on the notebook their own nutritional pyramid, based on the frequency of consumption of each food group. The foods they ate more frequently will have to be represented at the base of the pyramid, whereas at the top the foods they ate less.

In class, the teacher shows and explains the ideal representation of the nutritional pyramid, so that each child can compare its own pyramid to it and understand which are the food groups they have eaten too much and which ones they have not eaten enough.

The food chain

This activity is recommended for 12-14 years old children.

Objective: Learning all the food steps taken from the field to the fork.

How to do it:

The teacher assigns a different food to every child or to couple/group. Children have to describe and draw on their notebook all the steps involved in the food's production. When the chain will be completed, children show them to the rest of the classroom, while the teacher corrects mistakes and explain the process.

Here is an example:

Commercial name: Yogurt

Which is its raw material(s)? Milk

From which animal or plant do we get it? From the cow

Describe all the steps of this food's production.

Step 1: grass and forage are harvested.

Step 2: the cow eats grass and forage.

Step 3: the cow produces milk and farmers collect it.

Step 4: farmers send the milk to the yogurt industry.

Step 5: some bacteria are put into the milk, which ferments.

Step 6: when yogurt is ready, it is delivered to different markets and sold to the customers.

The ID card of food

This activity is recommended for 12-14 years old children.


Objective: To learn and understand the nutritional label of food.

How to do:

This game is useful to teach children how to get information about a food from its nutritional label. A label of a packaged food is assigned to each child.

Children have to answer on their workbooks to some questions about the food using the information on the label. They can also paste the label on the workbook or draw it.

Here you can find an example of the ID card that students could make on their notebook.

Food picture	
Trade name:	_____
How many times should you eat it in a week?	_____
Ingredients:	_____ _____ _____
Packaging materials:	_____
Can you recycle it?	_____
Where does it come from?	_____
Expiration date:	_____

FOR YOUR FAMILY: the *nutritional pyramid* is a simple way to remember how many times a day or a week we should eat the various food groups. The *environmental pyramid* associates our health to the planet's. Following the double-pyramid model, we can have a healthy diet also taking care of the environment. Think about it when you plan a family weekly menu, you can also use it at the supermarket!

Let's find out the characteristics of the double-pyramid using the games proposed.

DO IT WITH YOUR FAMILY!

The nutritional pyramid poster

Create a pyramid poster at home, so you will teach to your parents and brothers or sisters the correct frequency of consumption for every food!

The pyramid game

On a white paper, draw the pyramid and color the steps. Then take some magazines that you have at home (ask permission first) and cut out the images of foods. Otherwise, you can also draw them on papers. Now, face your parents or friends!! Distribute the food images among the participants. Everyone has 5 minutes to put the images of each food in the right place! You can also play in teams!

Recreate the life-cycle of a food you like!

Take some papers and start drawing in the first page the product you chose. Then make a list of all the steps of the life-cycle of that product. Make a painting for each step. Ask your parents to help you with the steps if you need. When you have all the steps, cut the sketches and organize them from the first to the last step. Hang the life-cycle on the fridge. You can do it for all the products you want! You will help your family to think about how those products impact on the planet.

Don't waste water

Water is essential for everyone, so it is important not to waste it!!! Draw some warning signs and put a water image into each of them: the sea, a fountain, a river... Then put those signs at home close to each tap, explaining to your family that it's important not to waste water and that it's necessary to turn off the water when we don't use it!!

My comments/What I think:

