

# Mystery Food Activity

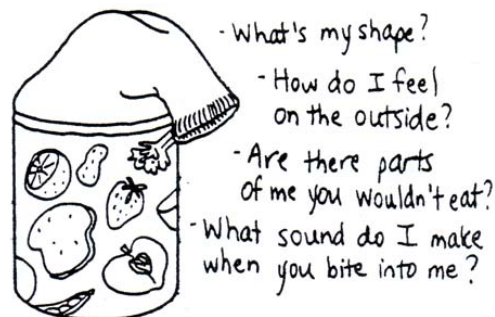
## (Preschool to Grade 8)

### Overview

Students will have the opportunity to explore food and identify its sensory properties through a classic, engaging activity. Foods common to BC are best suited for this activity.

Estimated time: ~30 minutes

Estimated food cost: \$10-15  
(depends on chosen ingredients)



### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson, the students will:

- Develop first-hand experiences with food
- Identify characteristics of food
- Describe the sensory qualities of food
- Demonstrate a willingness to taste new or commonly consumed food

### Materials

- Mystery Food Can (instructions follow)
- Mystery Food (enough for all your students to sample)

### To make the can

- Remove one end from a large, clean empty can
- Cut off the top portion of a sock
- Secure the sock along the edge of the can using masking tape
- Decorate the can with colourful pictures

### Procedures

1. Have students identify the mystery food
  - Place the mystery food in the can. Begin by using familiar foods and progress to less familiar ones. For older students, using familiar foods in less familiar forms (apple chips, fresh cranberries, freeze-dried cheese, etc) is one way to increase the level of mystery.
  - Explain to students that they will be identifying the food in the mystery can by sensory exploration: by touching it, smelling it and listening to the sound it makes by shaking the can. Tell them that they will have a chance to taste it after solving the mystery.
  - When working with **younger students (K-3)**, guide the exploration by

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having one student at a time put a hand into the mystery can. Ask the student a question about the size, shape, texture, sound, temperature, colour (inside and outside) etc. of the mystery food.

- When working with [older students \(Grade 4+\)](#), you can allow 4 or 5 students to touch the food, then ask the group a question, as suggested above. Allow multiple answers to that question from the group before moving on to another group with a new question.
- After everyone has had a turn, ask the students to identify the food. Remove it from the can for everyone to see.

### 2. Have students taste the mystery food

- Allow students the opportunity to taste the food. You may want to tie this in with a cooking activity. Note: It is important to be aware of any food allergies your students may have.

**Extension:** Continue the exploration of the mystery food using a story, poem or song about that food.

### More information for Teachers

To offset food costs, find out about [mini food grants](#).

Refer to [Kitchen Equipment for your Classroom](#) for more preparation and food safety tips.

### Curriculum links

This lesson supports the Big Ideas and Learning Standards in the Physical and Health Education [BC curriculum](#) and can also link to other subject areas.

### Background

The more often you expose children to a food, the more inclined they are to like it. Research also shows that social norms are a powerful influence on food choice. Youth who may be hesitant to try a food will often overcome the hesitancy in order to fit in. But don't pressure or reward your students for trying new foods. Research shows that children who are pressured or rewarded when trying a new food are less likely to go back to it than children who are simply exposed to it and allowed to decide on their own whether or not to eat it.

For more information, see [Positive Mealtimes](#) or [Nurturing Healthy Eaters in the Classroom](#)

### Want to do more nutrition education with your class?

Explore our other [lesson plans](#) or book a [free 1-hour workshop](#).