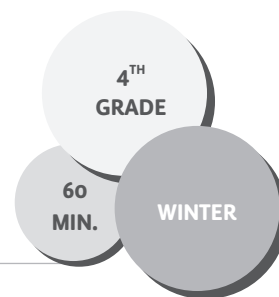


# Salad Dressing Challenge

**THEME:** PREPARING HEALTHY FOOD



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How can we balance flavors in a dish?*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to collaborate to prepare a salad dressing.
- ✓ Students will be able to develop their own salad dressing recipe.

## LESSON DESCRIPTION

After learning the basic formula for a dressing, students will collaborate in groups to develop a custom salad dressing, and they will vote on a class favorite.

## MATERIALS

- A collection of a few dressing ingredients from the chart below; limit to just a few items, such as olive oil, 3 kinds of vinegars, salt, honey, mustard, and 2 spices or herbs
- 5–6 bunches of greens (kale, lettuce, or whatever is available)

A set of the following for each group of 4–6 students:

- Zip lock bags for kale or large mixing bowls for lettuce
- Measuring spoons
- Small bowls
- Kitchen tongs
- 1 small jar with screw-top lid (½ pint)

For each student:

- Plate and fork
- Salad Dressing Recipe Cards (p. 452)

## PREPARATION

- › Set up a station of ingredients at the front of the room where students will shop. Ideally, you'll have several options from each column in the chart, so groups will have distinct dressings. Choose what makes sense based on your comfort level, what's in season, and what you already have on hand.
- › Prepare a large bowl or zip lock bag of greens for each group as well as a small bowl for tasting.
- › Pour ½ cup (8 Tbsp) of olive oil or other fat into a mason jar for each group.
- › Display a chart of the list of ingredients you have on hand (on chart paper or on the board)
- › Photocopy and cut blank Salad Dressing Recipe Cards for each student.
- › Display the following Dressing Formula:  
2 Fat + 1 Sour + Small Pinches of Flavorings = Dressing!

## POSSIBLE INGREDIENTS

FAT	SOUR	SALTY	SWEET
Olive oil	Lemon/lime	Kosher salt	Honey
Sesame oil	Orange	Sea salt	Raisins
Yogurt	Rice vinegar	Fish sauce	Other dried fruit
Avocado	Apple cider vinegar	Soy sauce	Apple slices or other fresh fruit
Tahini	Balsamic vinegar		Sugar
	Mustard		

## ACTION STEPS

**1. Engage:** Have ingredients on display, and ask students to share which ingredients they know and like. Lead a discussion about students' favorites. Have students figure out the four different categories of ingredients. Ask, *What do each of these groups of ingredients have in common?* Have students discuss and share ideas as a class. Explain that any good dressing or sauce has a balance of these things: richness, sourness, saltiness, and perhaps some sweetness. The key to making a good dressing is balancing these flavors based on what you like and tasting as you go. Direct students' attention to the Dressing Formula: 2 Fat + 1 Sour + Small Pinches of Flavorings = Dressing! Say, *If you had eight tablespoons of a fat, how many tablespoons of a sour ingredient should you add?* **(10 min.)**

**2. Explain the Activity:** Say, *In groups you'll be coming up with your own dressing recipe. You'll be given a fat to start with (eight tablespoons already in your mason jar); and then you'll have to come to a consensus about what your sour, salt, and sweet will be. Be open-minded and open to compromise. Once you've each created your own salad dressing, we'll have a chance to try each other's and vote on our favorite!* Remind students that a little goes a long way; and especially when it comes to adding salt or soy sauce, for example, they'll want to add in pinches or dashes at a time. Demonstrate and show what a pinch or a dash would be. Discuss ways of tweaking a dressing (e.g., ask, *If my dressing tastes too sour because I added too much vinegar, what can I add?*) Discuss adding more of the fat or sweet ingredients. **(5 min.)**

### 3. Wash Hands Break! (5 min.)

**4. Negotiating a Dressing Recipe:** Break students into groups of no more than five, and give them their group jar and a small bowl of leaves for tasting. You may want to assign a group leader who can give roles to each group member, such as recipe recorder, timekeeper, spokesperson, taste tester, etc. Have students negotiate and decide on their formula. Once each group has come to a consensus, have a group representative come to shop for ingredients with you at the ingredient station. **(10 min.)**

**5. Making Dressing:** Back at their tables, have groups add ingredients, shake their jars, and take a small leaf and dip it into the dressing. Remind them not to put a partially eaten leaf back into the jar. Ask how they can work together to improve the recipe. Say, *Talk with your group about what you can taste the most of and what you might need more of.* Give them time to adjust their recipes. **(5 min.)**

**6. Dressing Salad:** Once each group is satisfied with their dressing, pass out bowls of greens. If you're making a massaged kale salad, pass out zip lock bags of kale for students to pour dressing directly into and then massage the leaves through the bag. **(10 min.)**

**7. Tasting and Voting:** Have groups bring up bowls of tossed salad to the front of the room. Then have students use tongs to take just a taste of each salad on their plates, buffet-style. Alternatively, have one representative from each group circulate through the room and serve students a taste. Taste together and encourage students to use descriptive words to describe the flavors. You could also invite them to share

a “pro” (something they like about the dressing) and a “grow” (a suggestion for improvement). Students might enjoy having their classroom teacher or another staff member decide on the best dressing in addition to a class vote. **(10 min.)**

**8. Recipe:** Have each student write his or her ideal dressing recipe to take home. **(5 min.)**

## REFLECTION

Have students discuss the following questions in small groups, then share with the class: **(5 min.)**

- Which dressing was your favorite?
- What ingredients surprised you?
- How did tasting other groups’ dressings change your mind about your own dressing?
- How could you make this dressing at home?
- How did it feel to negotiate in your groups?
- How did your groups determine what would go in your dressing?
- How did your ability to collaborate affect the taste of your dressing?

## ADAPTATIONS

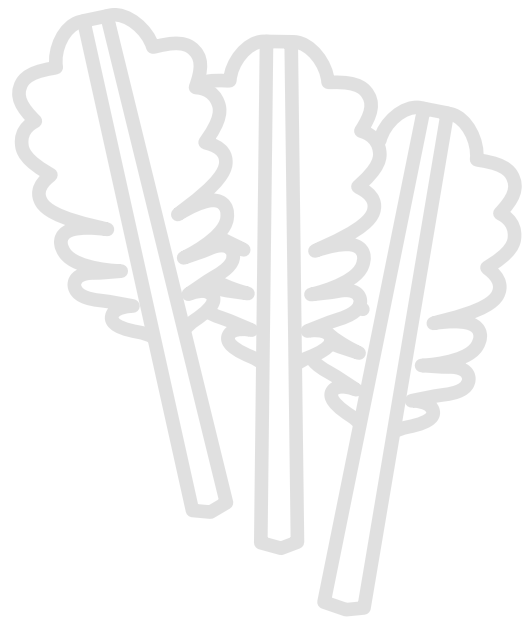
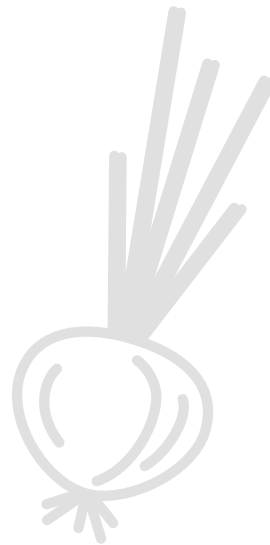
**Garden Setting:** Have students harvest their own greens and fresh herbs to add to their dressing.

## ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.



# Salad Dressing Recipe Cards

<b>FAT</b> _____	<b>SOUR</b> _____	<b>DIRECTIONS</b> _____
<b>SALTY</b> _____	<b>SWEET</b> _____	

<b>FAT</b> _____	<b>SOUR</b> _____	<b>DIRECTIONS</b> _____
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