

Categories Within Categories

TEACHER DEMO

RUN AT 11:30

20 MIN

The point

Groups hold groups: categories subdivide into subcategories and combine into bigger ones. A tree diagram grows live on the board while the kids direct it.

Materials

- Whiteboard (or big paper) + marker
- 6–8 food props from the pantry: apple, banana, carrot, potato, cereal box, milk, a can, bread
- Worksheet BACK (food-tree fill-in, done at 11:50)

Steps

- 1 Write **ALL FOOD** in a bubble at the top: “every one of these lives here — but the store doesn’t dump them in one pile, does it?”
- 2 Grow the first branches **as the kids direct**: fresh produce • cereals • milk things • cans. Draw each line slowly — the drawing IS the lesson.
- 3 Point at fresh produce: “one big happy pile? No — it **splits again**.” Grow **FRUITS** and **VEGETABLES** beneath it.
- 4 Name it: a **subcategory** — a group inside a group. Draw a tiny icon in each bubble for the pre-readers.
- 5 **The prediction game**: hold up each prop — “where will the apple land?” The prop only moves when the group points the same path.
- 6 Run it **upward** too: fruits + vegetables **COMBINE** into produce; produce + cereal + milk combine into... groceries.
- 7 Stop at two levels down — more becomes a thicket.

Say: “A category can live **INSIDE** a bigger category — fruits live inside produce, produce lives inside food. A group inside a group is called a subcategory.”



Fig. 1 — smaller food groups can live inside one larger food category

TEACHER PREP

Stage the food props (or picture cards) in a bag so each reveal is a fresh puzzle. Wipe the board.

What to watch for

- Kids pointing a prop’s whole path, branch by branch — every food has an address
- The word **subcategory** coming back unprompted at 11:50 on the worksheet

EXPECTED RESULT

Every prop lands by walking the branches; the tree runs both directions — **splitting down, combining up**.