

MACRO MAYHEM INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

WHAT THIS GAME IS

Macro Mayhem is a fast, cooperative card game where students build meals for different characters under time pressure.

Each character has:

- Target macronutrients: fiber, carbohydrates, protein, fats
- Allergies or dietary restrictions (for example: gluten-free, lactose intolerant, nut-free, vegetarian)

Students work in small groups to:

- Combine Food Cards to build a plate that meets macro targets
- Avoid foods that break the character's restrictions
- Use simple math to check their work
- Reflect on how we feed different bodies safely and fairly

WHAT STUDENTS LEARN

Health / Nutrition

- Building balanced plates using macros
- Understanding allergies, intolerance, and dietary restrictions
- Seeing how familiar foods differ in fiber, carbs, protein, and fats

Math

- Simple addition and estimation with real numbers
- Comparing totals to targets
- Checking group work under time pressure

SEL / Advisory / Social Studies

- Empathy for different dietary needs
- Communication, negotiation, and shared decision-making
- Reflecting on cost, access, and consequences of mistakes

Project-Based Learning

- Designing new characters with different needs
- Creating new foods or plate challenges
- Extending the game to topics like budgeting or cultural foods

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

For each group (3–6 students)

- 1 printed Macro Mayhem Rulebook
- 1 full set of Character Cards
- 1 full set of Food Cards, with each card printed 4×
(Because the food variety is limited in the current version, multiple copies keep the game flowing. Future versions can add more cards and expansion packs.)
- Any Superfood / Power Cards you choose to include
- Approximately 60 tokens (coins, cubes, chips, or cut-out circles)
- 1 paper plate in the center of the table (the shared plate)
- 1 timer (phone, stopwatch, or online timer)
- Scratch paper or a mini whiteboard and markers for macro calculations
- Optional: calculators if you want to de-emphasize manual arithmetic

For the instructor

- This Instructor Guide (printed or digital)
- A projector or board if you want to demonstrate one example plate with the whole class
- Extra tokens and spare printed cards

ROLES IN THE CLASSROOM VERSION

Shopkeeper (student facilitator)

- Reads Character Cards aloud
- Manages the Food Deck and tokens
- Starts and stops the timer
- Keeps the group's score
- Leads quick reflection questions
- Does not play Food Cards in the classroom version (they are not a Plate Player)

Plate Players (2–5 students)

- Hold Food and Superfood Cards
- Work together to build the plate on the paper plate
- Do macro math using paper or whiteboard
- Discuss restrictions, trade-offs, and strategy

After each round, rotate the Shopkeeper role so multiple students practice facilitating and asking questions.

SETUP STEPS (TEACHER CHECKLIST)

Form groups

- Arrange students into groups of 3–6, ideally 4–5.

Distribute materials

- To each group, give:
 - 1 rulebook
 - 1 Character deck
 - 1 Food deck (each card printed 4×)
 - Any Superfoods (if used)
 - About 60 tokens
 - 1 paper plate
 - Timer access
 - Paper/whiteboard and markers

Explain the core idea (about 2–3 minutes)

You can say something like:

“You are building plates for different people. Each person has macro needs and restrictions.

Your job is to meet the macros, respect their allergies, and do it under time pressure—working together.”

Model one example (optional but helpful)

- Show one Character Card to the whole class.
- Show a few Food Cards.
- Add up macros together and decide if the meal works.
- This lowers the learning curve before students play on their own.

RUNNING A SESSION

A typical session is 2–4 rounds, each 5 minutes long.

Assign roles

- Each group chooses 1 Shopkeeper.
- All other students are Plate Players.

Group setup

- Shopkeeper shuffles the Character and Food decks.
- Plate Players receive starting hands using the Starting Hand Table in the rulebook.
- Place the paper plate in the center (shared plate).
- Place the tokens in a small pile near the Shopkeeper.

Play a 5-minute round

Reveal character

- Shopkeeper flips the top Character Card and reads out macro targets and restrictions.

Start timer

- Set a 5-minute timer and begin the round.
- Students can talk, plan, and play at any time—there are no turns.

Build the plate

- Plate Players play Food Cards onto the paper plate.
- They aim to:
 - Meet or slightly exceed each macro target
 - Avoid foods that break the character's restrictions
- Macro math is done on scratch paper or whiteboard.

Check the plate

- When the group thinks the plate is ready, they:
 - Add up total fiber, carbs, protein, and fats
 - Check for forbidden allergy icons or restrictions
- The Shopkeeper confirms the result.

Score the plate

- If all requirements are met:
 - Move the Character Card and Food Cards to a Completed Plates area
 - Award the team 6 tokens
- Optional: use the Token Shop rules between plates, if you choose to play with that system.
- Reveal the next Character and keep going until the timer ends.

Quick between-plate reflection (about 30 seconds)

After each completed plate, the Shopkeeper asks one short question, for example:

- "Which plate looked the most tasty or realistic?"
- "Which plate felt the hardest to build?"
- "Did we almost serve something they couldn't eat?"

Then the group moves on to the next character.

End-of-round debrief (about 3–5 minutes)

At the end of 5 minutes:

Count tokens

- Total tokens = the group's score for the round.

Discuss (choose 2–3 questions)

- Balance: Were the meals balanced, odd, or surprisingly tasty? Why?
- Cost: Would these plates be expensive or affordable in real life?
(Optional: have students compare with a consumer price or grocery website.)
- Allergies: Did the group ever use a food that someone couldn't eat? What might happen in real life?
- Food insights: Did anyone learn something new about foods they already eat (protein, carbs, fats, or fiber content)?

Rotate roles

- Choose a new Shopkeeper in each group for the next round.
- Repeat another 5-minute round if time allows.

EXTENSION IDEAS (OPTIONAL)

If you have more time or a follow-up day, you can:

- Ask students to design new Character Cards (for example: athletes, elders, kids, people with specific conditions).
- Have students propose new Food Cards, especially from their own cultures or households.
- Add a budget variant, where each food has a cost, and students must balance price and nutrition.
- Compare game plates to official recommendations (for example, MyPlate) or to real grocery circulars.

For now, Macro Mayhem is intentionally simple:
print, cut, deal, and start building plates.

AI ASSISTANCE DISCLAIMER

This Instructor Guide was drafted with the help of an AI language model (ChatGPT) and then reviewed and adapted by the game's creators for accuracy, clarity, and classroom use