

Label Language

Wyoming Social Studies, Health

Objectives:

- Students will discuss the importance of a label to a consumer when making food choices.
- Students will gain an understanding of the economics involved in buying and selling a product.
- Students will observe the role of the consumer.

Background:

Food labels tell us exactly what is in the food we eat. Some people need to know this because they have health problems and have to avoid some foods. Some people won't eat certain foods for religious reasons. Most people who read labels just want to know what's in their food so they can avoid foods that are bad for them and get plenty of the foods that are good for them.

Until recently, most food manufacturers were required to do no more than provide a list of all the ingredients that went into their products. Some didn't even have to do that. The makers of standard foods like macaroni, ketchup, and jelly weren't required to list all their ingredients as long as they followed a certain recipe. Jelly makers didn't have to say what went into their jelly; as long as they made sure they used at least 45 percent fruit. If they used any less, they couldn't call it jelly. Most people knew that jelly was about half fruit and half sugar because not too long ago many people made their own jelly.

Even though the recipes for standard foods haven't changed much, people these days aren't so familiar with what goes into them, so they want the ingredients listed on the package. A new law passed in 1993 says even manufacturers of standard foods have to list all the ingredients.

The first ingredient on the list is the main ingredient. On a jar of jelly, the first ingredient listed may be fructose or sucrose. Those are two kinds of sugar. If they are first on the list, you know there is more sugar in the jelly than anything else.

Another new law says food manufacturers have to show how much of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's recommended daily allowances (RDA) are in one serving of the food.



Standards

Social Studies

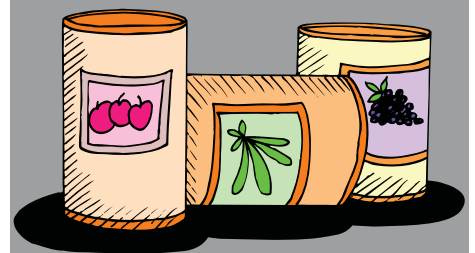
People, Places
& Environments: 5.4

Health

Health Promotion
& Disease Prevention: 1.5
Accessing Health Information,
Products, & Services: 2.1
Influence of Culture, Media,
& Technology: 4.1

Materials

- Assortment of print advertisements and taped commercials
- Variety of food products with labels (look for raw and processed products)



Estimated Time

60 Minutes

Grades 3-4

Materials Adapted from Oklahoma Agriculture in the Classroom

vocabulary:

- *product*
- *ingredients*
- *manufacturer*
- *daily allowance*
- *economics*
- *imports*
- *exports*

Activity Procedures:

1. Bring in an assortment of print advertisements or taped commercials. Discuss the many reasons students would or would not be interested in the products they see advertised. Discuss the eye-catching colors, special offers, the models or actors used, etc. Ask students if they are swayed to buy the product more by packaging or by what their families or peers like.
2. Share the background information with students.
3. Bring a variety of products into the classroom and hand out student survey worksheets for students to complete using labels from the products.
4. Ask the students what could be done to the product to make it more appealing to consumers. (higher quality ingredients, better packaging, better marketing, lower price, easier to recycle)

Questions for Investigation:

- Ask the students: Have you ever seen an advertisement for your product?
- Is your product processed or raw? (you may need to offer a brief vocabulary description of processed and raw)
- Why do you think it is rare to see an advertisement for a raw food product?
- Who determines what items will be sold in the grocery store, a farmer/grower or the consumer? (the consumer). Why is this? (because a farmer/grower cannot afford to produce foods that no one will buy they only grow what the consumers want).
- What is the most important factor when making food choices for most Americans? (price?).
- Do other countries have as many food choices as Americans? (probably not). Why would Japanese citizens have different food choices? (Japan is an island that imports approximately 60% (2007) of their food from other countries. The rest must be shipped in from somewhere else. Some foods do not ship well and would not be available for people in Japan.)



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Fill out the survey form using the information from the package of your choice.

1. What is the name of your product? _____

2. Where is it made? _____

3. What is the name of the company that makes this product? _____

4. How many servings are in a container? _____

5. How much did the product cost? _____

6. Would you buy this product? (circle one) Yes No
Why or why not? _____

7. Is the packaging of the product appealing to you? (circle one) Yes No
Why or why not? _____

8. Divide the serving sizes by the total price of the product. How much does one serving cost? _____

9. Are there any vitamins or minerals listed on the package as providing 100% of the USDA daily requirements? What are they? _____

10. Are there any vitamins or minerals listed on the product as contributing 0%? What are they? _____

11. Would you purchase this product? (circle one) Yes No
Why or why not? _____

