



Don't Pay a Packet!

Lesson aims

Are you an environmentally responsible shopper? When you buy something, what happens to the packaging? How much packaging is there? Is it made from recycled materials or can it be recycled?

Students will study the packaging on everyday items and gain an understanding of the various types of packaging that exist. Students will learn about the effect packaging has on the environment. They will look at ways packaging can be refused, reduced, reused and recycled. Students will create their own packaging for an everyday item, which is 100% environmentally friendly.

Learning outcomes

As outlined in the National Profiles:

Studies of Society and Environment	Resources	Use of resources; Management and enterprise
	Natural and Social Systems	Natural systems; Economic systems
Technology	Designing, Making and Appraising	Investigating; Devising; Producing; Evaluating Materials Nature; Techniques
The Arts	Creating, Making and Presenting	Exploring and developing ideas; Using skills, techniques and processes Presenting

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Background information

Packaging is the name given to the containers in which products are bought, sold and transported. It is an important part of everything we buy.

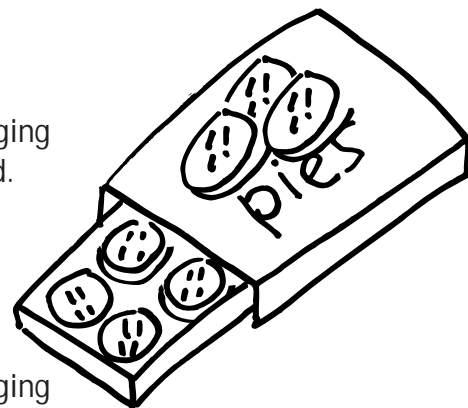
Most foods and drinks come in some type of packaging. Packaging is made from a variety of different materials, including paper, cardboard, glass, steel, plastics and aluminium.

There are four main reasons for packaging:

- To preserve food.
- To contain objects so that they can be transported safely.
- To describe and identify the contents, so that customers can find out the contents, weight and purpose of a product.
- To protect the contents so that goods arrive without damage or spoilage.

We can easily reduce the amount of packaging we throw away by shopping selectively as well as reusing and recycling. We need to try to reduce the amount of packaging we throw away by:

- Refusing products that have excessive packaging. This way, we don't use more packaging than necessary. Some foods have their own packaging and do not require any additional packaging. Examples include bananas, oranges and coconuts that are packaged in their own skin or shell.
- Looking for packaging that is made from recycled materials. This way, you know that the packaging was made using the least amount of natural resources and energy possible.



- Looking for packaging that can be reused. This way, we can extend the life of the packaging material.
- Looking for packaging that can be recycled. This way, you can continue the recycling loop.



Sources & further information

Amcor: Kid's Corner provides fun activities for kids of all ages (Go to Environment & Community / Education section of the website)
www.amcor.com.au

EcoRecycle Victoria: The Eco Classroom is full of learning materials and ideas for students to take action.
www.ecorecycle.vic.gov.au

Ollie Saves the Planet: This web site is full of games, puzzles and loads of information and projects.
www.ollierecycles.com/planet/aus/index.htm

Packaging Council of Australia: Provides information on packaging news and issues.
www.packcoun.com.au

Resource NSW: Provides a useful recycling guide and features an extensive online library.
www.resource.nsw.gov.au

Visy Recycling: Information on recycling processes.
www.visyrecycling.com.au

Classroom activities

1. Discussion

- Using the Background Information lead a classroom discussion on the main reasons for packaging.

2. Field Trip

- Organise a field trip to the local supermarket or bring in a range of products that can be passed around the classroom so that students can look and compare a range of products and their packaging. Students can use the *Worksheet: Types of packaging* to record their findings.

3. Lunch Packaging

- Have the students collect one type of food or beverage packaging from their lunch. Ensure that the packaging is clean.
- Put all the packaging into a garbage bag (or two) and weigh it.
- Have the students divide the packaging up into groups: metals, plastic, paper and weigh each category.
- Students can use the *Worksheet: Packaging materials* to record results.
- Ask students to answer the following questions through discussion or written format:

What is the largest group of materials the class threw away?

Are there items that use excessive packaging?

Are some products packaged in a variety of materials?

Which items appeared to be packaged more effectively/efficiently?

Which packages are identified as recyclable?

Which packages are made from recycled materials?

Are any of the packages that do not display a recycling symbol recyclable?



4. Identify Reduction Methods

- Ask the class to identify methods of reducing waste from product packaging. For example buying products with less packaging, buying products in bulk quantities, buying products in refillable containers, buying packaging made from recyclable materials, etc.

5. Packaging Design

- Have the students prepare an environmentally friendly packaging design for a food or beverage product e.g. a can or brown paper bag using the following points as a guide:

What size?

How are the product's benefits shown?

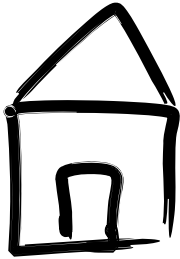
Is the packaging size appropriate for the contents?

What is the brand name of the product? Will it appeal to the target market? Is the typeface appropriate?

What colours and graphics will appear on the can and why?

What is the company logo?

What additional information do they wish/need to supply: ingredients, serving suggestions, company contact details, recycling information?



Extension / Home-based activities

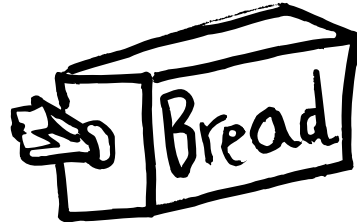
Lower Primary

How does it weigh up?

Packaging is becoming lighter and lighter as people develop new ways to make stronger containers with less material. Collect some different packages and weigh them on a set of kitchen scales. Why do some types of packaging have to be heavier than others?

Picture a Packet

Go through magazines (food and cooking ones are the best) and cut out pictures of products and their packaging. Develop a collage of the pictures.



Middle and Upper Primary

Home Packaging

Look around your kitchen to find some packaged products. What types of packaging are used most? Why do you think so many different kinds of packaging are used?

History of Packaging

Investigate the history of packaging and shopping practices. How is it different from how we package food today?

What's in a symbol?

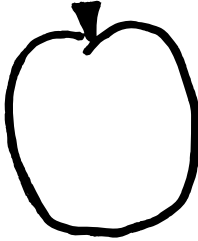
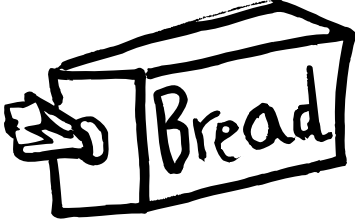

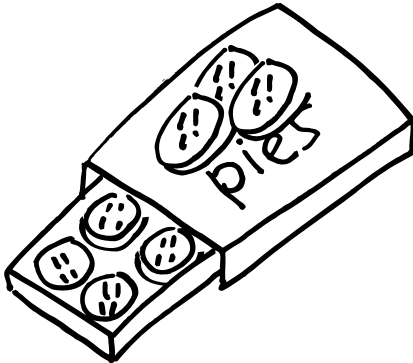
Look at the different types of recycling symbols used on packaging. What type of message are they sending to the consumer? Students can design their own logos.

Lunch Bag

Discuss alternatives to lunch packaging. Develop some packaging tips for reducing the amount of packaging you use on your lunch and include them in a school newsletter or flyer for parents.

Worksheet: Types of packaging

Visit the local supermarket or have a look at home and find at least five food or beverage items that fit into the boxes below. An example has been provided.

<p>No Wrappings</p> 	<p>One Wrapping</p> 
<p>Two Wrappings</p> 	<p>Three or More Wrappings</p> 

Worksheet: Packaging materials

Instructions

In the table below, write down the number of items the class collected and if they could be reused, recycled or thrown away.

What	Threw Away	Reused	Recycled	Composted
Plastic				
Glass				
Metal				
Paper				
Wood				
Food				
Other				
Total				