

Comparing Food Labels: Battle of the Labels

Lesson Description

In this lesson, students compare the nutritional values of the foods they eat by reading and interpreting Nutrition Facts food labels.

- Time required: 60 minutes
- Location of lesson: Classroom

Learning Objectives

- Learn to read and accurately interpret a Nutrition Facts food label on food packages.
- Describe which nutrients should be high and which should be low on a healthy Nutrition Facts food label using the 5-10-20% rule.
- Compare various nutrients on Nutrition Facts food labels of 2 different foods.

Attitude and Behavior Goals

- Choose to eat healthy packaged foods by reading and comparing food labels.

Teacher Background Information

- Students are already familiar with the key 6 nutrients and able to find them listed on a Nutrition Facts food label. Now they are ready to begin interpreting the information on food packages. By teaching students how to read a food label and compare the nutrient content of 2 different foods, we are empowering them with the practical skill to recognize and choose healthy packaged foods.

Materials and Preparation

- Pens
- Paper
- Optional, 1 loaf of 100% whole wheat bread in original store package
-  **Reading Nutrition Labels - 100% Whole Wheat Bread**
-  **Milk Label Challenge**
-  **Facts Up Front**
-  **Battle of the Labels**
-  **Food Labels for “Battle of the Labels”**
 1. Food labels are organized by food category and designated a different color for each category.
 2. Each food category should be printed out or photocopied onto its designated color of paper (e.g., cereals on yellow paper, chips on blue paper).

- Prepared vegetable snack of the week – 1 for each student
- Water to drink during the Class Warm-up – water dispenser in the classroom and 1 cup or a water bottle for each student

Class Warm-up: Champion Cheer and Veggie Taste Test (5-10 minutes)

- Give each student a cup of water or ensure that they have a filled water bottle in front of them.
- Give each student the prepared veggie snack of the day.
- Lead the students in enthusiastically reciting the  **Champion Cheer**.
- At the end of the cheer, drink water and eat the veggie snack together.
- Have students complete their  **Taste Test Observations** about the vegetable snack of the week.

Review of Last Lesson (2-3 minutes)

- Review the evaluation questions from last week's lesson. Evaluation questions from all lessons are listed at the end of the workbook .

Class Discussion (15 minutes)

- Warm up questions:
 - *Does anyone remember where we can find out what kinds and how much of nutrients are in the foods we eat?* (Answer: Nutrition Facts food labels)
 - *Does anyone know where to find this food label on a package?*
 - *Who can tell my why they think it is important for foods to have labels?*

The Nutrition Facts food label is the tool that helps us find out what kinds and how much of each nutrient are in the foods we eat. It is important to know about nutrients in our food so that we can choose healthy foods to grow and look and feel our best.

Refer students to the  **Reading Nutrition Labels - 100% Whole Wheat Bread** workbook page and review the dialogue boxes that explain the food label. As an option, use a package of 100% whole wheat bread as a visual. Take out one slice of bread to show the serving size. *If we eat a sandwich with 2 slices of bread, what would we need to do with the information on the Nutrition Facts food label?*

The % Daily Value column is also important. The 5-10-20% rule helps you figure out if the food is high, medium or low in each nutrient. 5%= low, 10%=medium, 20%=high. For example, if total fat on a food label says 3%, that is less than 5% and is a low source of fat. We want to look for foods that are low in fat and sugar, and high in protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals.

Today, we will do some activities and play some games that give us lots of practice on becoming Nutrition Facts food label superheroes.

Activities (35-40 minutes)

-  **“Milk Label Challenge” (10 minutes):** Students practice comparing milk labels together as a class. Optionally, choose to compare yogurt labels and have a blind taste test.
 1. Refer students to the  **Milk Label Challenge** workbook page. Compare serving size, total fat, protein and calcium across the 3 varieties of milk.
 - a. *Which is the nutrient that changes the most in the different types of milk? (Answer: fat) Is the calcium the same? (Answer: yes)*
 - b. *Drinking nonfat or low fat milk (1% or 2%) gives us the same amount of nutrients that help us grow (protein and calcium) with less fat.*

-   **“High and Low” (10 minutes):** Choose either activity 1 or 2. Students design a “front pack” nutrition label to advertise a food product or they choose to play a guessing game to determine what food they are by asking high and low questions.
 1. Design a Front Pack Label
 - a. Divide students into groups of 2 or 3. Hand each group a Nutrition Facts food label (the same ones used for the “Battle of the Labels” activity). Refer students to workbook page  **Facts Up Front**.
 - b. Using the 5-10-20% rule, students will determine if the food they are holding is a high source of any nutrients (20% or more of a nutrient) or low source of any nutrients (5% or less of a nutrient.) Record the high and low nutrients on the workbook page  **Facts Up Front**.
 - i. They will decide what marketing claim they would put on the front of this package to sell it. For example, blueberries could be “high in vitamin C” or “low in fat”. Record the marketing claim on the workbook page.
 - ii. Ask each group to tell the class which Front Pack label they chose to use and why.
 - c. Guessing Game
 - i. Without students seeing what is on their label, hand out a Nutrition Facts food label (labels for chips or cereals if using the teacher resource provided) to each student. Students put the label on their forehead –facing outward - so that others can see the highlighted nutrient but the student does not know what food they are representing.
 - ii. Students walk around the room and ask each other “Yes/No” questions to guess which food is on their label based on the answers to their questions.
 1. Example: “Am I high in calcium?” “Am I low in fat?” “Am I high in fiber?” “Am I high in fat?”
 2. Students might be able to guess if they are a chip or a cereal by the answers to the questions.

-  **“Battle of the Labels” (15-20 minutes):** Students play a comparison game to determine which foods are the healthiest by reading and interpreting Nutrition Facts food labels.
 1. Hand each student 2 Nutrition Facts food labels from the same food category.
 2. Refer students to the  **Battle of the Labels** workbook pages. For Round 1, students will write the name of the 2 foods they were handed and give a check to the correct food for each of the 7 questions on the workbook page. The food with the most checks is the winner (the healthier food).
 3. For Round 2, students take their winning food label from Round 1 and compare it to the winning food of another student with a food from the same category. The student with the less healthy food remains seated for the rest of the game.
 4. For Rounds 3 and 4, the winning student from each round continues to compare their food to the winning food of another student with a food in the same category.
 5. The game is over when there is only 1 food label left in each category.
 6. Ask some follow up questions:
 - a. *Which foods won and are the healthiest food options?*
 - b. *Are you surprised by any of the outcomes?*
 - c. *How often do you eat these winning foods?*
 - d. *How close were some of the games?*
 - e. *If these foods won the game, should we just eat them all the time?*
(Answer: no, we need other nutrients that are not in these foods)
 - f. *What makes a food nutritious?*
 - g. *Now that you have compared all of these foods, can you see how you can use the Nutrition Facts food label to help you figure out which food might be a healthier snack?* (Answer: by comparing labels, you can find healthier alternatives to eat)

Evaluation Questions (5 minutes)

1. *What are the main differences between whole, reduced fat, and nonfat milk?* (Answers: number of fat grams, % daily fat, and calories)
2. *True or False: whole milk (or regular yogurt) has more calcium than lowfat or nonfat milk (or low-fat yogurt).* (Answer: false - all milk and yogurt has the same amount of calcium)
3. *What are 3 things that a food label tells you?* (Answers: serving size, calories, fat, fiber, protein, etc.)
4. *If a food has 25% of your daily value for Vitamin A, is that a low, medium or high source of vitamin A?* (Answer: high)
5. *How can comparing food labels help you choose a healthy snack?* (Answer: helps you to see which nutrients and how much of each are in the food)
6. *How much water should you drink every day?* (Answer: at least 6 cups of water a day)

7. *How many fruits and vegetables should you eat every day?* (Answer: at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day)
8. *Does gardening connect you to your culture and help you learn new words in your language?* (Answer: yes)

Preparation for Future Lessons – Reminder for the Instructor

- Review the materials and preparation needed for the next lesson.
- Remember that an Elder guest instructor is needed for these Fall lessons: Lesson 2 (The Plant Life Cycle), Lesson 4 (Seed Saving), Lesson 6 (Drying Foods the Traditional Way) and Lesson 10 (Companion Planting and Traditional Cooking).

Notes
