

## FOOD LABELLING - A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

The following information **only** applies to pre-packed foods sold in shops. It does **not** apply to food made on the premises where it is sold.

The notes in red are suggestions for further work over and above the basic food labelling information.

### WHAT THE LABEL MUST HAVE:

#### 1. FOOD NAME -

Some foods have two different names

Every food must have a **true name**

That is a name that really describes it:

Still orange juice

Crisp biscuits

Apple, Kiwi and Lime Smoothie made with a blend of crushed fruits, and fruit juices from concentrate

This may not be the most obvious name on the pack: it may be hidden away on the back of the pack.

Look at the labels and try to identify the true name

Some foods have an extra exciting name to make us think that food is special and make us want to buy that food. It may include cartoon characters or other names that you know.

This is called the brand name - this is the name the person who made it has given it but it doesn't usually tell you what the food is E.g. Mars, Zing!, Yum! PJs, Capri Sun etc

What other brand names can the children think of?

Look at the labels on the table or in their lunch boxes if they need some help.

## 2. INGREDIENTS LIST -

This is a list of all the things that have been used to make up the food.

The list must start with the biggest ingredient first, down to the smallest.

Some ingredients will have a percentage (%) next to them. This is known as QUID - Quantitative Ingredient Declaration. A QUID is only needed for any ingredient that appears in the true name of the food eg orange in an orange juice drink.

Some ingredients you will recognise as foods you eat like water, sugar and oats and some will be chemicals to make the product last longer, or look nicer (these are known as additives or E numbers).

Ingredients: water, fruit juices from concentrate 12%  
(orange 7%, lemon, cherry), sugar, natural flavours.

So the biggest ingredient in this juice drink is water not orange as may appear from the Capri Sun juice drink label.

Ask the children to look at some of the labels and find the ingredients list.

What is the biggest ingredient?

Are they surprised by what is the biggest ingredient?

Talk about simple additives -

Eg preservatives to make the food last longer

Colour to make it look nicer

Flavour to make it taste nicer

## 3. DATE-

This tells you when the food has to be eaten by.

It will either be

A USE BY date, or

A BEST BEFORE date.

Sometimes the date will be next to the words Best Before and sometimes the label may tell you where to find the date.

Eg Rich Tea biscuits label shows straight forward Best Before date

Strawberry yoghurt pot says 'for use by see lid'.

Use by is used on foods where there is a danger of food poisoning if they are used after the specified date. Foods should not be eaten after a Use By date

Best before is used on dry goods where they will not cause harm to eat after the date although they may be stale

Look at a range of foods and find the best before or use by dates

Discuss the different formats of date eg 01.10.09, 01 nov 09 etc

Discuss why the foods have a use by or best before date

Discuss the signs of food spoilage eg mould, hardness, sourness, rancidity etc

#### **4. HOW THE PRODUCT MUST BE STORED -**

If the food needs special storage conditions other than just on a shelf in a cupboard it must tell you this.

So if it needs to be kept frozen, or kept in a fridge it should say somewhere on the label.

Why is this important?

Which foods should be kept in the fridge?

Why does the biscuit packet say 'store in a cool dry place'?

#### **5. NAME AND ADDRESS -**

Every food must have a name and address on it so you can contact someone if there is a problem with the food.

The name and address can be either

the name of the person who made the food, or  
the person selling the food.

The name and address of the seller usually appears on supermarket own brand foods

Eg Co-op spaghetti rings

The name and address of the manufacturer normally appears on other foods.

#### **6. WEIGHT OR VOLUME -**

All SOLID foods (like bread, pasta, ready meals, crisps etc) must be marked with a weight in kilograms or grams

All LIQUID foods (like orange juice, soup etc) must be marked with a volume in litres or millilitres.

Why?

Weights and volumes are useful to compare products on size and price.

Different shaped packs may give the impression of different sizes.

Eg an orange bottle and a carton drink with the same volume

Different brands may be different prices for the same volume or weight.  
Eg own brand products and branded goods

## **WHAT ELSE THE LABEL MIGHT HAVE**

The information shown below is, in general, not required by law but will often be seen on food labels

### **COOKING INSTRUCTIONS**

If the food needs to be cooked before eating the label must tell you how to do this to make sure it is cooked properly and is safe to eat.

Discuss cooking methods- roasting, frying, boiling, microwave etc

### **NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION**

This will give you information about how many calories, carbohydrate, fat and protein the food contains.

Why might this be important?

Obesity

5 a day

Healthy eating etc etc

### **ALLERGEN INFORMATION -**

This tells you if the food contains any ingredients that might make you ill if you suffer an allergic reaction.

Ingredients that can cause a reaction in some people are peanuts, milk or wheat.

Why might this be important?

Do the children know anybody with a food allergy?

### **SIGNS AND SYMBOLS -**

The label or packaging might have a number of signs and symbols.

e.g. The recycling symbol (three arrows in the shape of a triangle).

Why is this important?

What sorts of packaging can and cannot be recycled?

Look at the packs used as examples - which are easily recycled?

Whether the food has been produced in a special way eg organically.

Whether the food is suitable for vegetarians

Discuss different diets - maybe for different faith groups etc

### **PICTURES -**

Most foods have pictures on their labels.

Why?

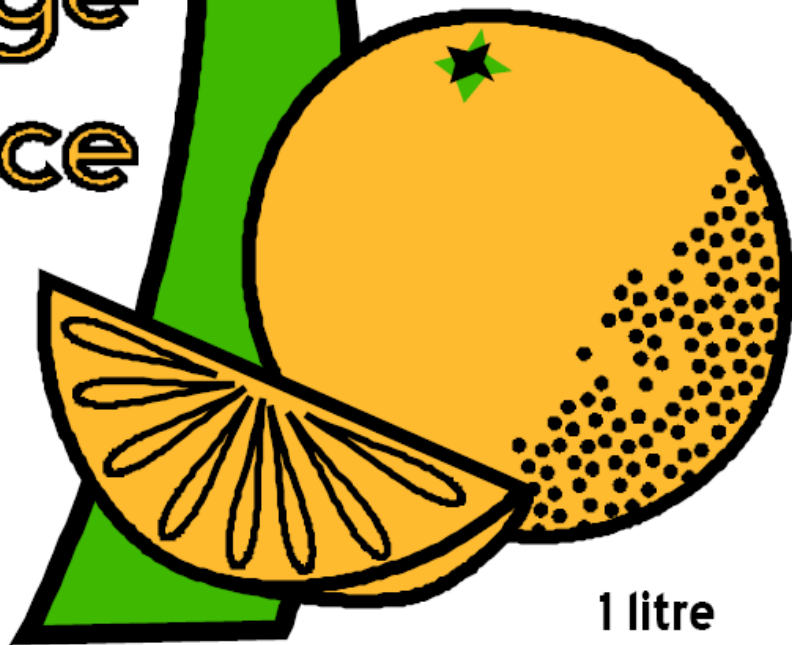
Sometimes it is a picture of what the food is made of, like the spaghetti hoops tin

Or what the product looks like when served on a plate.

It might be a picture of the main ingredient, like the Capri Sun packs and yogurts  
Or just have an eye catching design to get the buyers attention, like the PJ Smoothies pack.

# ZING!

## Orange Juice



Use by:  
16th March 08

1 litre

Ingredients: 100% Orange Juice

Keep in fridge after opening



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Imported by: Zing! Limited, Worcester, WR5 3NP