

A CAREFUL CONSUMER'S TRIP TO THE GROCERY STORE

RATIONALE:	Careful buying is the first solution to the problem of too much solid waste. An individual's careful buying decisions can significantly reduce the volume of household waste.
SUBJECTS:	Home Economics, Civics, Math
GRADES:	6-12
LEARNING OUTCOME:	<p>Students will understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How recycled materials are used in packaging. 2. Which natural resources are used in packaging and how these resources can be conserved through careful buying and recycling. 3. That, because approximately 40% of household waste consists of packaging, responsible buying choices can reduce Alabama's waste stream.
TEACHER BACKGROUND:	<p>Take a look at the following USDA website: https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=58354</p> <p>Notice the amount of money spent per dollar on processing, packaging, advertising, etc. Think about the difference in prices if we grow and process our own food or buy local at Farmer's Markets, etc... Also, where is the packaging for most of our food going to end up?</p>
MATERIALS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey 1----Product and Packaging Chart 2. Survey 2-----"A Potato By Any Other Name"
LEARNING PROCEDURE:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain to students that for homework, they will conduct a survey of some grocery store products and packaging. 2. Review definitions of survey terms: ORGANIC – Derived from living Organisms RENEWABLE RESOURCES – Naturally occurring raw materials derived from an endless or cyclical source such as the sun, wind, falling water (hydroelectricity), fish and trees. With careful management, the consumption of these resources can be approximately equal to replacement by natural or human-assisted systems. NONRENEWABLE RESOURCES – Naturally occurring raw materials, which because of their scarcity, the great length of time required for their formation, or their rapid depletion are considered exhaustible. In other words, when they are gone, they are gone. Example: petroleum 3. Review how to identify packaging made from recycled materials – look for the recycling symbol. The grey paper-board used for cereal boxes is made from recycled paper. 4. Review survey forms and distribute surveys. 5. Give assignments: Survey 1: Product and Packaging Chart <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Choose ten products and complete the Survey 1 chart for each. B. Choose at least two products available in a choice of packaging. C. By examining the products you chose, answer the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Which products need special packaging to protect public health? b. Which product's packaging was made from recycled materials? (Look for recycling symbol).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Which products could be bought in bulk or large containers? d. Which products could be bought in a less processed or packaged form? e. Which product’s packaging could be improved to save energy and resources and reduce waste? <p>Survey 2: Product and Packaging Chart</p> <p>Find as many potato products as you can, at least 12. Use the chart “A Potato by Any Other Name” as a guide. Fill in the chart on Survey 2.</p> <p>NOTE: Price per pound listing can be found on shelf labels beneath products. Analyze and discuss your findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. What effect does processing and packaging have on a product’s cost? B. What effect does package size have on the amount of waste? C. What else is added to food as it becomes more highly processed? D. List examples of recyclable packaging. E. List examples of products for which recyclable packaging is not even a choice. F. List examples of packaging made from recycled materials G. List ways people can reduce waste and increase recycling through careful buying.
EXTENDED LEARNING:	Visit a food co-op (or Farmer’s Market) and see their solution to the problem of too much packaging.
PRE & POST QUESTIONS:	<p>Approximately what percentage of the cost of packaged foods you buy goes for packaging?</p> <p>How can you reduce the amount of packaging you throw away?</p>
SOURCES:	<p>USDA.gov</p> <p>EPA.gov</p>

Survey 1. Product and Packaging Chart

Will this product's packaging become a part of Alabama's waste stream?					
What happens to this product's package when the contents are used?					
How could the packaging be improved to save resources and energy?					
Is there an alternative to this product?					
If so, which is best in terms of recycling?					
Is this product available in more than one form of packaging?					
Is this product necessary?					
Nonrenewable Resource (e.g. petroleum)					
Renewable Recyclable (e.g. paper)					
Product					

