

# Going Grocery Shopping

## Overview

Students need to combine knowledge of a healthy diet and budgeting skills as they shop for food. In these activities, students will learn how to make wise food and monetary choices at a grocery store.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

In this lesson, students will learn about making informed shopping decisions.

### SKILLS

- Distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy food choices
- Identifying food nutritional categories
- Locating items in a grocery store
- Understanding packaging and nutrition labels
- Using coupons and fliers
- Using unit price labels to comparison shop
- Computing the cost of food by weight

### ALIGNMENT WITH TRANSITION SKILLS INVENTORY

- **Primary:** I-1, pages 252–253; I-2, pages 255–256; I-3, pages 258–259; I-4, pages 261–262; I-6, pages 267–268; I-10, pages 278–279; I-11, page 281; and P-8, pages 491–492 in the *Transition Skills Inventory*.
- **Secondary:** B-2, pages 44–48; D-17, pages 115–117; D-18, page 118; H-4, pages 242–244; L-4, pages 319–321; and L-6, pages 325–330 in the *Transition Skills Inventory*.

### CONNECTIONS TO OTHER LESSONS

- “Using Coupons and Fliers” see *Managing a Budget*.
- “Reading Unit Price Labels” see *Determining How Much Items Cost*.

## Vocabulary

- Calorie
- Coupon
- Dairy
- Deli
- Diet
- Fat
- Fiber
- Fruit
- Grain
- Groceries
- Healthy
- Nutrient
- Nutrition
- Price
- Produce
- Protein
- Serving
- Sodium
- Sugar
- Unhealthy
- Unit price
- Vegetable

## Class Discussion Questions

- What are groceries?
- Where do you and your family shop for food?
- How do you decide what to buy?
- What are some examples of healthy foods? Unhealthy foods?
- What are some ways to save money at a grocery store?



# Activities

## Activity 1: Making Healthy Food Choices

### Objectives

- Understand terms used on nutrition labels
- Compare food choices for healthier items

### Materials

- Photos of a variety of foods—include magazine and flier cutouts, printouts of online images, nutritious examples as well as those with “empty calories” (candy bars, chips, soda pop)

1. Ask the students why people often say that junk food (like soda pop or candy) is “bad.” During discussion, list these terms on the board:
  - high in calories
  - added sugar
  - solid fats (saturated fats and trans fats)
  - high in sodium
2. Have the students tell what they know about each of the listed terms. During discussion, cover the following points:
  - Calories are units of energy that come from food. The body “burns” food, releasing calories. If the body takes in more calories than it uses, the calories are stored as fat. High-calorie foods can lead to gaining weight.
  - The body needs sugars for energy. However, sugar added to processed foods may overload the body’s ability to handle sugars. Sugary foods are also high in calories. Sugars in candy and sodas can also cause tooth decay.

- Solid fats, such as butter or pork fat, come from animals. Palm oil, coconut oil, and stick margarine are plant-based solid fats. Solid fats are often ingredients in cakes and cookies. Solid fats are high in calories and are linked to heart disease.

- Sodium is salt. The body needs salt, but too much can raise health risks to the heart and kidneys.

3. Display the photos of foods. Have the students sort the foods into categories based on how healthy each seems to be. Talk about the reasons an item might be classified as “healthy,” “unhealthy,” or “both.”
4. Have the students share ideas in response to this question: “Should you never eat salty, sweet, or high-fat foods?” Discuss with students the understanding that some foods should be eaten only occasionally, but not as a steady diet. Talk with students about alternatives to these foods. Name a food and see if the students can respond with a healthier option (an apple for a candy bar, for instance).



### Check for Understanding

- Can the student explain why some foods are unhealthy?
- Can the student identify healthy food choices?

## Activity 2: Understanding Nutritional Categories

### Objective

- Classify foods according to healthy diet recommendations



### Materials

- Student Book, page 37, and a pencil
- Paper
- Computer with Internet access (optional)

1. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) introduced “MyPlate” in 2011, replacing the food pyramid with a simpler image. Show the food plate with its labels (available at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)).



2. Have the students read each label with you. Prompt them to share what they know about the meaning of each term and to name one or two foods in each category.
  - Fruits grow on trees and other plants. Two examples of fruits are apples and peaches.
  - Vegetables come from the parts of plants. Two examples of vegetables are potatoes and lettuce.
  - Grains are kinds of plants. Grains include wheat, rice, oats, and barley. Two examples of foods made with grains are wheat bread and oatmeal.
  - Protein is a kind of nutrient—something that gives the body the energy it needs to work. Meats, seafood, poultry, beans, and nuts all are sources of protein. Two examples of foods that are high in protein are ham and peanut butter.
  - Dairy is the name for foods made from milk. Two examples of dairy foods are skim milk and cheddar cheese.

Ask the students what part of their daily diet should be made of fruits and vegetables based on the food plate. (1/2) Have them tell what else they notice about the relative sizes of the groups.

3. Write each food group label on the board as a column heading. Under each heading, write examples of foods named in the discussion. Have the students read the listings.
4. As you name each food group in turn, have groups of two or three work together to write as many examples of foods in that category as they can think of. Set a time limit.
5. When the time is up for the students, have them share their lists. Does everyone agree that the foods are in the correct category?
6. Have the students display their lists. Tell them to choose items for a shopping list of foods they would like to buy. Remind them to look at the size of each group on the food plate as they decide on items to shop for—there should be more fruits and vegetables on their list than grains, for example.
7. If you are using the Student Book, go to page 37. Support the students as they read the items in the chart and below. Encourage them to complete the page independently.

**If the student has limited writing skills:** Have the student use pencils and markers to draw the food in the different food groups. Alternatively, the student can use grocery store fliers to create a collage for each category.



### Check for Understanding

- Can the student classify foods as fruits and vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy?
- Does the student recognize that a healthy diet includes more of some kinds of foods and less of others?

### Activity 3: Navigating a Grocery Store

#### Objectives

- Recognize grocery store departments
- Locate foods in a grocery store
- Identify price signs

#### Materials

- Signs made with cards and markers
- Paper and pencils

1. Prepare for a visit to a grocery store. Start by making signs that name these major departments:
  - Dairy
  - Produce
  - Deli
  - Bakery
  - Frozen Foods
  - Beverages
  - Poultry
  - Meats
  - Fish
  - Canned Goods
2. Tell the students to picture a grocery store. Hold up one sign from above and read the sign together. Have the students think of foods they would find in that section. For each sign, set the goal of naming 3–5 food items. Have each student take a turn naming an item until the goal has been reached.
3. Provide individuals or partners with a chart like the one shown. On each chart, make a different shopping list with about five items that can be found in the departments discussed above. Explain that when the students are in the grocery store, they will find each item and fill out the rest of the chart. Model filling out the chart using an example.

Shopping List	Department or Aisle	Brand or Kind	Price
1 pound of apples			
1 loaf of whole wheat bread			
1 package of frozen peas			
1 package of uncooked chicken legs			
1 can of tomato soup			

4. When you arrive at the store, lead the students on a tour. Collect any discount coupons on display and the store's flier. (These coupons can be used in Activity 5.) Together, read the department signs and the aisle signs. Draw attention to the price signs and have the students find these examples:
  - A price of less than \$1.00
  - A price of more than \$2.00
  - A price for more than one item at a time, such as 2/\$4
  - A price that is lower than it usually is
5. In the produce department, have the students identify a sign for a fruit or vegetable priced per pound. Then show how to use the scale to weigh 1 pound and 2 pounds of the product. Discuss with the students how much it would cost to buy each different weight.
6. Direct the students to explore the store to find each item on their shopping list and note on their chart where, what, and how much.
7. Back in the classroom, have the students share their findings. Discuss how they decided which products to list. Use the discussion to emphasize that shoppers make choices. Have the students use their own words to give ideas about the factors that influence choices, such as price, quality, taste, and personal preference.

**If the student has limited reading skills:** Read the grocery store signs while pointing each out to the student and then have the student repeat the name and point to the sign as you name it again. Have the students partner up to find items in the grocery store.



#### Check for Understanding

- Can the student read grocery store signs?
- Does the student recognize how products are organized in a grocery store?
- Can the student locate particular items in a grocery store?
- Can the student locate and interpret price signs for items?

### Activity 4: Reading Labels on Packaged Foods

#### Objective

- Read and understand common terms on packaging

#### Materials

- A variety of food containers (cans, jars, boxes, bags) with labels intact

1. As you assemble the food containers, check the labels in order to give clues about terms often found on labels. (Focus on elements other than the Nutrition Facts label, which is the topic of Activity 6.) Use these clues as the class studies the various labels. Examples of clues:
  - This word has a list after it showing everything that is in the food. (ingredients)
  - This means the food has no fat in it. (fat free)
  - This means the food is lower in salt than other products like it. (low sodium)
  - This means vitamins and minerals have been added. (fortified)
  - This means some things in the food were made in a lab, not by nature. (processed)
  - This means you must keep the food cold. (refrigerate)
  - This is a dish to cook using this food as one of its parts. (recipe)

2. Display the food containers so that the students can examine them. As you state a clue, have the students find the matching term on a label. Read the terms together. (These examples fit with the clues listed above: fat free, ingredients, low sodium, enriched, artificial color added, refrigerate after opening, Hearty Noodle Soup Recipe.) Briefly discuss the reason that the term or element is on the label.
3. Have the students look at all the labels and identify elements that are found on most or all packaging. What do they think is most useful to know about the labels?

**If the student has limited reading skills:** Find the term on the packaging with the student. After identifying the term with the student and giving the definition, have the student point out the term to you and give the definition. Repeat for each term.



#### Check for Understanding

- Does the student understand the meaning of terms on the labels of packaged foods?

### Activity 5: Reading Nutrition Facts Labels

#### Objectives

- Read Nutrition Facts labels
- Understand serving sizes



#### Materials

- Student Book, page 38, and a pencil
- A variety of food containers (cans, jars, boxes, bags) with Nutrition Facts labels intact

1. Point out a Nutrition Facts label on a product. Tell the students that learning to read and understand such labels will help them make healthy choices when buying groceries.

- Distribute the food containers. As you explain each element of the Nutrition Facts label shown below, show it on your food container. Have the students find the same element on their Nutrition Facts labels.
  - Serving Size:** This tells how much is in one serving. It might be one piece, one cup,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, or another measure. What are some serving sizes in your products? Why should you know how much a serving is?
  - Servings Per Container:** This tells how many servings are in the whole container. How many servings are there in your containers? What can you figure out if you know the number of servings in a container?
  - Calories:** Calories are units of energy that come from food. How many calories are in one serving of your product? Look at the last part of the label to find more information about calories. Does your product seem to have a lot of calories per serving?
  - % Daily Value:** The percent of daily value is about how much of something a person may or should eat each day. For example, sodium is salt, and too much sodium can be unhealthy for some people. The recommended limit on daily sodium is about 2,400 milligrams. How much sodium is in your product? What percentage of the daily value is that?
  - Dietary Fiber:** Dietary fiber is sometimes called “roughage.” It comes from plants. Dietary fiber doesn’t provide energy itself, but helps the body digest foods and use nutrients well. Dietary fiber is measured in grams. How much dietary fiber is in your product? What is the recommended amount of fiber to eat in a 2,000 calorie-a-day diet?
- Have the students compare the fats, cholesterol, and sodium in their Nutrition Facts labels. Ask whether it is better to have high or low percentages of these, and why. (low, because too much may lead to health problems) Have them also compare the listed nutrients, including vitamins and iron, and use the % Daily Value listings to determine whether the product has “a lot” or “a little” of each.

- Encourage the students to ask other questions about the information in the Nutrition Facts labels for the group to answer.
- If you are using the Student Book, go to page 38. Read the directions together and have the students explain what they will do. Offer support as needed as the students complete the activity.

**If the student has limited reading skills:** Utilize an overhead projector to magnify the label, making it more readable. Read each element on the food label as you point to it and have the student repeat the name of each item or label to you.



#### Check for Understanding

- Does the student understand the elements on a Nutrition Facts label?
- Does the student understand what a serving is?
- Can the student explain the % Daily Value listings?

### Activity 6: Using Coupons and Fliers

#### Objectives

- Recognize that coupons can help save money
- Understand sale prices in grocery store fliers

#### Materials

- A variety of food coupons
- Grocery store fliers

- Display several coupons. Have the students tell what they know about using coupons. Cover the following points during discussion:
  - We use coupons to save money on a particular product.
  - Coupons can be found in newspaper inserts, in mailings, on the Internet, and in grocery stores.
  - Manufacturers provide coupons as a way of getting customers to try new products or get used to buying a brand.

2. Have each student choose a coupon. As you name an element and give a brief definition, have the students point to that element on their coupons: the product's name, the value, the number of items, the size of the item, and the expiration date.
3. Ask the students to use their own words to explain how a coupon works. Make sure they understand that in most coupons the value is subtracted from the cost of the item, and that the item is not for sale at that price. Explain to the students that to use a coupon, a shopper picks up the item on the coupon, and then presents the coupon at check out and then the amount is subtracted from their grocery bill.
4. Show the students the grocery store fliers. Tell them that most stores have weekly sale items. Point out the comparisons between the usual price and the sale price. Use examples from the fliers to guide students in calculating total savings if they buy a number of products.
5. Have the students look over the coupons and fliers as you ask questions to stimulate discussion about financial choices:
  - Which coupons do you think you might use? Why?
  - If you used a coupon for an item, what would make it a "good buy?"
  - Which food items in the fliers would you like to buy? Why?
  - How can you plan your meals by reading grocery store fliers?

**If the students have limited reading skills:** Instead of using multiple coupons, have the class concentrate on one coupon, and display it with an overhead projector. Go through each element of the coupon, having the students repeat each element back to you.



#### Check for Understanding

- Does the student understand how to use a grocery coupon?
- Does the student understand the difference between standard and sale prices?
- Can the student give reasons to check grocery store fliers?

## Activity 7: Reading Unit Price Labels

### Objectives

- Understand how to read unit price labels
- Compare unit prices to save money



### Materials

- Student Book, page 39, and a pencil
- Two different-sized containers of the same product, different brands

1. Introduce the concept of unit pricing by holding up the two containers, stating their prices, and asking the students which is the better buy. As the students give their ideas, cover the following points:
  - The containers are different sizes, so they hold different amounts.
  - We can only compare the prices by comparing the same amounts.
  - We need to figure out the cost of one unit (name the unit of measure on the containers, such as an ounce or a pound). How could we figure that out? (Students may recognize that dividing the total price by the number of units gives the per-unit price.)
2. Write "unit price" on the board. Tell the students that when they are in a grocery store, they can easily compare items of different sizes and different brands to see which has the lowest price. Explain that shelf tags give the unit prices of everything on that shelf. On the board, write these examples of unit price labels to look for on a grocery store shelf:

Joe's Applesauce		OUR PRICE
12 OZ	UNIT PRICE	\$2.29
	\$0.191 per oz.	

Moe's Applesauce		OUR PRICE
28 OZ	UNIT PRICE	\$4.99
	\$0.178 per oz.	

- Point to each element on the first label and describe it:
  - Joe's Applesauce is the name of the product.
  - The large number is the price of the whole jar, \$2.29.
  - The size of the jar is 12 ounces.
  - The unit price is the price of each ounce of applesauce: 19.1¢.
- As you point to each element on the second label, have the students describe it. Ask them how the unit price helps them decide which applesauce is the better buy. (Moe's costs 17.8¢ for every ounce, which is less than the 19.1¢ that Joe's costs.)
- Ask: "Before you buy the less expensive product, why should you check the Nutrition Facts label?" (If it's less healthy than the other, you might decide to pay a little more for the healthier one.)
- Write the following unit price labels on the board.

Flakes-O Cereal		OUR PRICE
10 OZ	UNIT PRICE \$0.265 per oz.	\$2.65

Flakes-O Cereal		OUR PRICE
16 OZ	UNIT PRICE \$0.249 per oz.	\$3.99

- Have the students tell what they can learn by comparing these two unit price labels. (The larger box of Flakes-O Cereal costs more, but is a better buy because it costs less per ounce.)
- Explain that in most cases, the same brand of product costs less per unit in a larger size. Can the students think of a reason not to buy the largest size? They may recognize that if the food might spoil before it is eaten, it makes sense to buy a smaller size. Not enough storage space is another reason.

- Have the students name favorite foods to buy in a grocery store. List a few food items. Suggest that on their next trip to the grocery store, either on their own or with the class, the students find unit price labels for one or two of the listed food items. They may report back to the group on the lowest prices found.



#### Check for Understanding

- Does the student know how to read a unit price label?
- Can the student compare unit prices and determine which size or brand is the better buy?

### Activity 8: Weighing Produce

#### Objective

- Use weight and price per pound to calculate cost



#### Materials

- Student Book, page 40, and a pencil
- A calculator (optional)
- A scale (optional)

- Have the students describe items to find in the produce department of a grocery store. Point out that apples, oranges, tomatoes, and many other fruits and vegetables may not be in packages, and the customers can decide how many of each to buy. These items are sold by the pound. Ask the students which items they have seen that are sold "by the pound."
- Ask the students to give a good reason for weighing produce on a scale in the produce department. Emphasize that weighing helps customers tell how much they will have to pay, because most items are priced "per pound."

3. Present the following problems in order, and have the students provide each answer or give you advice about how to figure it out.

- Eggplant is \$1.39 per pound. I put one eggplant on the scale. It weighs one pound. What does the eggplant cost? (\$1.39)
- Apples are \$1 per pound. I choose four big apples and weigh them. They weigh 2 pounds. What is the total cost? (\$2)
- Onions are 50¢ per pound. One onion weighs  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound. How much does the onion cost? (25¢)
- Cherries are \$3.00 a pound. The bag that I want to buy weighs  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. What is the total cost?  
 $(\frac{1}{2} \times \$3.00 = \$1.50 + \$3.00 = \$4.50)$
- Bananas are 48¢ per pound. The weight of my bunch of bananas is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  pounds. What is the total cost?  
 $(\frac{1}{4} \times 48¢ = 12¢ + 48¢ = 60¢)$

4. Explain that customers often estimate the price of weighed items. Estimate means to make a good guess. Provide these examples and have the students tell “about how much” the total cost will be. Remind them to round to the nearest ten cents or dollar for help with estimating. It might be helpful to use a scale and have the students weigh objects in the classroom, with you setting a price per pound for each.

- Squash is \$1.29 per pound. One squash weighs just over 3 pounds. (about \$4)
- Grapes are \$1.89 per pound. The bunch weighs  $1\frac{1}{4}$  pounds. (a little under \$2.50)
- Green peppers are \$1.19 per pound. Three green peppers weigh  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. (\$1.80, or between \$1.50 and \$2.00)

5. If you are using the Student Book, go to page 40. Talk with the students about the produce scale and point out the marks that indicate fractions of a pound. Read the directions and do the first item together. Provide help as needed.

**If the student has limited math skills:** The price per pound can be easily rounded up or down to a whole number that may make it easier for the student to work with. Also, using a real scale throughout the activity and letting the student weigh his or her items will make it easier for the student to follow the concepts.



**Check for Understanding**

- Can the student use price per pound and weight to calculate costs using whole numbers?
- Can the student use price per pound and weight to calculate costs using fractions?

## Extension Activities



1. Arrange a tour of a local grocery store, where the students may get a behind-the-scenes view of how foods are delivered and prepared. Prepare the students by talking in advance with the manager to learn what will be shown.



2. Have the students make a “Food Diary” for a week. Each student writes down what he or she eats for an entire week. When the students bring in their diaries, discuss the eating choices they have made. Discuss how students can make healthier choices. Have the students go through their lists finding healthier alternatives to the food they ate during the week.



3. Have the students choose a particular food item and conduct a taste test to compare products. Consider the following questions:

- Do the students think that one brand-name food tastes better than another?
- Does a brand-name food taste better than generic versions?

Plan the test together, emphasizing that each taster must have no clue about which product he or she is tasting.

Tasters may rate each product on a scale that the students devise. The students may then report their findings in a chart.



4. Have the students choose one recipe for a dish they would like to make. Together, make a shopping list based on the ingredients. How much do the students think they will need to spend to buy the items? List a few of their estimates.



5. On the students’ next visits to the grocery store, ask them to locate each ingredient and decide which brand and size offers the best buy. In a selected recipe, have them write down the brand and price they choose. Back at school, the shoppers may compare their totals. Who found the best buys? How close were the estimates to the actual prices?



6. Familiarize the students with the many abbreviations that appear with food products. Have them hunt through fliers and package labels to find and list as many abbreviations as they can: lb., oz., pkg., ea., btl., doz., mg., g., DV, and so on. Then have the students make a master list called “Key to Abbreviations” to post in the classroom.