

# Sustainability

<b>Lesson 2: Product packaging</b>	<b>KS or Year Group: KS 3</b>
<b>Resources:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Two bin bags of food packaging waste</li><li>2. Newspaper</li><li>3. Resource 4 – News article</li></ol>	<b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students assess the different amounts of packaging used by the major supermarkets</li><li>• Students are able to do their own research on the packaging issue</li><li>• Students are able to advocate both sides of the debate on packaging</li></ul>

## National Curriculum

---

Key concepts: 1.2c

Key processes: 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c, 2.3a, 2.3b, 2.2c

Range and content: 3e

Curriculum opportunities: 4a, 4g

## Lesson 2

---

This aim of this lesson is to consolidate the learning from the first lesson with a practical exercise. Students will be asked to consider a wide variety of food packaging in terms of how wasteful it is. They will then be asked to link the wasteful packaging produced by the major supermarkets to the impact on the environment.

## Starter

---

As a class, recap on the learning from the last lesson. Which side of the argument about recycling won the most group debates? Explain that in this lesson the class are going to look at the pros and cons of packaging in relation to a range of specific food products.

## Main activity

---

### Activity 1

- The teacher should cover an area at the front of the class with newspaper. Now tip the contents of the two bin bags of packaging onto the newspaper into a few distinct piles.
- Divide the class into groups of three or four. Assign a particular pile of rubbish to each group.
- Ask each group to look through the rubbish and do each of the following:
  1. Count how many examples of packaging there are in their pile.
  2. Find the best three examples (i.e. the least wasteful) of packaging in their pile.
  3. Find the worst three examples (i.e. the most wasteful) of packaging in their pile.
  4. For the best and the worst, they should put be able to put their examples in rank order (1 = the worst).
- Ask each group to present their findings to the rest of the class. Each of their best and worst examples need to be supported with a rationale (they should be prompted by the teacher if necessary). Why are some particular examples worse or better than others?
- The teacher should stick the 'over-packaging' logo (designed in the previous lesson) onto the worst example from each group. The worst examples should be put at the front of the class as each group finishes their presentation.
- Once each group has finished their presentations, the class as a whole should look again at the worst examples and discuss what features they have in common.
- Ask the students what they themselves could actively do about over-packaging as an issue. Put their ideas on the board. If needed, supplement these with some ideas taken from <http://www.totallywasted.org>:
  1. *Take your business elsewhere.*  
Visit farmers' markets and greengrocers if you can or consider a vegetable home delivery service.
  2. *Leave the packaging at the supermarket counter.*  
The Environment Minister Ben Bradshaw suggested that shoppers should leave 'excessive and unnecessary' wrappers behind.
  3. *Write to your local Trading Standards office.*  
Enclose either a photograph of the excessive packaging or the packaging itself. Remember to give the name and address of the store where you saw or bought the product.
  4. *Write to the supermarkets.*  
Do some research and quote the 2003 Packaging Regulations or the company's own corporate social responsibility commitments.
  5. *Petition the Prime Minister.*  
There are a couple of relevant e-petitions on the Number 10 website. If a petition gathers more than 1000 signatories, the PM's office has to write a response to it.

### Activity 2:

- Distribute copies of **Resource 2 – News article**. Students should read through the report quietly on their own.
- Ask the students which supermarket do their parents use regularly? According to the report, how well or badly do these supermarkets fare in terms of over-packaging?
- Ask the students if any of them would change their shopping habits as a result of what they have learnt in this lesson.

## **Plenary**

---

Ask the students to summarise the findings of the practical exercise. What did they learn?

### **Homework**

Ask the students to come up with some solutions to the problem of over-packaging (e.g. selling items loose or using recyclable materials). If possible, they should investigate the possibilities and problems associated with these 'solutions' on the internet.

### **Summary of learning**

- Students are able to apply key ideas about packaging to specific examples
- Students are able to relate their own shopping behaviour to concerns about packaging

## Resource 1 – News article

### Supermarkets Rapped Over Packaging

Tuesday October 23, 2007

***Up to 40% of packaging used by leading supermarkets cannot be recycled, says a new report.***

Marks & Spencer has been named as the worst offender in a survey for the Local Government Association.

It was also second worst when it came to the amount of packaging it used – 782g for a basket of 29 goods.

Lidl was the worst offender in this area with Morrisons third.

The findings were based on a basket of 29 common grocery items bought from Asda, Lidl, M&S, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, a local retailer and a market.

Tesco used the least packaging by weight at 684.5g per basket.

The local market and local retail had the highest proportion of recyclable packaging at 79% each.

Just 60% of M&S's packaging could be recycled, compared to 70% for Asda and Sainsbury's who scored highest.

Overall, the local market emerged as the most environmentally-friendly retailer.

LGA environment board chairman Cllr Paul Bettison said: 'People are working hard to increase their recycling rates.

'But their efforts are being hamstrung by needlessly over-packaged products on sale in supermarkets.'

A spokesman for M&S said: 'We've set ourselves clear and demanding targets to reduce our packaging and only use materials that can be easily recycled or composted.

'While we've made good progress over the last 12 months, we know there's still much more yet to do in both areas.'

Courtesy of SKY News