

Positive packaging

Individual and Class

Time: Two one-hour lessons. One for students to carry out the analysis and one for students to do presentations.

Purpose

To understand that similar products can be advertised in different ways and that each of these ways has inherent advantages and disadvantages.

Background to the task

Study different forms of packaging for similar products and draw conclusions as to their effectiveness from an environmental point of view. For example fruit drinks come in glass bottles, plastic bottles, foil and card cartons.

Resources

Examples of different types of packaging.

Carrying out the task

Students should be presented with a range of packaging items for similar products and then carry out a detailed product analysis on the range. They should look at the advantages and disadvantages in terms of their environmental impact, use of material, amount of material, ability to be reused and ability to be recycled. The information should be presented in such a way as to allow for a student to do a presentation of their findings.

Extension activity

Look at photo images of market places in emerging economies and see how products are displayed without packaging. Relate this to this to how fruits are displayed in supermarkets and cereals are displayed at health food shops in this country. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these methods and what other products could be sold in this way? For example could washing up liquids, detergents, bubble baths, shampoos be done in the same way?

Ideas for DMAs

There are many design and make activities which students could do:

- Re-design fast food packaging in order to use fewer amounts of materials.
- Design a set of information cards to encourage families to actively sort their waste and reuse as much of it as possible.
- Re-design how a specific product is packaged to minimise its environmental impact.
- Design a system to allow for product refill and design an advertising campaign to support this system.
- Re-design chewing gum packaging which will allow for the safe disposal of chewing gum when the user has finished with it.