



# Processed Foods

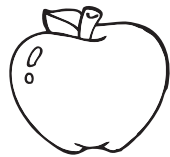


## Objective

Given sample nutrition labels, the students will learn to read labels to identify ingredients and additives in foods.

## Vocabulary

- processed
- ingredient
- additive



## Materials

- Play Dough recipe on page 32
- food coloring
- play dough toys or kitchen utensils
- apple and apple products with nutritional labels (e.g., jar of organic applesauce, regular applesauce, apple energy bar)
- sample ingredient labels from common lunch or snack food items
- overhead projector or interactive whiteboard (optional)
- magazine pictures (optional)

## Preparation

1. Gather an apple and apple products.
2. Download nutritional information for each product or gather labels to present to students on an overhead projector or interactive whiteboard. Or enlarge copies to post in the room for viewing in smaller groups.
3. Prepare play dough, but do not add the coloring.

## Opening

1. Conduct a demonstration with homemade play dough. Tell the students to pretend it is a food.
2. Add food coloring to the dough. Ask the class how the “food” has changed.
3. “Process” the dough using play dough toys and kitchen utensils to cut and shape the dough. Ask the students once again how it has changed.
4. Ask the class if anyone knows a word to describe what you have done to the dough. (processed it using an additive) You have *processed* the dough, or used a series of steps to change it and added a new ingredient.
5. Explain that food can also be *processed*. Much of the food we eat goes through steps to prepare it, and sometimes change it, before we eat the food. Cooking is a way of processing some foods.
7. Write the following sentences with blanks on the board. Invite the students to guess which words might complete the sentences. Post the vocabulary words if necessary.  
Processed foods have many ingredients. Additives are extra things that are added to food.
8. Ask the students what the difference is between an *ingredient* and an *additive*. (An *ingredient* is one of the things an item is made from; an *additive* is something that is added to a substance to change it in some way. Additives can be used to sweeten a product, make it last longer, or to make it look more appealing.)



# Processed Foods (cont.)



## Part 1

1. Ask the students to give examples of how food is processed (applesauce—*apples are cooked, which changes the consistency*; milk—*pasteurized to kill bacteria and make it safer to drink*; meat—*is often cooked*).
2. Display the apple and samples of apple products with ingredient labels.
3. Invite the students to compare the different products. Discuss how the main ingredient in each food item is apples. Some of the items have other ingredients as well.
4. Explain that we can learn to read ingredient labels to see what is really in the food we eat. Then we can decide if it is something we want to eat. If you do not recognize or cannot pronounce an ingredient, you might want to think twice about eating it.

## Part 2

1. Display sample ingredient labels from common lunch or snack food items.
2. Work with the class to create a T-chart. Compare ingredients they recognize and those they do not. Or compare food items with ingredients that are additives. For example, a package of crackers might list wheat and oil as food ingredients, and BHT as an additive added to the packaging to preserve freshness.
3. Periodically have the students create new T-charts for food items to examine the ingredients and/or additives. Encourage discussions about the nutritional value of different foods. Which foods do we need to eat to be healthy? Which ones do we eat strictly for enjoyment? Why is it important to strike a balance?

## Part 3

1. Explain that some things we do to our food are good things that make sense. These steps do not harm us or the environment. For instance, we peel a banana or an orange before we eat it. We crack an egg and cook it.
2. We freeze vegetables to preserve vitamins and keep them as fresh as possible for longer periods of time. Canned foods give us access to fruits or vegetables even when they are not in season.
3. Tell the students that some foods go through many more steps in a factory before we eat them. Often *processed* foods have extra sugar, salt, or fat added to them. Extra ingredients may be added for taste such as sugar added to whole wheat cereal. Some ingredients, such as salt, are added to food to help preserve it.
4. Processed foods are easy to heat and eat quickly. Astronauts, campers, and people in emergency situations benefit from these types of foods.



# Processed Foods (cont.)



## Closing

1. Have the students keep a food diary for one day. You may wish to do this in class. If so, have them think about what they ate today for breakfast and lunch. Encourage the students to remember what they ate for dinner the night before.
2. Have the students describe and/or illustrate their food choices.
3. Ask the students to share with a partner in what ways their food was *processed*. Remind the students that many processed foods are still healthful to eat, such as apples that have been cooked to make applesauce. Encourage them to select one food and describe its main *ingredient(s)*, as well as any *additive(s)*.
4. Encourage the students to set one or more healthful food goals for the following day.

## Extension

Have the students find magazine pictures or draw and color pictures of favorite foods. Ask, "How can you have that food in a less processed way?" For example, if students' favorite food is pizza, they can work with family members to make pizza at home. If they have pre-made pizza, they might have just one slice and have fruit or vegetables with it.

### ELL Tip

Have the students work with a native speaking partner to identify and label food items during the Closing activity. Encourage the students to write at least one English word for each food item, for example, *sandwich* or *cereal*.

## Play Dough

- 2 cups flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup salt
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup hot water

1. Stir dry ingredients together. Add oil.
2. Pour in water all at once.
3. Knead dough as necessary for consistency.

