



Food and Eating Habits

Multiple choice: food choices | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. Do you ever read labels before buying food?
2. What information on food packaging is useful?
3. Can advertising make food seem healthier than it is?
4. Should schools teach students about nutrition labels?

Exercise 4 at a glance

Read one longer text and answer six multiple-choice questions. Choose A, B or C. The correct answer may depend on attitude, purpose or a detail across a whole paragraph, not just one matching word.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the article. What did Marco learn about food labels?

Reading food labels

by Marco Ruiz

Our science teacher asked everyone to bring in a packaged snack for a lesson on food labels. I brought a cereal bar because the front of the packet said 'natural energy' and showed mountains in the background. I expected it to be one of the healthier examples. When we compared the labels, mine contained more sugar than I had imagined. I felt slightly tricked, although the information had been printed clearly on the back the whole time.

The teacher did not tell us that cereal bars were bad. Instead, she asked us to compare portion size, sugar, fibre and ingredients. That was more useful than simply dividing food into healthy and unhealthy groups. One student's packet looked high in salt, but the serving size was tiny because it was a seasoning, not a meal. Another snack had a long ingredients list, yet most of the unfamiliar names were vitamins. We learned that one number rarely tells the full story.

The most confusing part was the language on the front of packets. Words like 'light', 'wholegrain' or 'source of protein' may be true, but they can pull attention away from other information. My cereal bar did contain oats, but it also contained several types of syrup. I had assumed that natural-looking packaging meant a balanced snack. The teacher called this a shortcut our brains like to take when we are busy or hungry.

For homework, I checked labels during a family shopping trip. My younger brother chose a yoghurt because it had a cartoon footballer on it. I asked him to compare it with a plain yoghurt and fruit. He complained that I was making shopping boring, which was probably fair. But he was surprised by the sugar difference and chose a smaller pot instead. That felt like a better result than banning the yoghurt completely.

I still buy snacks, and I do not think every choice has to be perfect. However, I no longer trust the front of a packet as much as I did. Reading labels is not about feeling guilty; it is about noticing what you are actually eating. Food companies design packaging quickly to attract us, while the useful details often require slower reading. That small pause can change a choice.

3. Strategy focus

Read around the answer

The correct answer may depend on the whole paragraph, not one phrase. Read the sentence before and after the likely evidence.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

Question 1

Why did Marco choose the cereal bar for the lesson?

- A It was the only snack available at home.
- B His teacher had recommended that brand.
- C The packaging made it seem healthy.

Question 2

What did the teacher want students to understand?

- A All packaged snacks should be avoided.
- B Food labels need to be read in context.
- C Ingredients lists are usually misleading.

Question 3

What problem does Marco identify with front-of-packet language?

- A It can distract from less attractive information.
- B It is usually illegal or completely false.
- C It only appears on unhealthy products.

Question 4

How did Marco's brother react during the shopping trip?

- A He was annoyed but noticed a useful difference.
- B He refused to compare any labels.
- C He decided never to eat yoghurt again.

Question 5

What does Marco think about food choices now?

- A Snacks should be banned from family shopping.
- B They do not need to be perfect, but they should be informed.
- C Natural packaging is the safest guide.

Question 6

What is Marco's main message?

- A Food companies should remove all attractive packaging.
- B Nutrition labels are too difficult for teenagers.
- C A short pause to read details can change a choice.

5. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Which label information would be most useful to you?
2. Strategy: Compare the correct option with one wrong option. Which word makes the wrong option inaccurate?
3. Writing: Write advice for students choosing a snack before an exam.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to nutrition, packaging and consumer choices.

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2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: He learned that labels can help people make better choices, but only if they read them carefully and understand the context.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

1. C; 2. B; 3. A; 4. A; 5. B; 6. C

1. C - The packet said 'natural energy' and showed mountains.
2. B - She has them compare several details and shows one number does not tell the full story.
3. A - True words may pull attention away from syrups and other details.
4. A - He complained but was surprised by the sugar difference.
5. B - He still buys snacks but reads labels more carefully.
6. C - He says useful details require slower reading and that pause can change a choice.