

Consumerism

Background Information

Consumerism is an economic strategy where **consumers** are encouraged to buy **goods** and services in increasing amounts. Consumerism is based on the idea that an increased consumption of goods benefits the overall economy. **Marketing** is a way that companies attract consumers and encourage them to buy particular goods and services, like food, clothing, household items, etc. Food companies, restaurants, and grocery stores use marketing to promote the purchase of particular food items. Marketing efforts include product development, identification of target consumers, establishment of product pricing, and packaging design, and product promotion through **advertisements**. An advertisement is a message through the **media** that promotes goods or services. We see advertisements of food products in many places, including television commercials, grocery stores, magazines, newspapers, fliers mailed to our homes, radio, and the internet.

Common marketing techniques used in advertise-

ments and product packaging include: **health claims**, bright colors, catchy slogans, songs and phrases, free toys and prizes, television or movie celebrities and cartoon characters as spokespersons, and sale prices.

Food companies spend a great deal of time and money to convince people to buy their products. In the U.S., approximately six billion dollars are spent each year on food advertising, and children between eight and 12 years of age view approximately 21 food advertisements on television each day (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2007).

Due to the influence of advertising, it is important that people be able to make informed choices about the foods they eat. In order to make informed choices, people have to become educated consumers by learning about marketing practices and how to use reliable resources for information, like the Nutrition Facts label found on food packaging.

Concepts and Vocabulary

- **Advertisement:** a message through the media that promotes goods or services.
- **Consumerism:** an economic strategy where consumers are encouraged to buy goods and services in increasing amounts.
- **Consumer:** a person who purchases goods or services.
- **Goods:** products made and sold to satisfy the wants and needs of the buyer.
- **Health claim:** a statement that a relationship exists between consumption of a food or an ingredient in the food and a person's health.
- **Marketing:** the technique of promoting and selling a consumer good.
- **Media:** means by which promotional messages are communicated to the public (e.g., television, radio, newspaper).

Life Skills

Teamwork, Public Speaking, Critical Thinking

Subject Links

English-Language Arts, Science, Nutrition, Health

Educational Standards Supported

Discovering Healthy Choices curriculum supports Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core State Standards, and California Nutrition Education Competencies. For specific details on standards and grade levels, please see page 9.

Activity 7.1: Classroom Activity

Getting Ready

1. Make copies of the *Cereal “Boxes”* (Appendix 7A); one set for each group.
2. Make copies of the *Cereal Information Cards* (Appendix 7B), one card for each group. Cut out the individual cards.
3. Organize the class into small groups of 3 to 4 youth.

Facilitator Tip: These can be the same groups that were formed in Module 1, Activity 1. By doing so, the youth may continue developing teamwork skills with the same group members.

4. Provide each group with a sheet of flip chart paper and markers to answer opening questions.

Time Required

60 to 75 minutes

Suggested Groupings

Small groups of 3 to 4 youth

Materials needed

(*Materials provided in curriculum)

- Flip chart paper
- Markers or other writing utensils
- **Cereal “Boxes”* (Appendix 7A)
- **Cereal Information Cards* (Appendix 7B)

Opening Questions/Prompts

Ask the youth to respond to each question/prompt below by recording them on the flip chart paper provided and sharing their ideas verbally.

- Discuss places where you see and hear advertisements for food products.
- Explain how you think advertisements try to persuade us to buy their food.

Procedure (Experiencing)

1. Provide each group with one copy of the *Cereal “Boxes.”*
2. Ask each group to discuss the cereal box packaging, including: what they like or dislike about it, what caught their attention, and why (or why not) they might purchase it in the grocery store. Have them discuss in what ways they think what is written or illustrated on the cereal box may be trying to influence them to purchase the cereal. Have them record their ideas on the flip chart paper.
3. Have each group share their observations about the cereal boxes with the class.
4. Provide one *Cereal Information Card* to each group.
5. Ask the youth to create a 30-second commercial to perform as a skit. Ask them to create the commercial using the *Cereal Information Card*. Explain that the goal of the advertisement is to get as many other youth as possible to buy their product, but not to reveal the Nutrition Facts Label. Allow enough time for each group to complete the task.
6. Have each group perform their 30-second commercial for the class.
7. Ask the youth to discuss within their group the observations they made about the different techniques used by each group to sell their cereal. Based on the commercials, have the youth vote on which cereal they would buy. Have them write down their decision on the flip chart paper.
8. Have each group share the Nutrition Facts Label from their cereal with the class.
9. Ask each group to discuss if they would change their mind about buying the cereal, based on the Nutrition Facts Label. Have them write down their thoughts on the flip chart paper.

Sharing, Processing, and Generalizing

1. Ask the youth to share what they decided to include in their own commercial, why they made those decisions, and their thoughts about the other commercials.
2. Follow the lines of thinking of the youth through their general thoughts, observations, and questions. If necessary, ask more targeted questions/prompts:
 - Explain how you went about deciding what you would convey in your commercial.
 - Explain how you went about making the decision about which commercials did the best job at selling the cereal.
 - If you changed your mind after the Nutrition Facts were revealed, explain what it was about the Nutrition Facts that made you alter your decision.
 - Discuss how you think food packages and advertisements influence our food purchases.
 - Explain what we can do to avoid being convinced to buy a food based only on an advertisement.

Concept and Term Discovery/Introduction

Youth should understand there are several ways companies use product packaging to entice people to purchase foods, including the use of bright colors, health claims, characters, and prizes. They should also understand that commercials are another way that food companies entice us to purchase their products. The youth should also find out that there is reliable information, like Nutrition Facts Labels, that can help us make informed choices. Additionally, make sure that key vocabulary terms are either discovered by the youth or introduced to them: **consumerism, consumer, advertisement, health claim, marketing, and media.**

Activity 7.2: Home Concept Application

Getting Ready

1. Make copies of the *Television Advertising and Consumerism* worksheet (Appendix 7C), one for each youth.

Procedure (Experiencing)

1. Provide each group with one copy of the *Television Advertising and Consumerism* worksheet.
2. Ask the youth to take home the *Television Advertising and Consumerism* worksheet and complete it with their families. Explain that when they are watching television with their families they will select two television commercials to describe. Ask them to write down their observations about the techniques the food companies used to influence them to buy their product.
3. When the youth return with the completed sheet, ask the youth to share their observations about the television advertisements.

Time Required

5 to 10 minutes

Suggested Groupings

Individuals

Materials Needed

(*Materials provided in curriculum)

- **Television Advertising and Consumerism* (Appendix 7C)

Activity 7.3: Garden Concept Application

Getting Ready

1. Make copies of the *Garden Advertising* worksheet (Appendix 7D), one for each group.
2. Organize the class into small groups of 3 to 4 youth.

Facilitator Tip: these can be the same groups that were formed in Module 1, Activity 1. By doing so, the youth may continue developing teamwork skills with the same group members.

3. Provide each group with a sheet of flip chart paper and markers to answer opening questions.

Opening Questions/Prompts

1. Explain what you know about advertising.
2. Explain what you know about plants and in what ways they might advertise.
3. Explain why you think it might be important for plants to advertise.

Procedure (Experiencing)

1. Provide each group with one copy of the *Garden Advertising* worksheet.
2. Explain to the youth that they will go to the garden and make observations about the habitat plants in the garden. Ask them to answer each of the questions on the *Garden Advertising* worksheet.

Sharing, Processing, and Generalizing

1. Ask the youth to share what observed in the garden.
2. Follow the lines of thinking of the youth through their general thoughts, observations, and questions. If necessary, ask more targeted questions/prompts:
 - Explain what you noticed about how plants advertised, and how did you arrive at your conclusion?
 - Explain what you observed regarding similarities and differences in the way different plants advertise.
 - Explain how you originally chose the habitat plant you planted, and did your observations today differ from what you originally expected?

Facilitator Tip: This activity could be preceded by a lesson about pollinators to meet the California Science Content Standard for Grade 4 Life Sciences: living organisms depend on one another and on their environment for survival.

Time Required

60 to 75 minutes

Suggested Groupings

Small groups of 3 to 4 youth

Materials Needed

(*Materials provided in curriculum)

- Flip chart paper
- Markers or writing utensils
- **Garden Advertising* (Appendix 7D)

Facilitator Tip: The garden space should have been previously planted with habitat plants during Lesson 2.3 (Getting Physically Active Garden Application) so that the plants are now mature enough to attract pollinators and other beneficial insects.

Activity 7.4: Goal Setting Application

Getting Ready

1. Make copies of the *Goal Setting* worksheet (Appendix 7E), one for each youth.

Procedure (Experiencing)

1. Provide each group with one copy of the *Goal Setting* worksheet.
2. Ask the youth to take home the *Goal Setting* worksheet (Appendix 7E) and complete it with their families. They will answer the following questions:
 - What are some things you can do to make informed food choices?
 - What are some things your family can do to make informed food choices?
3. When the youth return with the completed sheet, ask the youth to share the goals they set for themselves and for their families.

Time required

5 to 10 minutes

Suggested Groupings

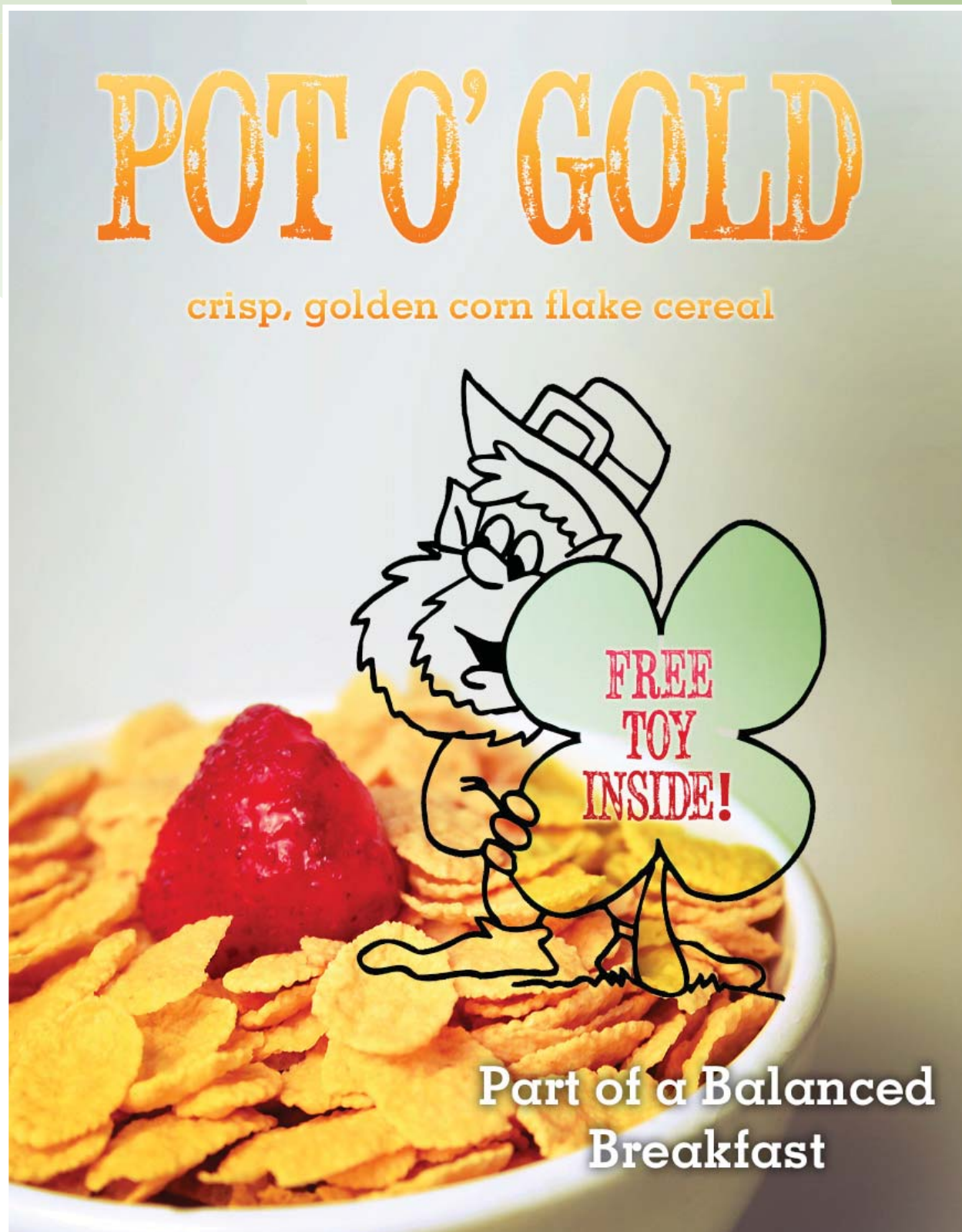
Individuals

Materials Needed

(*Materials provided in curriculum)

- **Goal Setting* (Appendix 7E)

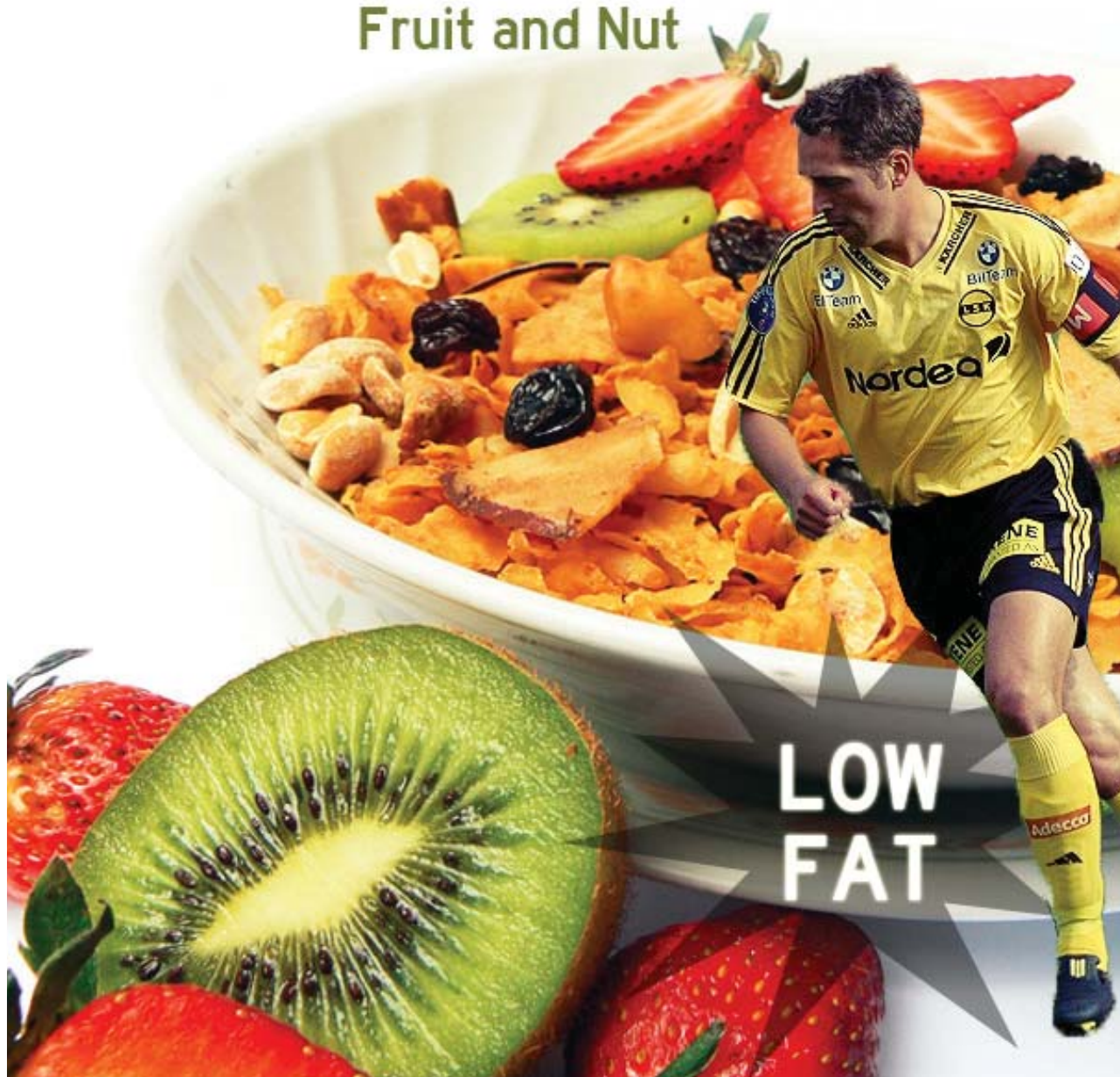
APPENDIX 7A: Cereal Boxes



APPENDIX 7A: Cereal Boxes

Heart Healthy Granola

Fruit and Nut



LOW
FAT

7B

APPENDIX 7B: Cereal Information Cards

Cinnamon Twists

Nutrition Facts	
11 servings per box Serving Size	3/4 Cup (31g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	130
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 220mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	8%
Dietary Fiber 2g	4%
Total Sugars 17g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 4mg	22%
Potassium 335mg	7%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Dr. Braintastic

Nutrition Facts	
11 servings per box Serving Size	3/4 Cup (28g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	100
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 90mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 24g	8%
Dietary Fiber 6g	21%
Total Sugars 18g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	5%
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 2mg	7%
Potassium 470mg	10%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Funky Monkey Crunch

Nutrition Facts	
11 servings per box Serving Size	3/4 Cup (30g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	180
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 30g	14%
Dietary Fiber 10g	36%
Total Sugars 20g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 6g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 180mg	14%
Iron 2mg	7%
Potassium 658mg	14%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

APPENDIX 7B: Cereal Information Cards

7B

Marshmallow Crunchies

Nutrition Facts	
11 servings per box	3/4 Cup (40g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	150
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 200mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 36g	13%
Dietary Fiber 3g	10%
Total Sugars 33g	
Includes 20g Added Sugars	40%
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 2mg	7%
Potassium 200mg	4%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Outer Space O's

Nutrition Facts	
11 servings per box	3/4 Cup (32g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	150
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 30g	14%
Dietary Fiber 5g	18%
Total Sugars 25g	
Includes 15g Added Sugars	30%
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 2mg	7%
Potassium 200mg	4%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Chocolate Rockets

Nutrition Facts	
11 servings per box	3/4 Cup (30g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	170
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 40g	14%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 35g	
Includes 20g Added Sugars	40%
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 2mg	7%
Potassium 200mg	4%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

7B

APPENDIX 7B: Cereal Information Cards

Peanut Butter Cocoa Crunchies

Nutrition Facts	
12 servings per box	3/4 Cup (30g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	115
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 2g	0%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 200mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 21g	14%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 9g	
Includes 6g Added Sugars	12%
Protein 2g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 2mg	1%
Iron 5mg	28%
Potassium 54mg	1%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Wild West Gold Nuggets

Nutrition Facts	
11 servings per box	3/4 Cup (30g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	170
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 40g	14%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 35g	
Includes 20g Added Sugars	40%
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 2mg	7%
Potassium 200mg	4%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

APPENDIX 7C: Television Advertising and Consumerism

When you are watching television with your family, select two food advertisements and then answer the following questions about them.

1. **Describe the first advertisement.**
2. **What are some techniques the first food company used to influence you to purchase their product?**
3. **Describe the second advertisement.**
4. **What are some techniques the second food company used to influence you to purchase their product?**
5. **What are the similarities and differences between the two television advertisements?**

7D

APPENDIX 7D: Garden Advertising

Garden Plant	Plant name and short description.	Is this the plant your group chose? If yes, explain why you originally chose this plant.	Describe ways you think the plant advertises to insects and other animals.	Describe the insects or other animals you observed.	Explain how similar or different the plant was to what you expected when you chose to plant it.
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

APPENDIX 7E: Goal Setting

What are some things you can do to make informed food choices?

What are some things your family can do to make informed food choices?