

ACTIVE CITIZENS

Learning partnership
Grundtvig

DIDACTIC GUIDE

Module 2: The labelling of products



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MODULE 2: "The labelling of products"

Basic part of the security and health of consumers.

1. PRESENTATION

The products talk through their labelling. That means, on the labelling of the products we can (or we should) find the necessary information for their correct use.

To learn to understand the language of the labels is important in order to carry out a correct purchase. Therefore, this multimedia material intends to make the consumers understand the importance and meaning of the labelling.

Usually, the most interesting thing for consumers is to learn how to compare: "Look for, compare and, if you find something better, buy it..." Therefore, as additional activity to the video included in the PowerPoint presentation, we propose to carry out a comparative analysis of labels.

2. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To be aware that "the products talk through their labelling".
- To be able to analyse the labelling of the purchased products.
- To learn to compare the labelling of the same product of different brands. To learn to choose.
- To make healthy purchases: to be able to distinguish between the various quality labels and to understand products with health claims.
- To know what the ecological labels stand for: Eco-label, energy label, food label...

3. CONTENTS

Labelling of industrial products

The labelling data has to be given, at least, in Spanish and has to be well visible, indelible and easily readable for the consumers.

The labels containing the obligatory data have to be placed directly on the product or on its container/packaging so that they are perfectly visible for the consumer or user, whereby in case of durable goods or because of space problem, the obligatory data can also be placed on leaflets and accompanying documents.

The minimum required data, which necessarily have to be mentioned on the labelling of industrial products reaching consumers, are the following ones in order to guarantee sufficient information:

- Usual or commercial product name or denomination
- Composition
- Recommended best-before date
- Product net content
- Basic characteristics of the product, instructions, warnings, advices or recommendations
- Production batch
- Company identification
- Place of origin in case its omission could lead the consumer into error
- Maximum power, supply tension and energy consumption in case of products that use electric energy for their normal use.
- Specific consumption and fuel type in case of products using other type of energy.

Food Labelling

The labelling are the mentions, indications, trademarks, labels, drawings or signs related to a food product which are placed on the packaging, document, note or labelling accompanying or referring to the mentioned food product.

The labelling may not lead the consumer into error, particularly:

- with respect to the characteristics of the food product and to its nature, identity, qualities, composition, quantity, duration, origin and way of production or obtaining.
- attributing effects and properties to the food product which do not exist.

- suggesting that the food product has special characteristics when all similar products have these same characteristics.
- Attributing precautionary, therapeutic or curative properties to a food product with respect to human illness, nor mentioning these properties without prejudice to regulations applicable to mineral waters and food products for a special nutrition.
- The term “ecologic” or its prefix “eco” can only be used in case of products which have follow a process of natural production.

The most interesting aspects for the user, with respect to the information given on the labelling, are as follows:

- From the HYGIENIC point of view, the best-before and expiry dates as well as the way of preservation which should follow. This will allow us to consumer the food with the maximum guarantee of hygiene and quality.
- From a NUTRITIONAL point of view, the list of ingredients, additives, etc. will allow us to value the importance of the product in the balance of our diet or to know whether the product is suitable regarding specific health alterations.
- From an ECONOMIC point of view, the product’s weight and its price relation will allow us to choose the most convenient product out of various options.
- The user should reject all kind of packed products without labelling or with insufficient and/or incorrect information, informing the corresponding Consumer Affairs Authorities at the same time.

In case of “small containers”, that means with a surface of less than 10 cm², it is only obligatory to mention the products’ denomination, net quantity and dates.

The labelling has to be expressed, at least, in the Official State Language, regardless of whether it is an import product, unless it is traditionally produced and distributed product on regional level of a Autonomous Community with own official language.

The products packed by food retailers and presented in the shops the same day of the packaging for its immediate sale, have to mention all the previous points except the batch number. As for the company identification, it has to refer to the packaging company.

The obligatory labelling information has to be mentioned on the packaging or on a label stuck together with the packaging.

Except for “small containers”, the following data has to be mentioned on the visual space:

- Sales denomination
- Net quantity
- Dates marking
- Alcoholic degree, if applicable
- In any case, the obligatory data has to be easily understandable and on a highlighted place so that it is easily visible, readable and indelible. The obligatory data on the labelling may not be hidden, covered or separated by other pictures or data.

Obligatory data of the labelling:

- Sales denomination of the product
- List of ingredients
- Quantity of certain ingredients or category of the ingredients
- Alcoholic degree in case of beverages with an alcohol content per volume of more than 1,2 per 100
- Net quantity in case of packed products
- Best-before date or expiry date
- Special conservation and use conditions
- Use instructions in case they are necessary for an adequate use of the food product
- Company identification: name, trade name or denomination of the producer or packaging company or seller within the European Union, and in any case the address
- Batch
- Country of origin

Nutritional labelling

It is only obligatory when it is mentioned on the label, at the presentation or in the advertising that the product has nutritional properties. In other cases, the nutritional labelling is optional.

The nutritional labelling contains data with respect to:

- Energetic value
- The following nutrients: proteins, carbohydrates, fibre, sodium and vitamins and salt in case of significant quantities.
- The data is structured as a table and the figures mentioned in columns. If there is no space it can be written in lines. In any case, clearly legible and indelible characters have to be used. In case of non-packed products, all the previously mentioned labelling data has to be given on a sign in a clear way.

Textile labelling

Textile products have a label with the following data:

- Producer, its denomination and address
- Number of Industrial Registry
- ID number of the importer if applicable
- Composition of the article
- Conservation method (optional)

The traders can label their textile products with registered brands adding the name, address and ID number. In these cases, the person in charge of the product becomes the trader.

In view of a textile product, the user has to look for all the precise information for its correct use and conservation on the label that is obligatory for each article so that the user should reject any textile product which is not correctly labelled.

The label must be a textile sewn on the article and must have the same useful life as the article. All containing information has to be easily readable and visible, and written, at least, in the Official State Language and with the information provided by the producer, clearly separated.

Aspects that contain the label:

COMPOSITION: Textile materials of which the article is composed.

CONSERVATION: The user receives information about the method to be used for a correct washing and use of the article and textile aimed at consumer and companies doing the washing and cleaning. Each article has to wear its own conservation label.

The label always refers to the hardest treatment which the article admits.

The most usual informative symbols are as follows:

TRAY: The article can be washed in the washing machine. The numbers inside the tray is the maximum wash temperature expressed in degree centigrade. A hand inside the tray means that the article can only accept hand wash. A line under the tray means that the spin-drying has to be reduced.

TRIANGLE: This symbol indicates that bleach can be used.

IRON: This symbol indicates that the article can be ironed. The points inside the iron indicate the maximum temperature which can be used.

CIRCLE: This symbol indicates that only dry clean is acceptable. The letters inside the circle indicate the different solvents for the dry clean. A line under the circle means that the dry clean has to be carried out with caution.

SQUARE: A circle inside the square means that it is possible to use tumble dryer.

When any of these symbols are crossed out, it means that is prohibited to carry out what they indicate.

Shoe labelling

The manufacturer is responsible for providing the label and guaranteeing the accuracy of the information which it contains.

In case the manufacturer is not located in Spain, this responsibility passes to the person in charge of launching the product on the Spanish market.

The retailer is responsible for the presence of the label on the shoes to be sold and has to be able to proof, in case of doubts, the correspondence between label and shoes.

The labelling has to indicate information about the composition of the shoes.

The labelling has to contain information about the three parts of the shoes:

- **Instep:** it is the exterior part of the structural element which is joined to the sole.
- **Outsole and insole:** is composed of the outsole of the instep and the insole which make up the interior surface of the shoe.
- **Sole:** it is the bottom of the shoe and is joined to the instep.

The composition can be indicated by pictograms or by text.

The labelling should contain information about the material which is majority, at least 80%, measured by the surface of the instep, insole and outsole of the shoe and in 80% of the sole volume.

In case no material represents at least 80%, it has to give information about the two main materials of which the shoe is composed.

The information has to be given on the shoe, either by pictograms or by text, and at least in Spanish.

The labelling consists in providing the obligatory information on, at least, one of the two shoes of the pair. It can be printed, stuck, stamped or using a tied medium.

The label has to be visible, fastened, and accessible and may not lead the consumer into error.

In case of using pictograms, they have to be large enough to facilitate their understanding.

4. DIDACTIC PROPOSALS

Workshops regarding labelling are classics and can be found in a wide range of didactic materials. Therefore, we will only mention their possibilities and ways of carrying them out.

The activity process could be as follows:

- In order to analyze whether the information of the labelling is correct, it is necessary to know what the law requires. Therefore, the first step should be to look for up-to-date information regarding the legal requirements.
- Once we have the list with the legal requirements, we can add more information answering to the question “What do I require from the labelling? This will help us to carry out a more complete analyze including our needs regarding the labelling.
- Finally, we can analyze whether, from the information provided by the labelling, we can answer the following question: For what is the product useful? That means whether we can use it correctly and without any problem for our health and security by reading the labelling.
- The whole process of the activity can be carried out in groups.
- In any case, the most interesting point is to compare. Therefore, we should analyze the labels of three different brands of the same product.
- At the end, we will carry out an idea-sharing session.

The results can be collected in the sheets for pupils number 1 and 2. Sheet number 1 is helpful to analyze the labels of any product. Sheet number 2 can only be used to analyze the labels of packed food products.

5. DIDACTIC SHEETS

SHEET FOR PUPILS No. 1

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS		
	1	2	3
What does the law require? 1 2 3 4 5 6			
What do I require from the labelling of this product? 1 2 3 4			
For what is the product useful? 1 2			

Conclusions:

SHEET FOR PUPILS No. 2

Comparative analysis of labels of packed food products.

ASPECTS TO BE ANALYZED	ANALYZED PRODUCTS		
	1	2	3
Name and BRAND of the product			
Responsible company			
Best-before date or expiry date			
Conservation method			
List of ingredients and additives indicating category (preservatives, oxidants,...)			
Production batch			
If applicable, nutritional value			

Conclusions:

Note: This sheet is useful to carry out a comparative analysis of the labels of food products. In case the labels of other products should be analyzed, it is necessary to include the corresponding legal aspects.