Unit Pricing and Other Shopping Strategies
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To The Educator:

Learners are most likely to remember the information presented at the beginning and ending of a lesson. This is referred to as the principles of primacy (what comes first) and recency (what comes last). The principles of primacy and recency tell us the beginning and ending of a lesson provide the strongest opportunity for learning and therefore require careful planning.

Don’t waste time at the beginning of the lesson with long welcomes and introductions. Briefly introduce yourself and the topic, discuss “voice by choice,” and move to the first activity. Plan lesson beginnings carefully to introduce the topic and help learners find their own connection to it. Once they have connected prior learning to the topic, learners are ready to hear new information and remember it.

The end of a lesson provides a powerful learning opportunity, too. Plan the closing carefully and intentionally to review key concepts, celebrate success and encourage new behaviors. Consider this as a process of “looking back and bridging forward.” Help learners set goals for using the information they have learned.

Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things.

- Cicero
Unit Pricing and Other Shopping Strategies

Who

Limited resource individuals and families who are seeking to improve their shopping skills in order to save money when shopping for food.

Why

It is often challenging for families with limited resources to be able to afford healthy foods. Careful comparison shopping for product quality and price will help stretch a family’s food budget.

Lesson Length

60 minutes

Where

This lesson will be held in community settings convenient to low-income learners. The facility should have tables and chairs for participants, as well as enough space for moving easily to different locations in the room.

What

The topics in this lesson include:
• The pros and cons of buying in bulk
• Using unit pricing to compare prices
• Avoiding food waste

By the end of this session, learners will have:
• Considered the pros and cons of buying grocery items in bulk
• Practiced using unit shopping to compare prices at the grocery store
• Explored ways to use leftover ingredients from a recipe
• Tasted a healthy dessert/snack
• Set a goal of using one new shopping strategy for saving money at the grocery store
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Teaching Materials and Supplies:

- Name tags
- Pens, pencils and markers
- 2 cans of pears – one large and one small of the same brand
- Flipchart
- Handout - Take Home Tips with Rise and Shine recipe on back
- Handout - Unit Pricing
- Inspirational Quotes - Choose a different quote for each group or have each group discuss the same quote

Introduction

Hi everyone, my name is ______________. I am excited about today’s lesson! We are going to talk about how to become a better shopper at the grocery store by comparing prices. We’ll also consider ways to avoid wasting food so that you make the most of your food purchases. You will learn some new ideas and have opportunities to share some of your own strategies for saving money when buying and preparing food. Our goal is for you to be able to make your food dollars stretch as far as possible so everyone in your family eats healthy food and enjoys homemade meals.

First, let’s talk about how this session will work. Today you will have lots of opportunities for participation, and I hope you will feel comfortable enough to contribute your thoughts and ideas. You won’t be required to talk to the whole group. I won’t call on anyone. Each of you can decide if you want to talk to the whole group or not. I call this “voice by choice.”

Let’s get started!
Anchor
To get us started thinking about how to manage money, we are going to take a look at some quotations about money and discuss what they mean to us.

Form groups with 2 or 3 people sitting close to you. Introduce yourselves to one another. I will give each group a quote about money. Talk with the members of your group about what the quote means to you. We’ll hear from each group in a few minutes.

Who will read your group’s quote and briefly tell us some of your group members’ thoughts and ideas about its meaning?

Now that we heard your thoughts on money, let’s take a look at how to manage money to cover our food needs throughout the month.

Add
Buying in Bulk
When you compare prices at the grocery store, very often (but not always) the larger version of a product is the better value when you compare the prices. But sometimes buying the larger bottle or package is not the right choice for you. Here are some questions to ask yourself before buying in bulk:

- Is this a product you and your family will use?
- Do you have enough money to buy the larger product?
- Do you have a place to store it?
- Do you have the storage containers you need?
- If the product is perishable, can you use it all before it spoils?

What are some products you usually buy in bulk to save money? What are some of the challenges you have experienced when you buy products in large quantities?
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Add Continued

Unit Pricing
Let’s take a closer look at comparison shopping. Most shoppers at the grocery store want to get the most for their food dollars. Grocery stores don’t make that easy for us! Here’s an example:

I need to buy canned pears and want to buy the less expensive choice.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canned pears</td>
<td>16 ounces</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned pears</td>
<td>28 ounces</td>
<td>$1.35</td>
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</table>

Which is the least expensive? Is it the smaller can for $1.00 or the larger can for $1.35? The only way to compare these items is to figure out how much 1 ounce of each can of pears costs.

To find out how much 1 ounce costs, divide the price by the number of ounces. (calculations have been rounded)

\[
\frac{1.00}{16} = 0.06 \text{ cents an ounce}
\]

\[
\frac{1.35}{28} = 0.04 \text{ cents an ounce}
\]

At $0.04 an ounce, the bigger can is the better buy.

Think of all the products you buy at the grocery store. Can you imagine doing the math every time you want to compare prices? Fortunately most stores give you help with making these comparisons. It is called unit pricing. The unit price of a food is displayed on the shelf on a sticker like this.

The unit price sticker gives you the price per unit (per ounce, per gram, etc.) just as we did when we compared the 2 cans of pears. With unit pricing, you do not have to do the math. The store has done it for you.

What did you discover about unit prices? Who has used unit pricing to make cost comparisons at the grocery store? What were some of the challenges you experienced? What are some of the benefits of using unit prices?
Tasting Activity

One way to save time and money is to plan ahead for using all the food you buy. Did you know that Americans throw out about 14% of the foods they buy at the grocery store? This is about $500 worth of wasted food each year per household. Think of the money you would save if you used all the food you buy instead of throwing it out when it spoils!

The best way to avoid wasting food is to plan meals and snacks for the coming few days or week before you go to the grocery store. Make a shopping list based on that plan and then stick to your list at the store. Your meal plan should take into account the shelf life of foods (how long the food items last until they spoil). You also should plan for using leftovers.

Here’s an example:
Buy a roast chicken. Serve it for dinner. Cut any remaining chicken off the bones and use it for another meal such as chicken quesadillas or chicken vegetable stirfry. Make a soup using the chicken carcass for the broth. Add some fresh, frozen or canned vegetables, and some leftover cooked pasta or rice. That stretches one chicken a long way!

How about another example? You can help me with this one. I made a vegetable stir-fry for dinner and have leftover vegetables. What are your ideas for using these leftover vegetables?

Today’s tasting recipe uses canned fruit. I like to stock up on both canned fruits and vegetables when they are on sale because they are so convenient and can be stored a long time. Canned fruit packed in water or light syrup is a healthier choice than fruit packed in heavy syrup.

Have you noticed that some recipes that use canned foods do not use the entire can? A smart shopper finds ways to use the remainder of the can either by doubling the recipe or using it in another recipe. Meal planning is so important in your efforts to save money because it helps find ways to avoid wasting food.

Today’s recipe is called Rise and Shine Cobbler. It can be served for breakfast or even for a snack or dessert. Canned peaches and pears were on sale this week – 2 (16-ounce) cans of pears for $1. The peaches were the same price.

Notice that this recipe does not contain a good source of protein. If you are preparing this for breakfast, serve it with low-fat yogurt or low-fat milk to provide protein needed to prevent your family members from getting hungry mid-morning. What are some other ways you could serve this recipe (for breakfast, dessert, or even as a side dish)?

Note:
Ideas might include using the vegetables in a salad, on a sandwich or with some chicken to make a taco.
Rise and Shine Cobbler

Serving size: 1 cup
4 servings

Ingredients

1 16-ounce can peaches, 100% juice packed
   or in light syrup, drained and sliced
1 16-ounce can pears, 100% juice packed
   or in light syrup, drained and sliced
1/2 cup prunes cut in half or dried cranberries
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 orange or 1/4 cup orange juice
1 cup low-fat granola or other crunchy, whole grain cereal

Instructions

1. In a large microwave-safe bowl, mix peaches, pears, prunes, and vanilla.

2. Rub an orange against a grater to remove 1 teaspoon of the orange peel. Then, cut the orange in half and squeeze 1/4 cup orange juice. Add grated orange peel and juice to fruit mixture. Stir. Or use 1/4 cup orange juice and omit the grated orange peel.

3. Top with granola or other crunchy, whole grain cereal.

4. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Let stand for 2 minutes.

5. Spoon into 4 bowls and serve warm.
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Away
Take a look at the Take Home Tips handout. It includes a list of some of the main ideas we discussed in today’s lesson. I also listed some goals for you to consider. Choose one or two goals you might try to reach. Circle the goal(s) you chose and post the handout on your refrigerator to remind you to try one or two changes in the coming week.

Included on the Take Home Tips handout is the recipe we tried today. Why not give it a try in the coming week?

Great job today! I really enjoyed talking about comparison shopping and avoiding food waste with all of you. I hope you enjoyed our session together and I look forward to seeing you again next time!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspirational Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bargain isn’t a bargain unless it’s something you need.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sidney Carroll</td>
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<tr>
<td>He who does not economize will have to agonize.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Confucius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I’ll tell you what they are.</td>
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<td>- James W. Frick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Save for a rainy day. When you don’t work, savings will work for you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- M.K. Soni</td>
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<td>I have learned to seek my happiness in limiting my desires, rather than attempting to satisfy them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- John Stuart Mill</td>
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<tr>
<td>It’s good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it’s good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure that you haven’t lost the things that money can’t buy.</td>
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<td>- George Lorimer</td>
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Take Home Tips

Unit Pricing and Other Shopping Strategies

Before buying in bulk, be certain you:

• Need the product
• Have enough money to buy the larger product
• Have a place to store it
• Have the storage containers you need
• Are able to use it before it spoils

Use unit pricing to compare prices at the grocery store.

Avoid wasting food by planning meals and snacks before shopping.

Buy foods that can be used in several different ways.

Set a Goal

I will buy foods in bulk my family can use without wasting.

I will use unit pricing to compare prices at the grocery store.

I will avoid wasting food by planning meals and snacks before shopping.

Other: ____________________________________
Rise and Shine Cobbler

Serving size: 1 cup
4 servings

Ingredients

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  or in light syrup, drained and sliced
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5. Spoon into 4 bowls and serve warm.
UNIT PRICE
$0.06
PER OUNCE

RETAIL PRICE
$1.00
CANNED PEARS
16 OZ. CAN

0111022287 03/14/13

UNIT PRICE
$0.04
PER OUNCE

RETAIL PRICE
$1.35
CANNED PEARS
28 OZ. CAN

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