

# READING MEDICINE LABELS

**Lesson Length:** 1.75 hours + Extension Activity

**Vocabulary & Expressions:** directions, uses, warnings, should/shouldn't, as needed, daily, once/twice a day, side effects (and examples of side effects), and other common medicine label vocabulary

**Language/Culture Point:** Using 'should' to give advice

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify important information on a medicine label in order to use it correctly

**Materials:** A variety of medicine bottles and packages, Directions, Uses, and Warnings Sentence Strips, Illness Scenario Cards, Scavenger Hunt Worksheet



## STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

| Time Frame   | Materials                                    | Teaching Strategies                      |
|--------------|--|--|
| 5-10 minutes | - A variety of medicine bottles and packages | - Authentic Materials<br>- Brainstorming |

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

- Place various bottles and containers of medication at each of the students' tables. Ask questions to get them thinking about using medication. When would you take this medication? How much would you take? Would it be a problem if you took more or less? What do you do when you are given a new medication, like a prescription from the doctor? How do you decide how much to take and when to take it?

## STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

| Time Frame    | Materials                                    | Teaching Strategies   |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|
| 10-15 minutes | - A variety of medicine bottles and packages | - Authentic Materials |

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

- Tell the class a story about a time you were sick. Explain what your symptoms were. Choose 3 medications that you may have had in your home. Explain how you read the labels to determine which medication to take. Read the labels and explain why you did

# READING MEDICINE LABELS

or didn't use that particular medicine. For example:

"One day I had a very bad headache. I wanted to take some medicine to feel better. I looked in my cupboard and found Tylenol, Ibuprofen, and Pepto-Bismol. (Hold these up.) I decided to read the labels to figure out which one to take. I looked at the uses first. (Read the uses for each one.) Tylenol and Ibuprofen would be ok for headaches. I checked the warnings to see if there was one I shouldn't have. (Read the warnings.) I decided to take Tylenol. But I needed to check how much. (Read the directions.) Ok. That's how I knew how much to take."

2. Ask students what information you needed to make a decision about medication. Write the words "directions," "uses," and "warnings" on the board. Discuss the meaning of each of these words. Ask the students to look at some of the medication in front of them and find those three words.
3. Point out that directions tell someone how much to take and how often to take it. Uses tell someone what illnesses and symptoms are helped by this medication. And warnings give specific information about who should not take the medication or if there is a maximum amount of the medication you can take.

## STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK


| Time Frame | Materials   | Teaching Strategies               |
|------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 10 minutes | - Directions, Uses, and Warnings<br>Sentence Strips  | - Word Sorts<br>- Sentence Strips |

## TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Read an example of a direction, use, or warning. Ask students to identify which category it belongs to. To practice this concept, pair students and have them work to sort sentence strips giving examples of directions, uses, and warnings. Ask them to put the sentence strips in the 3 categories.
2. Go over the answers with the class and make sure the students have the sentence strips in the right category. If possible, give all the students a master copy of the examples for their own reference.

# READING MEDICINE LABELS

## STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

| Time Frame | Materials  | Teaching Strategies  |
|------------|--|--|
| 10 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A variety of medicine bottles and packages</li> <li>- Illness Scenario Cards </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authentic Materials</li> <li>- Graphic Organizers</li> <li>- Scenario Cards</li> <li>- Think Aloud</li> </ul> |

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Explain that today you will be learning how to read medicine labels so that they are using correct information when taking medication or helping others with medication.
2. Create a grid on the board with five columns: name of medication, uses, directions, warnings, who should use this medication?
3. Choose one of the medications from the table. Look on the back and model looking for the three categories. Read each one as you find it. Make notes in the appropriate column on the board about what you find. Engage students by asking questions about the three categories, giving them a chance to practice the skills they learned in the previous activity.


For example, say, “Hmm... I wonder how many I should take. Where do you think I could find that? (Students respond with “directions.”) Here are the directions. It says, ‘Chew 2-4 tablets as needed.’ So I could take 2, 3, or 4 depending on how bad my symptoms are. Ok, I’ll write this down under directions...2-4 tablets, as needed. What is this medicine for? Where should I look to find that information? (Students respond with “uses.”) Ok, here are the uses. It says ‘For relief of headaches, fevers, toothaches, backaches and other mild or moderate pain.’ So this is a pain reliever. Let me write this under uses.... For mild or moderate pain relief. Can I give this to children? Where is that information? (Students respond with “warnings.”) Ok, I’ll look at the warnings. It says ‘contact a doctor before giving to children under the age of 12.’ Ok, so I have to call a doctor first.” (If possible, give each table a medicine bottle similar to the one you are reading. For example, if you have a few Tylenol bottles, you could all be looking at the Tylenol bottle.)

4. Once this is completed choose one of the Illness Scenario Cards and read it aloud. Several Illness Scenario Cards have been provided for you, as well as blank cards should you need to create your own scenarios to match the medications you’ve provided.
5. Conduct a Think Aloud in which you determine if the medication on the board is appropriate for the illness. Choose a student to read a medicine label to you. If it is

# READING MEDICINE LABELS

not, read another and repeat the process until you find a card that matches the use of the medication. Write the name of the person on the Illness Scenario Card in the final column to show that the medication would be appropriate for this person.



## STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

| Time Frame | Materials  | Teaching Strategies  |
|------------|--|--|
| 15 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A variety of medicine bottles and packages</li> <li>- Illness Scenario Cards </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authentic Materials</li> <li>- Graphic Organizers</li> <li>- Scenario Cards</li> <li>- Question Asking and Answering</li> </ul> |

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask a pair of students to complete the same task. Ask them to choose a medication from their table and look for the three categories. Provide assistance as needed.
2. Once they have had the opportunity to look at the medication, ask them for the name of the medication and the information that should go into each of the categories on the board. Ask them questions, such as when should I take this? What symptoms does it help? How much should I take? Are there any side effects? They should refer to the information they found to answer your questions.
3. Provide them with a couple of the Illness Scenario Cards, being sure that one of them matches the medication. Ask them to find which of the Illness Scenario Cards matches the medication, and write the name of the person on the card on the board.
4. Repeat the activity with at least one more pair of students, time permitting.

## STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK

| Time Frame | Materials  | Teaching Strategies   |
|------------|--|---|
| 25 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A variety of medicine bottles and packages</li> <li>- Scavenger Hunt Worksheet </li> <li>- Illness Scenario Cards </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authentic Materials</li> <li>- Scavenger Hunt</li> <li>- Scenario Cards</li> <li>- Problem Solving</li> <li>- Line Dialogue</li> </ul> |

# READING MEDICINE LABELS

## TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Place medication bottles around the room in various locations. Pair students and give a Scavenger Hunt Worksheet to each pair. Point out the medications located around the room and the information they need to complete the worksheet. Explain that they will work with a partner to read each of the medicine labels and write the information they've found on their worksheet. One student will read the medication bottle and the other will write. They should take turns reading and writing. Explain that they can summarize and paraphrase their findings.
2. Give students 10-15 minutes to move around the room to each station and practice reading the labels.
3. After they have finished reading the labels, check the answers with the class.
4. Give each student a scenario card. Pair the students using a line dialogue format. One student should read their scenario and the other should determine which medication on their list would be appropriate for that scenario. They can then switch roles and the other student reads their scenario card. When they are finished they should switch cards before moving to the next partner.
5. Bring the students back together. Read a few of the scenario cards and ask students how they responded.
6. Take time to answer any questions students may have about words or phrases they came across in their practice.

## STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

| Time Frame | Materials                                    | Teaching Strategies                  |
|------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 10 minutes | - A variety of medicine bottles and packages | - Authentic Materials<br>- Role Play |

## TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Point out the word "should." Ask students if they noticed that word on any of the medication labels. Explain that we use it in English to give advice. Give some examples of ways we use it.
2. Ask students to work with a partner. One partner should act out a symptom. The other partner should give advice using the word "should" and information from one of the medicine labels. For example, "You should take 2 tablets to help your headache." Tell

# READING MEDICINE LABELS

them that they can come up with their own advice as well, such as “you should rest” or “you should drink tea with lemon.”

## STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

| Time Frame | Materials                                    | Teaching Strategies                   |
|------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 10 minutes | - A variety of medicine bottles and packages | - Authentic Materials<br>- Exit Check |

## TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. As each student leaves the room, act out a symptom or illness. Ask them to recommend a medication and give you some important information about it using the label.

# READING MEDICINE LABELS



## EXTENSION ACTIVITY: FIELD TRIP

| Time Frame | Materials                                    | Teaching Strategies   |
|------------|--|-----------------------|
| Varies     | - A variety of medicine bottles and packages | - Authentic Materials |

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Have students bring in a medication from home. Ask them to prepare a brief presentation to the class about that medication. The presentation should include the uses, directions, and any warnings. They should also share a situation when that medication could be used. If relevant, they can also share ideas of other advice they have for someone in that situation. For example, someone with a cough could take cough syrup. After sharing the information from a cough syrup bottle, they might share that drinking tea, or gargling with salt water can also help a cough or sore throat. They may also want to share some interesting information about beliefs in their own cultures about dealing with symptoms.
2. Give each student a chance to present to the class.

