Questions:
Assume that you should eat 2000 Calories per day. The FDA recommends the following percentages for the breakdown of a 2000 Calorie eating plan.

30% - Fat  60% - Carbohydrate  10% - Protein
Based on one serving of each of the four foods you selected, calculate the percentages of kcals from fat, carbohydrate and protein.

What were some of the criteria you used to choose your four foods?
Students may answer taste, nutrition, labeling, etc.

Now that you have completed the worksheet, would your change any of your four foods? Why?

Follow-up questions

What is a health claim?
A health claim is a statement on the food label that describes the relationship between a food or food component and a specific disease or health-related condition. To make a health claim, a food must meet certain nutrient criteria set by the government.

The FDA allows health claims for eight diet and health relationships that are supported by sound scientific evidence. These include the following:

- Calcium and osteoporosis
- Sodium and hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Saturated fat and cholesterol and heart disease
- Fat and cancer
- Fiber-containing grain products, fruits, vegetables, and cancer
• Fruits, vegetables, and grain products that contain fiber and heart disease
• Fruits and vegetables and cancer
• Folate and neural tube defects (birth defects involving spinal cord or brain)

FSIS is expected to propose that the same health claims be permitted for meat and poultry.

**What other information will appear on the product label?**
In addition to ingredient and nutrition information, a product must include:

- Common or usual product name
- Net contents in weight, measures or count
- Total percent juice content (for juice drinks)
- Name and address of the manufacturer, packer or distributor
- Country of origin, if imported
- Approved health claims
- Descriptive terms if the product meets specified criteria e.g., “low in fat and cholesterol free.”

Most product labels also bear a Universal Product Code (UPC) for use in store scanner automated checkout systems.

**Will all foods have nutrition labels?**
No. Although most packaged foods will have nutrition labels, the following foods are exempt from the labeling regulations.

- Foods of insignificant nutritional value (e.g., plain coffee, tea, and most spices)
- Foods sold in restaurants
- Foods sold for immediate consumption (e.g., hospital cafeterias, airplanes)
- Foods prepared in food stores (e.g., deli, bakery, and candy store items)
- Foods sold by foodservice vendors (e.g., mall cookie counters, sidewalk vendors, and vending machines)
- Bulk foods not for sale to consumers
- Foods in very small packages (Products may provide a telephone number or address a consumer can use to obtain nutrition information.)
- Foods manufactured by small businesses
- Medical foods

Foods that are exempt from nutrition labeling must still comply with ingredient, net content, and other regulations. Imported foods will carry nutrition labels unless they qualify for one of these exemptions.

**What does the ingredient list tell me?**
The ingredient list tells you exactly what is in a food. Ingredients are listed by weight in descending order (from most to least - those in the largest amounts are listed early (near the top on the list)). For example, bread that has “wheat flour” first on the ingredient list means that wheat flour is the main ingredient in the food.

The ingredient list is also helpful for someone with a food sensitivity or a food allergy. For example, a person with a peanut allergy can check a product ingredient list to see if it contains...
any form of peanuts. If you are in doubt about the ingredients, call or write the food manufacturer.

**Why do some labels list only two vitamins and two minerals?**

Vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron are the only vitamins and minerals required on the label. This reflects a focus on nutrients of public health concern that may help reduce the risk for certain diseases.

For example, you may not see thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin on a nutrition label even if a food contains these nutrients. The requirement to list these nutrients was dropped, since most Americans get plenty of thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin.

Food manufacturers are allowed to list certain additional vitamins and minerals on a voluntary basis. If vitamins and minerals are added as nutrient supplements to a food, or a claim is made about them, they must be listed on the nutrition label.

**Extension Activities**

Write a business letter to a food company found on label requesting more nutrition information.

Have students critically read government regulatory agencies articles such as the FDA and USDA

Have students perform a geographical mapping of location of major food companies

Ask students to discuss packaging design, advertisements and commercials, letters of inquiry, directions for food preparation (serving size).

**Student assessment**

Give the following writing components to each student as a guide to their food label outputs:

- Students identify serving sizes of various foods
- Review the nutrition label on food packages
- Record as much detail as possible

Assign points for the following components of the food label worksheets and questions:

- Students completely fill in the food label worksheet
- Students demonstrate a clear understanding of serving sizes and the food pyramid daily recommendations