

PACKINGHOUSE SIMULATION

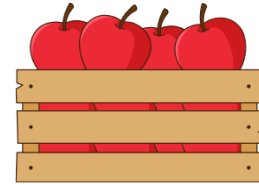
ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES



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ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

1. Students will learn about the history of orchards and packinghouses in the Okanagan
2. To deepen their understanding, students will participate in a packinghouse simulation
3. Can be connected to local economies and the environment



BIG IDEA: Our rights, roles, & responsibilities are important for building strong communities; the pursuit of valuable natural resources has played a key role in changing the land, people, & communities of Canada; natural resources continue to shape the economy & identity of different regions of Canada

COMPETENCY:

Inquiry, significance, continuity & change, ethical judgement

CONTENT:

Key events/developments in the local community; how people's needs/wants are met in communities; the history of the local community; resources & economic development in different regions of Canada

WHAT WILL WE KNOW:

- History of orchards and packinghouses
- How packinghouses worked
- Economic & environmental implications of packinghouses

FURTHER INQUIRY:

Field Trip Suggestions

1. Winfield Packing House
2. Lake Country Museum and Archives



We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which the Lake Country Museum is situated, where this lesson was developed, is on the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples.

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Lake Country Heritage and Cultural Society

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Packinghouse Simulation

Learning Objective(s)	Students will learn about the history of packinghouses and their importance to the local economy and culture. They will critically analyze various methods of packing fruit that were used in the past and still used today. This activity is a great way to introduce students to a piece of the Okanagan’s history and economy.
Suggested Grades	Elementary
ACTIVITY	
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit in various states (perfect, some bruising, mold, etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Toy fruits can be used, or you can utilize balls of different colours to represent different grades of fruit</i> • Tissue paper (to wrap the fruit) • Boxes (for packing the fruit) <p>Think about the different ways students can mark the varying grades (different coloured packaging, stickers, etc) and make those available to them. For this activity, it will be up to them how they package and market their fruit.</p>
Introduction	<p>In the early years, the fruit industry was very labour intensive. Apples were packed in the orchard until growers could afford to build small packinghouses. Soon, larger packinghouses were built by cooperatives and independent shippers. In these buildings, fruit was drawn by belts along sorting tables to the packing benches. Bench packing utilized the division of labour: dumpers, sorters, packers, pressmen, labellers, and box makers.</p> <p>Your class will roleplay the bench packing method. Divide students into groups so that there are students who will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort the apples • Pack the apples • Label the boxes
Packing Simulation	<p>Once the groups have been made, inform each group of their task.</p> <p><u>The apple sorters</u>: they must decide how they will sort the varying grades of apples and then wrap them according to their decision. Do</p>

	<p>they use a sticker to differentiate? Different coloured wrapping?</p> <p><u>The packers</u>: they must decide how they want to pack the varying grades of apples. Do they separate the apples by grade? Do any apples get thrown out? Put a mix of each grade in a box?</p> <p><u>The labelers</u>: they must decide how to market the apples and price them. If there is a box of lower-grade apples, how can they create a label and/or price the box so that potential buyers will still be interested?</p>
<p>Debrief</p>	<p>Once the class has packaged all the apples, have a class discussion to close the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After working through all those apples, what do you imagine life was like for people who worked in the early packinghouses? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What would life have been like for farmers before packinghouses when they had to do all that work themselves? • If you had infinite resources, what technologies would you create to make this process even better?
<p>Historical Context</p>	<p>In the early 1900s, the introduction of irrigation significantly impacted the economy in Oyama, leading local ranches to evolve into orchards. This created a demand for a local packinghouse. In 1913 the Vernon Fruit Union opened as a cooperative packinghouse, which was supported by the Oyama growers. An independent packinghouse was opened by Stirling and Pitcairn on the canal in 1914 and, by 1916, individual orchardists began entering the packinghouse business. Some orchardists continued to pack their own fruit.</p> <p>With this increase in production, hand grading at the Vernon Fruit Union was replaced by two grading machines and they built a storage plant, the Vernon Storage Company, opened in 1919. Production continued to grow so much that by 1921, they had built a new, larger packinghouse. By 1950, they were packing 3000 boxes per day.</p> <p>At the packinghouses, fruit was sized and graded. Fruit considered not suitable for the market due to bruises, blemishes, or poor colour were culled. (<i>To cull: something picked out and put aside as inferior</i>). Thousands of pounds of culled fruit were dumped and left to rot. But, in World War I, small companies began dehydrating the culls and canning the dried fruit. By the 1930s, companies began processing the culls into apple juice.</p>

Further Inquiry

Field Trip Suggestions:

- Winfield Packinghouse
- [The Lake Country Museum and Archives](#) has a wide range of exhibits and activities for your class to take advantage of. There is also a playground and field behind the building and the lake nearby that students can make use of for various activities.

There may be the opportunity for a guest lecturer to visit your classroom or be present at the museum with the knowledge of more local history stories. If interested, please contact the Museum ahead of time.

Suggested Resources:

- LCMA website resources: *Student Essays: History of Winfield*, various authors, *The Story of Waitamata: The Towgood House*, by Vera Towgood, *The Kalamalka Women's Institute*, by Laura Neame, *Conferring the Electoral Franchise upon Women*, by Carol Thomson
- Okanagan Historical Society Reports: *Apple Packing in the Okanagan Valley*, by Clement Battye, 48:16-19,
- *Working Women in the Early Packinghouses*, by Brianna Shannon, 78:131-134
- [Winfield Packinghouse video](#), by Alyssa Parfitt
- [BC Tree Fruits Winfield Packinghouse - Apple Bags](#), video BC Tree Fruits
- [A Rich and Fruitful Land](#), BC Tree Fruits BC Tree Fruits