Concept
Some packaging is better for the environment than others.

Objective
Students will gain an understanding of the resources which make up some typical packages and potential ways to reuse or recycle them.

Method
Students will answer questions about different containers.

Materials
Aluminum can, plastic bag, cardboard box, steel can, glass bottle, attached The Story of...

Subjects
Social Studies, Language Arts

Skills
Communicating information, designing, evaluating, gathering information

Time
Several class periods.

Vocabulary
Biodegradable, photodegradable, raw materials, natural resources, reuse, recycle, pollution, processing

Resources
Glass Packaging Institute; Reynolds Aluminum Company; The Aluminum Association; American Forest and Paper Association; Vicki Cobb, The Secret Life of School; Brad Herzog, S is for Save the Planet: A How-to-be-Green Alphabet; Norman Smith, If It Shines, Clangs and Bends, Its Metas; Suzanne Hilton, How Do They Get Rid Of It?

3R's of the Common Core
Parallel Activities
K-3, Gum Wrappers
7-8, Potato Cakes
9-12, Packaging Preferences

Information
Components of the Waste Stream
Packaging

Resources
Green Consumption, Consumerism and Sustainable Development
Solid Waste and Recycling

How Does Packaging Contribute to Waste?

Leading Question
What kind of container do you think is best for the environment?

Procedure
1. Divide the class into five groups, each group representing one of the following common types of packaging:
   a. aluminum can
   b. plastic bag
   c. cardboard box
   d. tin can
   e. glass bottle
2. Each group will do some research into their packaging type using the attached The Story of... questions as guidelines for inquiry.
3. After completing their research, each group will produce a written report and either a multi-media component or visual display to present to the class explaining the discoveries about their type of packaging.
4. As a class, compare reports, discuss advantages and disadvantages of each type of container and decide which are most desirable.
5. Teacher to hold up examples of mixed packaging. Class to discuss problems caused by mixed packaging. See 4-6, III.A.1, Pondering Packaging.

Evaluation
Was the student able to report about a packaging type?
Common Core Alignments

GRADE 4
CC.SL.4.2
Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration
CC.SL.4.4
Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas
CC.W.4.8
Writing: Research to Build & Present Knowledge

GRADE 5
CC.SL.5.2
Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration
CC.SL.5.5
Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas
CC.W.5.8
Writing: Research to Build & Present Knowledge

GRADE 6
CC.SL.6.2
Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration
CC.SL.6.5
Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas
CC.W.6.8
Writing: Research to Build & Present Knowledge

Classroom Activities
A. Try to use reusable containers for your lunch. Keep a tally of how many of the students bring reusable containers each day for a week. Award a prize to the student making the most effort.
B. Collect all the packaging from products you buy for a period of time. Could you have made wiser choices in your product selection? Could the manufacturer have made wiser choices in the package production?
C. Design an environmentally sound package for a product.
D. Write a letter thanking a local restaurant for using recyclable packaging for its takeout containers or a letter requesting that the restaurant consider changing its current packaging.
The Story of ...

Name: ______________________________________________________ Date: _________________________

I am a/an _______________________ container.

Please tell my story by finding answers to the following questions:

1. Describe me.

2. What are some of the things I am used for?

3. What am I made of?

4. What natural resource do I come from?

5. Are large amounts of my raw materials available?

6. How does it affect the earth when companies extract my raw materials?

7. Does it take a large amount of energy to produce me?

8. Am I thrown away after I am used?

9. Am I biodegradable? Am I photodegradable?

10. Do I disintegrate if I am thrown into a river, lake or ocean? If so, by what chemical/biological means do I disintegrate?

11. What are some ways in which I could be reused?

12. Can I be recycled? Am I recycled? Where am I recycled?

13. What happens to me when I am recycled?

14. Who is responsible for disposing of me?

15. Who pays the cost for disposal?

16. Do you think I am a good container? Why or why not?