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# Project-Based Unit: The Supermarket Challenge

**Subject Focus:** Integrated Life Skills (Math, English, Economics, Health, Career Ed)

**Grade Level:** High School (Age 17)

**Duration:** 1 Week

**Designed For:** A homeschool student with dyslexia and dysgraphia, focusing on hands-on, project-based learning and minimizing written-heavy tasks.

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## Materials Needed:

- Smartphone or camera for photos/videos
  - Computer or tablet with internet access
  - Calculator
  - Access to a local grocery store
  - Weekly grocery flyers (physical copies or online versions)
  - A set budget for a real shopping trip (e.g., \$50-\$75)
  - Several empty food packages (e.g., cereal box, can, snack bag)
  - Optional: Apps like voice-to-text, mind-mapping software, a video editing app, or the Fooducate app (for scanning nutrition labels).
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## Daily Lesson Plan

### Day 1: The Supermarket Detective - Store Layout & Psychology

**Learning Areas:** Social Studies (Marketing & Consumer Behavior), Math (Spatial Awareness), Art (Design)

#### Learning Objectives:

- The student will identify and analyze common grocery store layout strategies.
- The student will explain orally how product placement is designed to influence shopper behavior.
- The student will document observations using photography or video instead of written notes.

#### Activities:

1. **Introduction (15 mins):** Watch a short, engaging video on YouTube about the psychology of supermarket design (search for "grocery store tricks" or "supermarket layout psychology"). Discuss the key ideas: Why is milk always in the back? Why are fruits and vegetables at the front? What are "end caps"?
  2. **The Field Trip Mission (60-90 mins):** Go to a local grocery store. The student's mission is to be a "Supermarket Detective." Using a smartphone, they will document evidence of the strategies discussed.
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- **Mission Checklist (Verbal or on a simple typed sheet):**

- - Take a photo of the "decompression zone" (the open space at the entrance).
- - Film a short video walking the path to the milk/dairy section. Is it far? What do you pass on the way?
- - Find and photograph three "end cap" displays. What kinds of products are on them?
- - Go to the cereal aisle. Where are the sugary, kid-focused cereals located (high, middle, low)? Where are the "healthy" adult cereals? Take pictures.
- - Find the impulse-buy items near the checkout lanes. Document them.

3. **Debrief (20 mins):** Back home, look through the photos/videos together. Have a conversation about the findings. What was the most surprising discovery? How does the store layout guide shoppers? No writing required; the discussion and visual evidence are the assessment.

**Dyslexia/Dysgraphia Support:** This day is almost entirely visual, kinesthetic, and verbal. Photography replaces note-taking. The checklist can be read aloud. The assessment is a conversation, not a report.

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## Day 2: Cracking the Code - Advertising & Nutrition

**Learning Areas:** English (Media Literacy), Science (Nutrition), Health

### Learning Objectives:

- The student will deconstruct advertising language on food packaging.
- The student will locate and interpret key information on a nutrition facts label.
- The student will create a short audio or video report comparing marketing claims to nutritional reality.

### Activities:

1. **Marketing vs. Reality (30 mins):** Gather 3-4 different food packages. Look at the front of the packages. Discuss the words used: "Natural," "Source of Fiber," "Low Fat," "Made with Real Fruit." What feeling or idea are these words trying to sell?
2. **Label Investigation (45 mins):** Turn the packages over to the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient list.
  - Focus on the most important parts first: **Serving Size, Calories, Sugars, Sodium.**
  - Look at the ingredients. Can you pronounce them all? Is sugar one of the first three ingredients? (If so, it's a primary component).
  - (Optional) Use the Fooducate app to scan the barcode and get a simple letter grade (A, B, C, D) and an easy-to-understand explanation of the product's healthiness.
3. **Creative Report (30 mins):** The student chooses one product and creates a 1-2 minute "exposé" video or audio recording.
  - **Format:** "On the front, this cereal claims to be 'part of a healthy breakfast'... but when we look at the back, we see it has 15 grams of sugar per serving! That's almost 4 teaspoons of sugar."
  - This allows for creative expression and consolidates learning without writing.

**Dyslexia/Dysgraphia Support:** Activities are tactile (handling packages) and verbal. The app provides auditory and simple visual feedback. The final project is a recording, which removes the barrier of writing and spelling.

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## Day 3: The Master Planner - Budgeting & Meal Prep

**Learning Areas:** Math (Budgeting, Percentages, Decimals), Life Skills

**Learning Objectives:**

- The student will create a meal plan for three dinners based on a set budget.
- The student will use grocery flyers to find prices and calculate the total estimated cost, including sales tax (GST).
- The student will compile a shopping list that stays within the assigned budget.

**Activities:**

1. **Set the Challenge (15 mins):** Announce the budget for the week's shopping trip (e.g., \$60). The challenge is to plan three complete, reasonably healthy dinner meals for two people that can be bought within this budget.
2. **Flyer Scavenger Hunt (45 mins):** Using physical or online grocery flyers, the student finds the main ingredients for their three chosen meals (e.g., Spaghetti Bolognese, Chicken Stir-fry, Tacos).
  - As they find items, they should add them to a shopping list. This can be done via:
    - Typing on a computer or phone.
    - Using a voice-to-text app.
    - Drawing or pasting pictures of the items into a document.
3. **Do the Math (30 mins):** Using a calculator, list the price of each item next to it.
  - Add up all the prices to get a subtotal.
  - Calculate the sales tax (e.g., if GST is 5%, multiply the subtotal by 0.05).
  - Add the subtotal and the tax to get the grand total.
  - **Crucial step:** Is the grand total under budget? If not, what can be swapped out? (e.g., brand name for a store brand, a different cut of meat that's on sale). This encourages problem-solving.

**Dyslexia/Dysgraphia Support:** Flyers are highly visual. A calculator removes the stress of manual computation. The shopping list can be created in multiple, non-written formats.

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## Day 4: Behind the Scenes - Careers & The Supply Chain

**Learning Areas:** Career Education, Social Studies (Economics)

**Learning Objectives:**

- The student will identify at least four different jobs within a grocery store.
- The student will explain, in their own words, the basic path food takes from farm to store.
- The student will create a simple visual or oral "Job Profile" for one supermarket career.

**Activities:**

1. **The Food's Journey (20 mins):** Watch a video about the food supply chain (search "how food gets to the grocery store" or "supply chain for kids" for simple, visual explanations). Discuss the different steps: Farm -> Processing Plant -> Warehouse -> Truck -> Supermarket.

2. **Career Exploration (30 mins):** Brainstorm all the jobs someone can have at a grocery store (Cashier, Stocker, Baker, Butcher, Deli Clerk, Manager, Produce Clerk, Marketer, etc.). Look up brief, simple job descriptions online for a few that seem interesting.
3. **Job Profile Project (40 mins):** The student chooses one job to profile. Instead of a written report, they can:
  - **Create a Mind Map:** In the center, write the job title (e.g., "Produce Manager"). Branching out, add key duties (ordering, stocking, quality control), required skills (organized, good with people), and tools they use (knives, scales, computer). Use drawings and keywords.
  - **Record a "Day in the Life" Interview:** The student pretends to be the person with that job and answers questions you ask them. ("So, as a baker, what's the first thing you do when you get to work in the morning?").

**Dyslexia/Dysgraphia Support:** Learning is done through video and discussion. The final project is creative, verbal, and/or visual, completely avoiding the need for a traditional essay.

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## Day 5: The Grand Finale - The Shopping Trip & Presentation

**Learning Areas:** All (Culminating Project)

### Learning Objectives:

- The student will successfully navigate a grocery store to purchase items from their pre-made list.
- The student will manage a budget during a real-world transaction.
- The student will orally present a summary of their key findings from the week's activities.

### Activities:

1. **The Real Deal (60-90 mins):** Go to the grocery store with the budget and the shopping list from Day 3.
  - The student is in charge. They navigate the store, find the items, and place them in the cart.
  - Encourage them to check unit prices on shelf tags if there are options. This is a great real-time math challenge.
  - At checkout, the student handles the transaction. If using cash, have them estimate the change they should get back. They are responsible for checking the receipt for accuracy.
2. **Project Presentation (30 mins):** Back home, after putting the groceries away, the student gives a short, informal presentation of their week-long project. This is a "show and tell" of their learning.
  - **Structure:**
    - 1. Show the photos from Day 1 and explain the #1 trick they think supermarkets use.
    - 2. Show the food item from Day 2 and explain its marketing trick vs. its nutritional reality.
    - 3. Show the receipt from the shopping trip and explain if they came in under budget.
    - 4. Briefly share the most interesting fact they learned about their chosen supermarket career from Day 4.
3. **Wrap-up:** Celebrate the successful project! Maybe cook one of the planned meals together.

**Dyslexia/Dysgraphia Support:** The entire day is a hands-on, kinesthetic learning experience. The final assessment is a low-pressure, oral presentation that allows the student to demonstrate their full understanding through speaking and visual aids, celebrating their effort and knowledge.

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