

W1.1 CAN WE PACKAGE SMARTER?

Different types of packaging



Packaging from nature

The banana is a good example of an object in nature that is packaged. The peel of the banana gives signals to its surroundings. When the peel of the banana is green it is not yet ripe to be eaten. When the skin has become brown, the banana is no longer edible. The communication of signals can, therefore, be a function of packaging.



Tangerines in plastic

This example shows exactly what it is all about. It is not necessary to pack all our products in plastic; nature often has solutions for this. In this case, tangerines are peeled first, and then rewrapped in plastic. Is this really necessary?



Earphones with your mobile phone

With your mobile phone you often get earphones to listen to music. All the different parts that come with a phone are often packaged separately in plastic. Because of this we produce more plastic waste than necessary.



Pizza boxes

Pizza boxes, and many other takeaway containers, are made from recyclable materials, but when cheese or other food residues stick to the cardboard, they are no longer recyclable. The problem is that oil often seeps into the cardboard. The oil cannot be separated from the packaging making the material less valuable and less marketable for buyers.



Coffee cups

Although they consist mostly of paper, disposable coffee cups are lined with plastic which is firmly attached to the paper so that the cups are watertight and can therefore contain liquid. The difficulty of recycling coffee cups is increased by the fact that they are contaminated with liquids. This means that cups cannot be recycled in standard recycling plants and should instead be taken to special facilities. The reality is that less than 1% of coffee cups are ever recycled.