Name: _____ Date: _____

Pack It Right: Heavy Things Close to Your Back

Circle group

A backpack looks simple. You fill it with books, zip it, and go. But a pack that is loaded badly can make your shoulders and back sore. A few smart habits can make it feel lighter.

First, think about what goes inside. Put the heaviest things, like a big textbook, close to your back. That is the part of the pack that touches you. Heavy things far from your body pull you backward. Then you lean forward to keep your balance. Lighter things, like a jacket or a lunch, can go toward the outside.

Next, check the straps. Use both of them. If you carry a pack on one shoulder, one side does all the work. Your spine may twist. Tighten the straps so the pack sits high and snug. It should not hang low by your waist. Some packs have a belt around the middle. Clip it. Your strong hip muscles will share the weight.

Last, clean out your pack now and then. Old papers and things you do not need add weight. Your back carries what you carry. If your pack still feels too heavy, ask a teacher or parent for help.

Questions

1. Where should the heaviest things go in a backpack?

_____

_____

2. What happens when heavy things sit far from your body?

_____

_____

3. Why is it better to use both straps?

_____

_____

4. Where should a pack sit on your back?

_____

_____

5. What does clipping the belt around the middle do?

_____

_____

6. Why should you clean out your pack now and then?

_____

_____

Words to know

habits: things you do over and over without thinking
balance: staying steady without falling over
spine: the row of bones down the middle of your back
snug: fitting close and tight in a comfortable way

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pack It Right: Heavy Things Close to Your Back

Triangle group

A backpack seems simple, because you stuff in your books, zip it shut, and go. But a pack that is loaded badly can make your shoulders ache and your back feel sore by the end of the day, and a few smart habits can make it feel much lighter.

Start with what goes inside. Put the heaviest items, like a big textbook, close to your back, in the part of the pack that touches you. Heavy things that sit far from your body pull you backward, and then you have to lean forward to keep your balance, while lighter things, like a jacket or a lunch, can go toward the outside.

Next, check the straps. Use both of them. Carrying a pack on one shoulder makes one side of your body do all the work, and your spine may twist to make up for it. Tighten the straps so the pack sits high and snug instead of hanging low near your waist. Some packs also have a belt around the middle, and if you clip it, your strong hip muscles will share the weight.

Last, clean out your pack once in a while. Old papers, extra water bottles, and things you do not need all add weight. Your back carries what you carry. If your pack still feels too heavy, ask a teacher or parent how to lighten the load.

Questions

1. Where should the heaviest items go in a backpack?

_____

_____

2. What happens when heavy items sit far from your body?

_____

_____

3. Why is it better to use both straps?

_____

_____

4. Where should a pack sit on your back?

_____

_____

5. What does clipping the belt around the middle do?

_____

_____

6. Why does the writer suggest cleaning out your pack once in a while?

_____

_____

Words to know

habits: things you do over and over without thinking
balance: staying steady without falling over
spine: the row of bones down the middle of your back
snug: fitting close and tight in a comfortable way
lighten: to make something weigh less

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pack It Right: Heavy Things Close to Your Back

Square group

A backpack seems like a simple object. You cram in your books, zip it shut, and head out the door. However, a pack that has been loaded carelessly can leave your shoulders aching and your back sore by the end of the day. A handful of sensible habits can make it feel considerably lighter.

Begin with what goes inside. Place the heaviest items, such as a large textbook, close to your back, in the section of the pack that touches you. Heavy objects that sit far from your body pull you backward, and then you are forced to lean forward in order to keep your balance. Lighter items, like a jacket or a lunch, can go toward the outside.

Next, examine the straps. Always use both of them. Carrying a pack on a single shoulder makes one side of your body do all of the work, and your spine may twist to compensate. Tighten the straps so that the pack sits high and snug rather than dangling low near your waist. Some packs also have a belt around the middle. If yours does, clip it, and your strong hip muscles will help to share the weight.

Finally, clear out your pack every so often. Old papers, spare water bottles, and anything else you do not need all add extra weight. Your back carries whatever you carry. If your pack still feels too heavy, ask a teacher or parent how to lighten the load.

Questions

1. Where should the heaviest items be placed in a backpack?

_____

_____

2. What happens when heavy objects sit far from your body?

_____

_____

3. Why is it better to use both straps?

_____

_____

4. How should a pack sit on your back?

_____

_____

5. What does clipping the belt around the middle accomplish?

_____

_____

6. Why does the writer recommend clearing out your pack every so often?

_____

_____

Words to know

habits: things you do over and over without thinking
balance: staying steady without falling over
spine: the row of bones down the middle of your back
snug: fitting close and tight in a comfortable way
lighten: to make something weigh less

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Pack It Right: Heavy Things Close to Your Back

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Pack It Right: Heavy Things Close to Your Back

Easier · 194 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.5

1. Close to your back.
2. They pull you backward, so you lean forward to keep your balance.
3. On one shoulder, one side does all the work and the spine may twist.
4. High and snug, not hanging low by your waist.
5. It lets your strong hip muscles share the weight.
6. Things you do not need add weight that your back has to carry.

Triangle: Pack It Right: Heavy Things Close to Your Back

This passage · 230 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.9

1. Close to your back.
2. They pull you backward, so you lean forward to keep your balance.
3. Carrying a pack on one shoulder makes one side do all the work and may twist the spine.
4. High and snug, not hanging low near your waist.
5. It lets your strong hip muscles share the weight.
6. Unneeded items add weight that your back has to carry.

Square: Pack It Right: Heavy Things Close to Your Back

Harder · 243 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.1

1. Close to your back.
2. They pull you backward, so you must lean forward to keep your balance.
3. On a single shoulder, one side does all of the work and the spine may twist to compensate.
4. High and snug, not dangling low near your waist.
5. It lets your strong hip muscles help share the weight.
6. Items you do not need add extra weight that your back must carry.