

# VITAMANIA

**By:** Genepool Productions

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The documentary *Vitamania*, as the name suggests, provides the viewer with insight into the popularity and manufacture of synthetic vitamins. The presenter, influential science communicator Dr Derek Muller, known for his YouTube channel *Veritasium*, demonstrates his commitment as a researcher and advocate for unravelling the use of vitamins and their role in diet.

Dr Muller travelled around the globe interviewing historians and specialists in the field of nutrition to delve into the big questions surrounding the increasingly popular supplement industry. The *Vitamania* documentary — produced by Emmy Award-winning Australian filmmakers, Genepool Productions — is just one part of this resource. It also includes: lesson plans, extended content, interviews with experts, animations, quizzes, debate topics and supporting teacher resources. *Vitamania* delivers a brief overview of the function of vitamins and the range of foods that provide essential nutrients and then delves into the science behind vitamins and the history of their discovery. This resource is linked to relevant Australian Curriculum descriptors in Science as a Human Endeavour and Science Inquiry Skills, as well as understandings in biology and chemistry. With significant links to scientific content, this resource could also be effectively used in health and physical education subjects with effective outcomes.

This resource shows little bias. It provides students with accurate, impartial information on the vitamins found in foods as well as those manufactured and sold all over the world. It also provides students an opportunity to make informed decisions about natural versus synthetic vitamins and teaches that good nutrition can be achieved from a well-balanced diet.



The *Vitamania* resource is presented in a fun and entertaining way using musical jingles and relatable characters to educate viewers. Scientific terms and techniques are explained in plain language, which accounts for a younger audience. This resource will appeal to a wide age group but is designed for middle school students (Years 7–10), however, the information is still of relevance to senior students. The concepts presented are based on a scientific approach to nutrition and the resource highlights how little society knows about the manufacture of synthetic vitamins, highlighting the power of marketing. Students viewing this resource from a senior nutrition class found the information engaging and easy to understand. Of particular interest to them was the ability to watch the short clips and animations, which they could later revisit for revision.

The resource is very well priced considering all of the extra bonuses available in the package, which include: (a) a selection of lesson plans, posters and activities (best for middle school students) that challenge students to answer relatable, real-world questions; and, (b) extension activities challenging students to become more analytical thinkers and providing quality authentic tasks for students to demonstrate justification for their reasoning. Quiz questions, answers, and debate topics are also provided making this resource an enjoyable and engaging package. Bonus scenes and animated sequences have also been developed to allow students to delve deeper into the topic. Throughout, the resource's information is presented in a student-friendly form, which — overall — would be a great addition to your schools' resources.