



[KidsHealth.org/classroom](http://KidsHealth.org/classroom)

## Teacher's Guide

This guide includes:

- Standards
- Related Links
- Discussion Questions
- Activities for Students
- Reproducible Materials

## Standards

This guide correlates with the following National Health Education Standards:

Students will:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
- Demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Your state's school health policies:  
[nasbe.org/HealthySchools/States/State\\_Policy.asp](http://nasbe.org/HealthySchools/States/State_Policy.asp)

Peer pressure gets a bad rap. For many people, it brings to mind an image of kids influencing other kids to do risky things like smoke, drink alcohol, or shoplift. But it can also be a force for good, exposing kids to positive new ideas and role models. Help your students explore the benefits and pitfalls of peer pressure with these activities.

## Related KidsHealth Links

### Articles for Kids:

#### Dealing With Peer Pressure

[KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/peer\\_pressure.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/peer_pressure.html)

#### How Cliques Make Kids Feel Left Out

[KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/clique.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/clique.html)

#### The Story on Self-Esteem

[KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/self\\_esteem.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/self_esteem.html)

#### Alcohol

[KidsHealth.org/kid/stay\\_healthy/body/alcohol.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/body/alcohol.html)

#### What Kids Say About: Drinking Alcohol

[KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/poll\\_alcohol.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/poll_alcohol.html)

#### What You Need to Know About Drugs

[KidsHealth.org/kid/grow/drugs\\_alcohol/know\\_drugs.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/grow/drugs_alcohol/know_drugs.html)

#### Smoking Stinks!

[KidsHealth.org/kid/watch/house/smoking.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/watch/house/smoking.html)

#### Stealing

[KidsHealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/learning\\_problem/stealing.html](http://KidsHealth.org/kid/health_problems/learning_problem/stealing.html)

## Discussion Questions

*Note: The following questions are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.*

1. What is a peer? Is a peer always a friend? Do adults have peers?
2. A peer can have a lot of influence over the way a kid acts and thinks about things. Have you noticed this at school? In what ways?
3. Sometimes friends can be a bad influence on each other, like when they talk each other into doing things like cheating or lying. Other times, they can be a good influence, like when they encourage each other to work hard or be kind. Name some examples of good, or positive, peer pressure. Name some examples of bad, or negative, peer pressure.
4. Have you ever experienced peer pressure? How did it feel?
5. Is it easy or hard for kids to go against what their friends are doing? Why?



## Activities for Students

*Note: The following activities are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.*

### Silent Signals

#### Objectives:

Students will:

- Participate in a classroom experiment about peer pressure
- Discuss the nonverbal communication of peer pressure

#### Materials:

- Markers and white paper

#### Class Time:

- 15 minutes

#### Activity:

Note to instructor: To begin, send two helpers out of the room on a quick errand. Note: Be sure to choose less sensitive students who won't mind being singled out later.

While they are out, tell the rest of the students that they're going to participate in an experiment about peer pressure. Have the students clear their desks, then hand out the markers and paper. Leave markers and paper on the helpers' desks as well. Ask each student to write the word "APPLE" in large letters and display the paper on their desk. Tell the class they are not to talk to the returning students, even if they ask what's going on. No giggling either!

Now wait for the helpers. What will they do when they return? Will they ask for an explanation? Will they ignore the signs because they make no sense? Or will they pick up their markers and write the word "APPLE" because everyone else has?

Afterward, ask the helpers why they did what they did. What made them follow along - or not? How was this an example of peer influence?

#### Extensions:

1. Peer pressure can occur even when people don't say a word. As a class, brainstorm ways that peer pressure can be communicated through actions; for example, everybody doing, or wearing, or liking the same thing. How can body language also make someone feel like they are or aren't part of a group (hugging, huddling, sitting together at lunch, eye-rolling, staring, giggling, pointing)?
2. Brainstorm ways students can help make your classroom a place of positive influences.



## Think First

### Objectives:

Students will:

- Respond to various peer pressure scenarios
- Explore possible positive and negative outcomes
- Enhance their decision-making skills

### Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- “Think First” handout, pen or pencil

### Class Time:

- 40 minutes

### Activity:

Whether it’s preschoolers playing in a sandbox or grannies having tea, one thing’s for sure: Friends influence friends. The trick is to know when that influence is leading you down the wrong path instead of the right path - and then to have the courage to do something about it.

Today, we’re going to take a look at five examples of peer pressure. For each, we’re going to determine the **problem** (what is being asked of you), the possible **consequences** (both the good and the bad), and what action you think you should take. Afterward, we’ll discuss your responses. Which of these decisions were the easiest to make? Which were the hardest?

### Extension:

Ask for volunteers to role-play a few of these scenarios in front of the class. Practice different ways of refusing to go along when you know you’re being pressured to do something wrong.

## Reproducible Materials

### Handout: Think First

[KidsHealth.org/classroom/3to5/personal/growing/peer\\_pressure\\_handout1.pdf](http://KidsHealth.org/classroom/3to5/personal/growing/peer_pressure_handout1.pdf)

### Quiz: Peer Pressure

[KidsHealth.org/classroom/3to5/personal/growing/peer\\_pressure\\_quiz.pdf](http://KidsHealth.org/classroom/3to5/personal/growing/peer_pressure_quiz.pdf)

### Answer Key: Peer Pressure

[KidsHealth.org/classroom/3to5/personal/growing/peer\\_pressure\\_quiz\\_answers.pdf](http://KidsHealth.org/classroom/3to5/personal/growing/peer_pressure_quiz_answers.pdf)

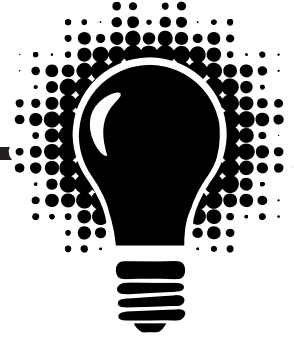


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Think First

Instructions: Here are five peer pressure situations. For each situation, use the chart below to think about whether it would be a good idea to follow along or not.



**Problem:** What does my friend want me to do? Is it something good or bad? Kind or mean? Healthy or unhealthy? Legal or illegal? Is it something you would do if your parents were watching?

**Consequences:** What could happen if I do it? Imagine any possible good results: Will you learn something positive? Will you be helping someone? Imagine any possible bad results: Can you get hurt? Can you get in trouble? Can someone else get hurt or in trouble?

**Action:** Should I do it? Will you be proud of your choice afterward? Would your parents be proud of your choice?

1. You're studying for tomorrow's quiz when some of your teammates come by. They want you to shoot some hoops with them. "You're not going to nerd out on us, are you?" they ask.

Problem:

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Consequences:

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Action:

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. You're at the store, wishing you had enough money for some candy. Your friend says, "Just take it! It's no big deal. The clerk's not even looking."

Problem:

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Consequences:

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Action:

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3. Your friends are trying to get you to try out for the school musical, but you're not sure you have the guts. "Come on, do it! You have a great voice," they say. "We'll be there to cheer you on."

Problem:

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Consequences:

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Action:

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your friend asks to “borrow” your homework - again - because he didn’t do it last night. He says if you don’t give it to him, you won’t be invited to his party this weekend.

Problem:

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Consequences:

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Action:

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5. You’re playing video games with your friends when one of them mentions a 5K race that’s coming up. You’ve never run a race before and aren’t sure you should start now, but your friend says, “I bet we can do it. Look, I printed out this training plan. Let’s start tomorrow.”

Problem:

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Consequences:

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Action:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Quiz

1. Peers are:

- a) people about your own age
- b) classmates
- c) teammates
- d) all of the above

2. In “peer pressure,” the word pressure means:

- a) hurting
- b) pushing
- c) influence
- d) ignoring

3. True or false: Peer pressure is always bad.

4. Fill in the blanks: When friends try to influence you to do things that are harmful or wrong, it’s called \_\_\_\_\_ peer pressure. When friends try to influence you to do things that are helpful or kind, it’s called \_\_\_\_\_ peer pressure.

5. True or false: Only kids and teens have to deal with peer pressure.

6. List two things kids might do to try to get other kids to do what they want: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

7. List two reasons why kids might give in to peer pressure: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

8. List two ways friends can be a bad influence on each other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

9. List two ways friends can be a good influence on each other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

10. True or false: People can influence each other without even speaking.



## Quiz Answer Key

1. Peers are:

- a) people about your own age
- b) classmates
- c) teammates
- d) all of the above

2. In “peer pressure,” the word pressure means:

- a) hurting
- b) pushing
- c) influence
- d) ignoring

3. True or false: Peer pressure is always bad.

4. Fill in the blanks: When friends try to influence you to do things that are harmful or wrong, it’s called negative peer pressure. When friends try to influence you to do things that are helpful or kind, it’s called positive peer pressure.

5. True or false: Only kids and teens have to deal with peer pressure.

6. List two things kids might do to try to get other kids to do what they want: Any two of the following: tease, call names, threaten, say they’re not cool, exclude from group, ignore, etc.

7. List two reasons why kids might give in to peer pressure: Any two of the following: to seem cool, to seem brave, to get in with a group of friends, to impress others, etc.

8. List two ways friends can be a bad influence on each other: Any two of the following: they can encourage each other to smoke, drink, cheat, lie, steal, bully others, act lazy, act disrespectful, not do their homework, etc.

9. List two ways friends can be a good influence on each other: Any two of the following: they can encourage each other to work hard in school or sports, try a positive new activity, believe in themselves, exercise, read a new book, be kind, be honest, etc.

10. True or false: People can influence each other without even speaking.