



Preview – Information



Thank you for your interest in this Mega Bundle. This product contains multiple Workbooks and Google Lesson Slides. Within this preview, you will see:

- ✓ A selection of Ready-To-Use Google Lesson Slides for each unit.
- ✓ A selection of worksheets included in each workbook.

When you make a purchase, you will receive a folder that contains each of the .pdf workbook files and links to where you can make copies of the Google Lessons units to your Google Drive.

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Google Slides Lessons Preview





Alberta Health and Wellness Wellness Choices Unit – Grade 9

3-Part Lesson Format

Part 1 – Minds On!

- Learning Goals
- Discussion Questions
- Quotes
- And More!

How Media and Stereotypes Impact Body Image

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think social media has such a strong effect on how teens feel about their bodies?
2. How can seeing "highlight reels" online change how we see ourselves in real life?
3. Why do people compare themselves to influencers or celebrities?

Think Before You React

Instructions: Read each situation and choose the most appropriate healthy response.

Situation 1: "You're not that tall!" "Why would you ask that?" "No way, you're amazing just as you are." "I miss, one year I had bad days."	Situation 2: "You're not the best at your job." "I don't even decide your work." "Maybe if you showed others who it would help." "You're probably overthinking it!"	Situation 3: "You're not looking like the other students in your class." "They don't even look like that in real life." "Body types come from bodies." "Try them out first—it's intense but worth it!"
Situation 4: "You could use a little more time." "Yeah, I don't have more either." "What's that for? I love how you feel inside, you're beautiful!"	Situation 5: "You're not like the others, and that's weird." "I guess that's true." "Yeah, because we're everything."	Situation 6: "You're not like the others, and that's weird." "I've had enough, you're kidding!" "You don't need skills to get this, you're tough." "That's just how your media works now."

Part 2 – Action!

- Surveys/Polls
- Matching
- Drag and Drop
- Videos
- And More!

Part 3 – Consolidation!

- Exit Cards
- Quick Draw
- 3-2-1 Reflection
- One-Sentence Summary

Exit Card – Media & Body Image Messages

Write one thing you learned today about how media and stereotypes affect body image that you want to remember or use.

The Best Thing I Learned Today is...



Alberta Health and Wellness Wellness Choices Unit – Grade 9

Sorting Self-Talk: What Builds Body Confidence?

Sort each statement by dragging it to the left if it supports positive body image.

I'm proud of what my body can do.	I hate the way I look.	My body is strong, capable, and growing.	I choose to be kind to myself.
I need to be skinny to be accepted.	I wish I looked like people online.	Everybody is different and that's okay.	I'll never be good enough.
I deserve respect no matter my size.	Some will never understand my body.	I'm too fat/thin to feel confident.	I appreciate my body for getting me through each day.
I can't wait that—I don't look good enough.	I choose to be kind to myself.	My worth is not based on how I look.	Other people's bodies are better than mine.

What Help or Hurt Your Mood

Sort each item into the category based on whether it is likely to help you stay focused and feel good, or may lead to energy crashes and mood swings.

Helps Brain & Mood	Hurts Brain & Mood
Chips	Unusual
Whole grain bread	Walnuts
Salmon	French fries
Candy	Soft drinks / soda
Spinach / leafy greens	Banana
Bacon	Sausage
Carrot	Yogurt
Hamburger	Doughnut

Who Can You Count On?

Drag the people you can count on into the circle. Leave out those who may not be safe or helpful.

Coach	Gossipers	Close Friend
Bulies	Parent	Help Line
Strangers online	Sibling	Influencers
Counsellor	Teacher	Dramatic friends
Youth Worker	Neighbour	Talky peers



Alberta Health and Wellness Wellness Choices Unit – Grade 9

How Stereotypes Impact Health Choices

Match each possible health consequences with its stereotype.

1 Boys must be tough	Don't ask for help	Give in to peer pressure
2 Girls should be skinny	Bethel up emotions	Hide pain or stress
3 Talking about feelings is weak	Skip meals or over-eat	Try nicotine, risk addiction
4 Wiping looks cool	Asking mental health support	Girls avoid sports
5 Boys shouldn't cry		
6 Please let him/her drink alcohol		
7 Only boys are athletes		
8 Being cool means you're invisible		

Artistic

How Stress Affects the Brain

Drag each effect of stress to the brain image to show how it can impact how we think, feel, and learn.

Trouble focusing	Difficulty organizing thoughts
Increased energy	Troubled hours
Struggling to plan ahead	Trouble following instructions
Laughing more often	Poor memory
Easily distracted	Making careless mistakes
Improved test scores	Slower decision-making
Racing thoughts	Faster reflexes
Overthinking simple problems	Better sleep
Confused thinking	Forgetfulness

School Safety

<input type="checkbox"/> Drill	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindness
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire	<input type="checkbox"/> Respect
<input type="checkbox"/> Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Lockdown	<input type="checkbox"/> Wellness
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Support



Workbook Preview



Grade 9 – Health Unit

Wellness Choices

Learning Strategies		Students will make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others.
	Skill and Procedures	Pages
W9.1	Use knowledge of a healthy, active lifestyle to promote and encourage family/peer/community involvement	7-16, 88-92
W9.2	<p>Preview of 80 pages from this product that contains 144 pages total.</p>	
W9.3		
W9.4	Analyze and develop strategies to reduce the effects of stereotyping on body image; e.g., health risks of altering natural body size/shape to meet media ideal	17-32, 73-76
W9.5	Develop strategies that promote healthy nutritional choices for self and others; e.g., adopt goals that reflect healthy eating, encourage the placement of nutritious food in vending machines	7-11, 33-37, 62-67
W9.6	Analyze addictions; e.g., stages, kinds, and resources available to treat addictions	38-43, 68-76, 82-87
W9.7	Evaluate implications and consequences of sexual assault on a victim and those associated with that victim	50-54

Grade 9 – Health Unit

Wellness Choices

Learning Strategies		Students will make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others.
	Skill and Procedures	Pages
W9.8	Develop strategies to promote harm reduction/risk management; e.g., differentiate between choosing personal challenges or acting impulsively, encourage others to evaluate risks	44-49
W9.9	Analyze and evaluate laws and policies that promote personal, community and workplace safety; e.g., driving, boating, employment standards	55-61, 82-92
W9.10	Assess the quality and reliability of health information provided by different sources; e.g., on the Internet	93-97
W9.11	Use personal resiliency skills; e.g., seek out appropriate mentors, have a sense of purpose, have clear standards for personal behaviour	93-97
W9.12	Determine "safer" sex practices; e.g., communicate with partner, maintain abstinence, limit partners, access/use condoms/contraceptives properly	98-103
W9.13	Identify and describe the responsibilities and resources associated with pregnancy and parenting.	104-114
W9.14	Develop strategies that address factors to prevent or reduce sexual risk; e.g., abstain from drugs and alcohol, date in groups, use assertive behaviour.	104-114

NAME: _____

WELLNESS CHOICES

PREVIEW



Making Wellness Choices for Everyday Life

What Is Wellness?

Wellness means taking care of your whole self—your body, your mind, and your relationships with others. It's about more than just avoiding sickness or getting better when you're sick. True wellness includes how you feel emotionally, how safe and supported you are, and how well you connect and communicate with the people around you. When you make positive choices for your wellness, it helps you concentrate better in school, feel more confident in yourself, and handle stress in healthier, more effective ways. You're not just avoiding problems—you're building a stronger, healthier version of yourself. Good wellness doesn't happen all at once—it comes from the small, everyday decisions you make, like choosing to rest when tired, being kind to yourself, or reaching out for help when needed.

The 5 Parts of Wellness

To be truly well, you need to take care in all five areas. These are the parts of wellness that help you grow into a healthy, happy person.

- **Physical Wellness** – Keeping your body healthy through sleep, exercise, and good food choices.
- **Emotional Wellness** – Understanding your own feelings and deal with them in safe ways.
- **Social Wellness** – Building and maintaining relationships with friends, family, and classmates.
- **Mental Wellness** – Keeping your brain sharp and healthy through learning and problem-solving.
- **Spiritual Wellness** – Understanding your values, beliefs, and feeling like your life has purpose.



Wellness Habits That Make a Difference

Even small changes in your habits can lead to big improvements. The more consistent you are, the better you'll feel.

- Get 8 to 10 hours of sleep every night to help your brain and body rest.
- Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Be active for at least 60 minutes daily—walking, biking, dancing, or playing sports.
- Drink 6–8 cups of water per day and limit sugary drinks.
- Take breaks from screens, especially social media, to avoid burnout.
- Practise mindfulness, breathing exercises, or journaling to manage emotions.
- Talk to a trusted adult or friend when you feel stressed, sad, or overwhelmed.

How Your Choices Affect Others

Your personal choices can influence the people around you, both in good and bad ways.

- Helping a friend or sibling shows kindness and builds trust.
- Staying calm during arguments sets a positive example.
- Avoiding drugs, vaping, or alcohol shows others that health comes first.
- Respecting boundaries helps everyone feel safe and included.

Making smart choices today creates a better future for you and your community.

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Wellness includes how you treat other people.	True	False
2) Only physical health matters when talking about wellness.	True	False
3) Getting enough sleep can improve your focus.	True	False
4) Spiritual wellness always means following a religion.	True	False
5) Talking to someone helps with emotional wellness.	True	False

SketchSketch a "Wellness Hero" who models healthy habits. Label the drawing with
wellness habits.**Questions**

Answer the questions below.

1) What are two benefits of making good wellness choices?

2) Why is emotional wellness important for teens?

Story: Wellness Habits and Healing Practices

The Wellness Challenge

"You're seriously doing a wellness challenge?" Lucas raised an eyebrow as he looked at Zara from across the cafeteria table, holding a half-eaten sandwich.

"Yup," Zara said confidently, biting into her apple. "Ms. Sinclair said we could earn bonus marks if we tracked our wellness habits for a full week—sleep, food, exercise, stress. Figured I'd give it a shot."

Lucas chuckled. "But you basically live off bubble tea and three snacks a day, right?" Zara grinned. "Exactly. That's why I need this. It's for a reason."

That night, Zara wrote in her log and started keeping track of her day. She was surprised to learn that Canadian teens are supposed to get 8 to 10 hours of sleep every night, but most—just like her—don't. On day two, she skipped her usual social media scrolling and put her phone away at 10:00. She fell asleep by 10:30 and woke up feeling more rested than usual.

By Wednesday, she had made more changes: swapping chips for carrot sticks, started drinking more water, and even looked up Clara's Food Pyramid. She learned that a balanced plate means half fruits and vegetables, one-quarter whole grains, and one-quarter protein. One evening, she even surprised her family by cooking chicken, rice, and stir-fried vegetables. After school, she told Lucas, "Only 39% of Canadian teens get 60 minutes of physical activity a day. So today I walked home and did a beginner yoga routine."

"Yoga?" Lucas asked with a laugh.

"Clara does it to help with her anxiety and says it helps her sleep better," Zara replied.

Lucas nodded thoughtfully. "My Granny used to do herbal baths and smudging. She believed it helped clear her mind and body."

"Really? That's so interesting. I read that Indigenous healing practices focus on balance—emotional, physical, and spiritual. Some even use healing circles to support each other."

On Thursday, Lucas joined her for a walk after school. They talked about different ways people take care of their health, like acupuncture, which Lucas had tried once for a sports injury.

"Turns out," Zara said, checking her phone log, "there's more than one way to be healthy. It's not just gym class and apples." By Sunday, Zara submitted her wellness log. Her sleep had improved, her mood was more stable, and she hadn't skipped breakfast all week.

"Ready for another round?" Lucas asked Monday morning, tossing her a banana.

Zara smiled. "Yep. Taking care of yourself works." And just like that, the challenge became a habit—a new, healthier routine.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) A balanced plate is mostly protein.	True	False
2) Consistent habits are important for long-term wellness.	True	False
3) Herbal remedies are part of alternative health care.	True	False
4) Skipping meals helps improve mental focus.	True	False
5) Emotional health affects physical wellness too.	True	False

Questions Write your answers to the questions below.

1) What are three things that support a healthy lifestyle?

2) Name two alternative health practices and their benefits.

List

Write 5 things you could do this week to improve your sleep.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Activity – Healthy Habit Planner

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will create and follow a personalized weekly plan that includes fitness, healthy meals, goal setting, and gratitude. This activity builds awareness of how consistent choices contribute to physical and emotional wellness.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Printed copy of the *Weekly Wellness Plan* template
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: colour pencils



Instructions

How will you complete it?

1. At the beginning of the week, take time to think about what you want to improve or focus on. In the Main Goals box, write down your goals for your personal wellness. Make sure your goals are clear, realistic, and achievable. These goals will guide your choices and actions throughout the week.
2. In the daily activity boxes for each day of the week, write down daily wellness activities that you plan to do. You can repeat some activities to mix it up to stay motivated and discover what you enjoy.
3. In the Healthy Meals section, plan balanced meals that you will try to eat during the week. These meals should include at least one of the following: fruits or vegetables, whole grains (like brown rice or oatmeal), or a healthy protein (like eggs, beans, tofu, chicken, or fish). Try to plan meals that you'll enjoy and have access to at home or school.
4. Write in the "I'm Grateful For" Box: Use this space to write one thing you are grateful for. It could be something small like a compliment you received, a kind gesture from a friend, a beautiful sunset, or just feeling proud of yourself for making healthy choices.
5. Once the week is over, take a few minutes to review your planner. Look at the activities you completed and the meals you ate.

Healthy Habit Planner

★ Main Goal



Monday

What I'm Grateful For:



Tuesday



Wednesday



Healthy



Thursday



Saturday



Sunday

☐ Mon

☐ Tue

☐ Wed

☐ Thurs

☐ Fri

☐ Sat

☐ Sun

Write

Explain how healthy habits and wellness practices help your body and mind.
Use these questions to help guide your writing:

1. *What are three healthy habits you know or use?*
2. *How do food, sleep, and exercise help you feel better?*
3. *What can happen if you don't follow healthy habits?*
4. *What is one wellness practice you'd like to try?*
5. *How do these habits help you manage stress?*
6. *How do these habits help you now and in the future?*

PREVIEW

Newspaper: How Media and Stereotypes Impact Body Image

Teens Speak Out on Body Image and Media Pressure

As social media use continues to grow among teens, so does concern about body image and self-esteem. With the constant stream of photos, videos, and influencer content, many young people feel pressure to meet unrealistic standards. Recent studies show that over 70% of Canadian youth feel pressure to look a certain way—often influenced by what they see online and in advertising.

A 2024 Youth Mental Health Survey found that over 70% of Canadian teens are unhappy with their bodies. In a survey concerning body image, 58% said that body image has a direct impact on their self-esteem. From Instagram to TikTok, teens are constantly exposed to edited, filtered, and posed content that presents a highly idealized version of beauty.

These polished images make it easy for teens to compare themselves—and just as easy to feel like they don't measure up. "Social media presents a highlight reel, not reality," explains Dr. Natasha Byrne, a youth psychologist based in Calgary. "Many teens compare themselves to these idealized images and start believing they're not good enough. This can lead to serious mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, disordered eating, and even self-harm."

Some teens, however, are beginning to push back against these harmful ideas. Fourteen-year-old Ava Morales, a Grade 9 student in Edmonton, says she struggled with body image throughout middle school. "I'd scroll through fitness influencers and fashion accounts and think I had to look like them to be pretty," Ava shared.

"Then I learned how much editing goes into those posts. It helped me stop comparing myself."

Advertising and popular media also play a big role in shaping unrealistic expectations. Girls are often told to be thin and petite, while boys are encouraged to be tall and muscular. Teens who don't fit these narrow stereotypes may feel judged, excluded, or even ashamed of how they look.

"Stereotyping based on size, shape, or gender creates real harm," says Dr. Byrne. "It teaches young people that their worth is based on appearance. That's not only false—it's dangerous."

Effects go beyond just feelings. According to a 2024 survey, 1 in 4 Canadian teens have skin issues or over-exercised due to body image concerns. These behaviours can lead to long-term physical and emotional health problems.

In response, some schools have introduced media literacy and body positivity programs. These lessons help students critically think about the images they see and challenge the idea of worth based on more than appearance. "Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes," says Dr. Byrne. "It's time we teach that message everywhere—from classrooms to newsfeeds."



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Social media often shows edited and filtered images.	True	False
2) More than half of teens feel happy with their bodies.	True	False
3) Boys never feel body image pressure from media.	True	False
4) Stereotypes often link thinness to success.	True	False
5) All social media images reflect real life.	True	False

Body Image
Brainstorm

or draw 4 things that make you confident that have nothing to do with



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What are two ways social media can affect how teens see their bodies?

2) Why is it harmful to compare yourself to edited images online?

Activity – My Real Self Post

Objective

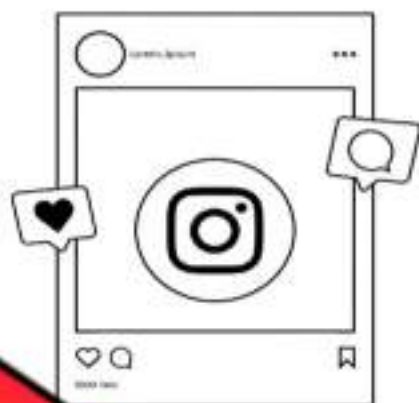
What are we learning about?

Students will explore how social media shapes body image and self-perception. They will reflect on their true identity and values and create a positive Instagram-style post that promotes positivity and body confidence.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Printed Instagram template
- Pencils, erasers
- Pencil crayons or markers (optional)

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

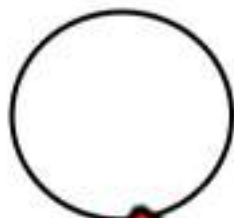
1. Create a unique and positive @username in the space provided – it should reflect something true about who you are.
2. In the circle, draw a fun or symbolic “profile photo” – it can be a face, an object, or a symbol of your values or personality.
3. In the big image box, draw a picture that shows your real self – something you’re proud of, something you love to do, or how you want to be known (not just what looks good online).
4. In the caption space, write a message or quote that shows confidence, self-acceptance, or something encouraging you’d want others to hear.
5. Include hashtags that support wellness and body positivity like: #RealNotPerfect, #MyTrueSelf, or #HealthyIsHappy.
6. Use colour to bring your post to life and show your personality.

Name: _____

20

Curriculum Connection
W.9.4

My Real Self Post



@ _____

PREVIEW



**Two Stars
And A Wish**

Identify two strengths (stars) and one area for improvement (wish) about your Instagram post.

Write two strengths and one area for improvement of your work.

PREVIEW



Using Positive Self-Talk to Build Confidence

What Is Self-Talk?

Self-talk is what you say to yourself in your mind. It's like your personal inner voice that's always with you, narrating your experiences. Sometimes, this voice is helpful and kind. Other times, it's negative and hurtful. The way we talk to ourselves can change how we feel and act each day. Whether you realize it or not, your inner voice can shape your mood, motivation, and confidence levels.

Why It Matters

Positive self-talk builds confidence and encourages you to take on new challenges. When you tell yourself you can do something, you're more likely to try and put in your best effort. It's like giving yourself a pep talk. Negative self-talk, on the other hand, can stop you from trying altogether, even if you're capable of succeeding. It affects self-esteem, decision-making, and even friendships by making you doubt yourself.

The Canadian Mental Health Association says that teens with positive self-talk have learned to be kinder to themselves and handle stress more easily. These thoughts can help us stay calm and focused on tough situations. When we speak kindly to ourselves, we reduce anxiety, improve our mental health, and make more confident choices.

Negative self-talk may include saying things like:

- "I'm terrible at this."
- "I'll never be good enough."
- "Everyone is better than me."

These thoughts often aren't true but can feel very real in the moment when emotions are strong. Over time, they can cause low confidence, sadness, or anxiety. A recent Help Phone survey found that **64% of teens** struggle with negative thoughts during times of school stress, peer pressure, or social media use.

Change the Way You Talk

The good news is you can change your self-talk with practice and awareness. Start by recognizing when your thoughts are negative. Then, question them. Is that true? Would I say that to my best friend? Would I believe it if someone said it to me? Here are some examples of how to flip your self-talk:

- "I can't do this." → "This is hard, but I'll keep trying."
- "I always mess up." → "Everyone makes mistakes. I can learn."
- "Nobody likes me." → "I have people who care about me."

Practice Makes Progress

Try writing down one negative thought each day and changing it to a positive one. You can also use sticky notes on your mirror or journal your thoughts in a notebook. Positive self-talk doesn't mean ignoring your problems or pretending things are easy.



List Write 3 ways positive self-talk can help you build confidence.

1)	
2)	
3)	

True or False State if each statement is true or false?

1) Positive self-talk helps reduce anxiety.	True	False
2) Self-talk has no impact on your mood.	True	False
3) Negative thoughts are always accurate.	True	False
4) Journaling can help improve your inner dialogue.	True	False
5) Confidence can grow with practice and self-reflection.	True	False

Matching Type Match each term with its correct definition.

1)	Repeating kind, helpful messages to yourself	a) Confidence
2)	Believing you can learn from mistakes	b) Journaling
3)	Writing to understand your emotions and thoughts	c) Negative Self-Talk
4)	Inner voice that affects how you think and feel	d) Positive Self-Talk
5)	Telling yourself "I'll never be good at this"	e) Self-Talk

Activity - Positive Self-Talk Bubble Map

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will learn to identify and practise positive self-talk as a tool for improving self-esteem and emotional wellness. This activity helps them recognize unhelpful thoughts and reframe them into supportive, kind messages.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Print out worksheet (one shown in the image)
- Pencil or pen
- Eraser (optional)
- Crayons or coloured pens (optional for decorating)



Instructions

How will you complete?

1. Think about a time when you felt sad, embarrassed, frustrated, or discouraged. It could be something that happened at school, during a class project, in a sports activity, with friends, during a disagreement or misunderstanding, or even at home with a family member or sibling. Everyone experiences hard moments—the activity will help you practise being kinder to yourself when those feelings come up.
2. Take a moment to imagine the kinds of negative thoughts that were in your mind during that experience. Try to remember how those thoughts made you feel—were you more upset, anxious, or alone?
3. Now it's time to flip those thoughts around. Think of some kind, calming, or helpful things you could have said to yourself instead. These messages should be realistic but encouraging—something you'd say to a friend or loved one going through the same thing.
4. In each of the thought bubbles, write down one positive message you can say to yourself the next time you're having a tough moment. Make sure each message feels real and meaningful to you. Avoid empty compliments—use words that help you keep going.
5. Once you've filled in your bubbles, take some time to decorate your page. You can use your favourite colours, shapes, patterns, or symbols—anything that helps you feel peaceful, joyful, creative, or confident.

Positive Self-Talk Bubble Map

PREVIEW



Whenever You Feel Bad About Yourself, What
Are The Positive Thoughts That Can Help You
Feel Better?

Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) Which positive thought helps you most? Why?

2) How do your self-talk change your mood?

3) What situations make it hard to think positive and how can you prepare for them?

4) Have you ever used kind words to help a friend? What did you say?

5) How do you feel after doing this activity?

Story: Personal Nutrition Goals and Smart Food Choices**Fuel For The Future**

Jasmin slumped into her chair in science class, her stomach growling louder than her thoughts. She wrapped her arms around her and hoped no one noticed.

"You okay?" her best friend Ella whispered, glancing over with concern.

"Skipped breakfast again," Jasmin mumbled. "Didn't have time, and honestly, I just didn't feel like eating."

Ella frowned and reached into her bag, handing Jasmin a granola bar. "Here, you need fuel. You've looked exhausted all week. You've been zoning out in every class."

At lunch, Jasmin barely touched her food, pushing her fries around on her plate while scrolling through fitness influencers on her phone. Everyone in the videos looked perfect and full of energy. Their toned bodies and perfect meals made her feel like she wasn't doing enough. She sighed deeply and sipped her iced tea without taking a single bite of food.

Later that day, during volleyball practice, her legs gave out mid-sprint, and she collapsed onto the gym floor, dizzy and pale. The room spun around her as she lay there.

"Jasmin!" her coach called out, running toward her. "When was the last time you ate properly?" she asked, helping Jasmin sit up.

That evening, at the clinic, the nurse sat beside her, gently explaining the importance of eating enough of the right foods, Jasmin. Your body needs energy to grow, to think clearly. Skipping meals or following TikTok diet trends won't keep you healthy. Teen girls should get about 2,200 calories a day, and most of that should come from real, balanced meals—not just snacks or sugary drinks."

At dinner, Jasmin looked at her plate. "I just want to be healthy, but everything online says I should cut carbs or eat only salads." Her mom smiled gently. "Healthy doesn't mean skinny. It means strong, energized, and nourished. Fish, vegetables, fruit, rice—it's all part of a balanced plate."

Her dad nodded. "Real health means listening to your body. Not influencers."

The next day, Jasmin started packing better lunches—boiled eggs, fresh fruit, and rice bowls. She also joined the school's nutrition group. "Can we add healthier options in the cafeteria?" she asked at a meeting. "We need food that fuels us, not just fries and pizza."

Weeks later, Jasmin felt stronger, more focused, and confident in herself.

"You're glowing," Ella said one afternoon. Jasmin grinned. "I'm finally taking care of me—mind and body."



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Eating well helps your brain work better.	True	False
2) All healthy foods are expensive.	True	False
3) Drinking water helps your body work properly.	True	False
4) Reading food labels can help you make smarter food choices.	True	False
5) Too much added sugar can affect your energy and focus.	True	False

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of best answer for each question.

1. What helps you feel strong?		
A. Candy	B. Protein	C. No carbs
2. What information is most helpful on food labels to make healthy choices?		
A. Nutrients	B. Calories	C. Price tag
3. What is a fad diet?		
A. A healthy plan	B. A trendy diet	C. A balanced meal
4. Why eat balanced meals?		
A. For energy	B. To look cool	C. To lose weight
5. How can you eat better at school?		
A. Skip lunch	B. Eat snack bars	C. Plan the snacks

Explain

How can setting realistic nutrition goals help improve your overall health and choices?

Activity – My Weekly Nutrition Log

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students recognize and record the specific foods they consume daily by category—fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins—and track their water intake to build awareness of healthy eating habits.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Printed worksheet
- Coloured pens or markers (optional for visual tracking)



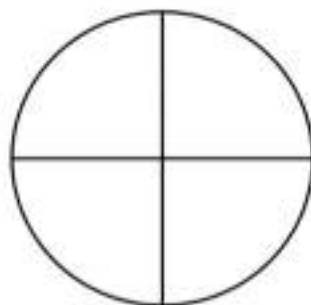
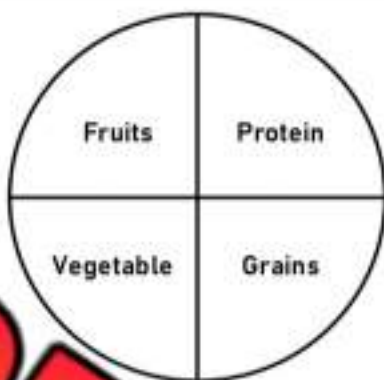
Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Each day from Monday to Sunday, take a few minutes—either after dinner or before bed—to think about everything you ate and drank that day. This includes your main meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) as well as any snacks in between. Try to recall your food as accurately as possible.
2. In the circle plate for each day, write down the foods you ate in the correct food group sections. Use the categories listed below to help you organize your meals.
 - Fruits – Examples include apple, mango, grapes, banana, etc.
 - Vegetables – Like spinach, broccoli, carrots, corn, green beans, etc.
 - Grains – Examples are oatmeal, pasta, rice, cereal, or whole wheat bread.
 - Protein – Include foods such as beans, eggs, chicken, fish, tofu, or lentils.
3. Be sure to list all the items you ate from each group if you had more than one item in that category during a meal. This helps show the variety and balance in your meals, and it may even help you spot food groups you're missing.
4. Next, look at the water cups beside each plate. For every glass of water you drank during the day, colour in one cup. This will help you track your daily hydration. Your goal is to aim for 6 to 8 glasses of water each day to stay properly hydrated and keep your body functioning well.
5. Try to complete your log daily for one full week, from Monday through Sunday. It's best to fill it out at the end of each day, when your memory is still fresh and you can remember what you ate and drank.
6. At the end of the week, take some time to review your entries. Then, turn to the reflection sheet and think about your overall food choices.

Activity – My Weekly Nutrition Log

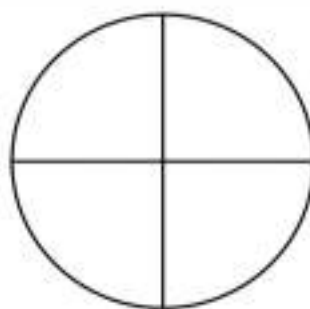
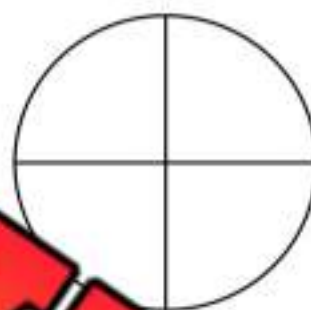
Fill in what
you eat and
colour each
glass of water
you drink



Thursday



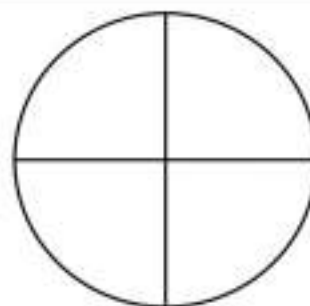
Monday



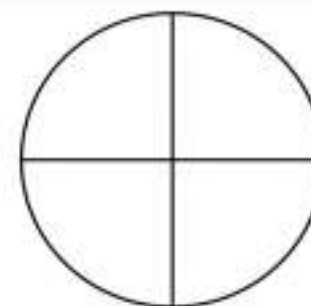
Tuesday



Saturday



Wednesday



Sunday



Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) Draw two emojis that show how you felt before and after completing your nutrition log.. (Left = Before, Right = After)

2) Which day of the week was hardest for you to log your food and water? why?

3) What did you notice about your eating and drinking habits over the week?

4) How can this activity help you make healthier food and hydration choices in the future?

Understanding Addiction

What Is Addiction?

Addiction happens when someone keeps using a substance or repeating a behaviour, even when it causes problems in their life. It affects the brain's reward system, making it feel like the person needs that substance or behaviour to feel good or even just to feel normal. Over time, the brain begins to rely on it, and stopping becomes harder. This makes it difficult for the person to control their actions, even when they truly want to stop.

There are two main types of addiction:

1. **Substance Use:** This includes the use of alcohol, nicotine (such as smoking or vaping), cannabis, prescription drugs, or other substances that can alter how a person feels or thinks.
2. **Behavioural:** This involves behaviours like excessive use of social media, video gaming, gambling, or even eating. These habits can become harmful when they take over someone's life.

Both types of addiction affect how a person thinks, acts, and feels. It can lead to poor performance at school, trouble with arguments with family, or withdrawing from friends and hobbies. Some people also experience the risk of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and even difficulty sleeping.

How Addiction Develops

Addiction usually starts with something that seems small or harmless. At first, it might feel fun. But with repeated use, the brain builds tolerance, which means the person needs more to feel the same effect. This can lead to dependence, and eventually the person may feel uncomfortable or upset when they stop—known as withdrawal.

According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA):

- About 60% of Grade 9–12 students in Canada have tried alcohol.
- 17% reported vaping in the past month.
- Around 5% of teens may meet the signs of gaming addiction.

Warning Signs to Watch For:

- Spending more time on the activity than planned
- Feeling upset, anxious, or restless without it
- Ignoring schoolwork, hobbies, or friendships
- Hiding use or lying about how often it happens
- Wanting to stop but feeling unable to do so

Getting Support

If you or someone you know is struggling, you are not alone. Many teens go through this, and help is available. You can reach out to:

- Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868 or text 686868 for free, confidential help)
- School counsellors or trusted teachers/adults
- Wellness Together Canada for free online support programs
- Youth clinics, social workers, or local community health centres



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Addiction can be both physical and mental.	True	False
2) All addictions involve drugs or alcohol.	True	False
3) Gaming, gambling, or social media can also become addictive.	True	False
4) Addictions only affect the person using the substance or behaviour.	True	False
5) Talking to someone you trust is a good first step in getting help.	True	False

Question

What is it like to want to understand the types of addiction and how to get help?

PREVIEW

Create

Create a mini poster that explains one addiction where someone can go for help. Use simple words and drawings.

PREVIEW

Fact or Fiction – How Food Affects Our Body and Brain**Objective**

What are we learning about?

To help students explore what addiction is, how it affects people and communities, and how to recognize different types of addiction. This activity also builds critical thinking by helping students separate truth from myths and know where to find support.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- A list of statements about addiction (substance, food, or behavior), warning signs, and support options
- 'Fact' and 'Fiction' labels
- Space in the room for students to move to either side

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Your teacher will read a statement about addiction, habits, or sources of support. These statements may be about common beliefs, facts, or things people often misunderstand.
2. Listen carefully and pay close attention to each statement.
3. After hearing the statement, decide if you believe it is true or FICTION (false or misleading) based on what you've learned.
4. Move to the side of the room labeled either "FACT" or "FICTION" to give your answer. Choose your side with confidence but stay open to new information.
5. Once you are in place, stand quietly and respectfully while others make their decisions. Everyone should have a chance to think without pressure or distraction.
6. When everyone has chosen a side, your teacher will reveal the correct answer and provide a short explanation. This may include facts, examples, or helpful tips to better understand the topic.
7. After the discussion, return calmly to your seat and get ready for the next round. You'll continue playing for several rounds, so stay focused and ready to listen and move again.
8. As you play, keep an open mind and think critically. This activity is not just a game—it's a chance to learn how to separate facts from myths, discover how to support yourself and others, and build smarter, healthier habits for the future.

Fact or Fiction

Read the statements to the class.

#	Statement	Answer
1	Addiction only happens to people who use illegal drugs.	Fiction
2	You can become addicted to video games and social media.	Fact
3	Drinking coffee every day is just as dangerous as using illegal drugs.	Fiction
4	People with strong willpower don't get addicted.	Fiction
5	There are helplines where you can ask for help anonymously.	Fact
6	All addiction is the same in every person.	Fiction
7	Using a substance once means you'll become addicted.	Fiction
8	Talking to a trusted person is one way to get support.	Fiction
9	Addiction only affects the person, not their family.	Fiction
10	It's possible to recover from addiction with the right support.	Fact
11	Nicotine is a highly addictive substance found in vapes and cigarettes.	Fact
12	Only adults can get addicted to substances.	Fiction
13	Watching too much TikTok or YouTube can lead to behaviour problems.	Fiction
14	Some people use substances to cope with stress, anxiety, or trauma.	Fact
15	You can't get addicted to prescription medication.	Fiction
16	Knowing your warning signs can help you prevent addiction.	Fact
17	Addiction can affect your brain, emotions, and relationships.	Fact
18	There's nothing you can do to help someone who's addicted.	Fiction
19	Going to therapy or support groups can help with addiction recovery.	Fact
20	People with addiction are weak or lazy.	Fiction

Exit Cards

Cut Out Cut out the exit cards below and have students complete them at the end of class.

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One Question in My Mind

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One Question in My Mind

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One Question in My Mind

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One Question in My Mind

Newspaper Article: Safe Choices in Everyday Situations

Teen Quick Thinking Prevents Late-Night Park Accident!

[Riverside Park, Tuesday 8:45 PM] – What started as a fun evening hangout nearly took a dangerous turn for four teens in Riverside Park. Thanks to one Grade 8 student's smart and quick decision-making, what could've ended in injury or worse—was avoided just in time.

Ella, 16, 15, and three friends were celebrating her birthday with snacks, music, and laughter. One friend, Leo, suggested climbing a bridge ledge to take photos. "It was harmless at first," Ella said. "I was just goofing around and trying to get a shot for Instagram. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized someone could slip and fall. It was getting dark, and the ledge was narrow and slippery."

Instead of going along with the crowd, Ella spoke up: "I told them, 'This isn't worth it, guys. We could get seriously hurt.'" Her words made her friends pause and rethink. They stepped back from the ledge. Just minutes later, a dog running through the area slipped on that very ledge and fell into the river. The dog was quickly rescued by its owner, but the close call proved Ella's instincts were right.

Experts say teens often face intense pressure in group situations, especially when trying to fit in or look cool.

But making a safe, thoughtful decision can make all the difference. "Teens are wired for risk and fun," says safety educator Marlon De Leon. "That's why pausing and thinking before acting is a powerful skill."

Just last month, a similar case was reported on downtown Market Street, where a student chose to walk away from a group of friends who were attempting to ride the LRT without paying. "It wasn't just about breaking rules," that teen said. "It was about how I'd feel after, and what kind of person I want to be."

Whether it's late-night dares, skipping responsibilities, or handling risky online challenges, students like Ella are proving that thinking ahead and resisting pressure isn't just smart—it's brave.

Teachers and community leaders are praising these teens for showing real-world leadership. "When people make smart choices outside of school, online, or even in their own homes, they're setting a great example for themselves and others."

Remember: The next time you face a tough decision, pause and ask yourself—"What are the real consequences?" That one thoughtful moment might be the smartest choice you ever make. It could protect you, help someone else, and shape who you are becoming.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Impulsive choices often lead to safer outcomes.	True	False
2) Peer pressure can make decision-making more difficult.	True	False
3) Thinking ahead helps reduce risky behaviour.	True	False
4) Safe choices always have no consequences.	True	False
5) It's okay to ignore your instincts in dangerous situations.	True	False

Question

Answer the questions below.

1) Why is it important to think ahead before making a decision?

2) How can peer pressure affect your ability to make a safe choice?

List

List three "safe choice reminders" you could post on your wall.



Role Play - Making Safe Choices

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students recognize how strategies like thinking ahead, weighing consequences, and resisting peer pressure influence real-life decisions, and to practise safe choice-making through role play.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Prepared scenarios showing common risky or impulsive choices
- A safe classroom space for acting
- Optional: basic props



Instructions

How will you complete it?

1. Divide students into small groups of 4-6 members. Try to make sure everyone has a role and a voice in the group. Each person should contribute and participate in the performance.
2. Give each group a scenario card that describes a real-life situation involving a risky decision, peer pressure, or an impulsive action. These scenarios are meant to reflect challenges students might face.
3. Students prepare a short skit that includes two versions of the scenario.
 - a. One version shows the unsafe or impulsive choice—a decision made without thinking about the risks or consequences.
 - b. The second version shows the safe and responsible choice, where someone uses a strategy like thinking ahead, saying no, or asking for help to stay safe and in control.
4. Groups act out both scenes in front of the class. They should use voice, body language, facial expression, and even simple props or classroom items if they like.
5. After performing, each group takes a few minutes to explain what safety strategy was ignored or successfully used in their second version.
6. As a class, hold a reflection discussion. Talk about how small, everyday choices can have big effects on personal safety, friendships, and well-being. Discuss how students can use decision-making skills in real life, and how speaking up can help students stay safe, show leadership and avoid negative consequences.

Scenario Cards

Cut out the cards below.

Skatepark Dare

You're hanging out at the skatepark when your friend dares you to try a difficult trick you've never practised. You're not wearing a helmet, and others are watching. They start chanting your name, and you feel the pressure to impress them. What would you do?

Rain Ride

After school, it starts pouring rain and you forgot your umbrella. A classmate's older cousin, who you barely know, pulls up and offers you a ride. Your phone's dead and you're not sure how long it'll take to walk. What would you do?

Sleepover Prank

At a sleepover, someone suggests prank calling another classmate. Your friend pulls out their phone to record it and you can hear the other person's voice. Everyone is laughing and you're feeling nervous. What would you do?

Skipping Class

Your friends dare you to skip your next class and go hang out at the food court in the mall. They say, "It's just one class—what's the big deal?" You're feeling nervous, but it's tempting to go. What would you do?

The Mystery Drink

You're at a small party when someone hands you a drink saying, "Just have a sip—everyone else is drinking it." You don't know what's in it, and you don't want to seem like you're not in. What would you do?

Viral Photo Share

Someone in your class tripped and fell earlier, and another student caught it on video. It's now in the group chat, and people are joking. A friend asks if you want to share it with even more people. What would you do?

Mall Dare

While hanging out at the mall, your friend dares you to slip a small item into your bag just for fun. "It's not like anyone will notice," they whisper. You're nervous but don't want to seem scared. What would you do?

Scenario Cards

Cut out the card below.

Bike Light Challenge

You're biking with friends, and someone suggests racing across the street even though the light is red. They're already pedalling fast, and you're falling behind. What would you do?

Group Chat

In your group chat, someone starts teasing a classmate, calling them names and making jokes. Others are adding laughing emojis, and it's getting mean. You feel uncomfortable, but you're not sure if saying something will make it worse. What would you do?

Suspicious Meet-Up

You're at home when you see a friend meeting up with someone behind a convenience store. You overhear the friend say something about "just a quick exchange." Your friend notices you're watching. What would you do?

Found Phone Temptation

You and a friend find a smartphone on a park bench. Your friend says, "Let's check the apps or see if they have games—it'll be fun." They start scrolling through it and pass it to you. What would you do?

Late-Night Message

You get a text from a friend at 11:30 PM. The message says they're scared and want to run away, but they don't want to tell anyone. You feel worried but aren't sure what to do next. What would you do?

Vape Pressure

Behind the school, a group of students offers you a vape. "It's just one puff—everyone's done it," they say. They laugh when you hesitate and tell you to stop being a baby. What would you do?

Thin Ice Trouble

Your younger sibling wants to try walking on a frozen pond near your house even though the ice looks thin. "Just come with me—it'll be quick," they say. No adults are around. What would you do?

Blog Post: Respect, Consent, and Impact of Sexual Violence**Consent, Boundaries, and the Impact of Sexual Assault**

Date: July 9, 2025

Author: Amanda Lavoie

4-minute read

In any healthy relationship—whether it's between friends, dating partners, or family—consent and boundaries are extremely important. Consent means giving clear permission for something to happen, and it must be freely given, informed, enthusiastic, and reversible. This means a person can change their mind at any time, even if they said "yes" earlier. Consent should never be forced or coerced. It must be clear and ongoing.

Sadly, many people still don't fully understand what consent really means. In fact, studies show that only about 10% of people fully understand the concept of consent (Canadian Women's Foundation). This lack of awareness can lead to serious harm, including sexual assault. Setting and respecting boundaries—like saying "I don't feel comfortable with that" or "I need some space"—helps people avoid unwanted situations and builds trust and safety in all relationships.

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act that affects people of all genders, ages, and backgrounds. In Canada, one in five women and one in seven men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime (StatsCan, 2021). The impact can include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and difficulty trusting others. Survivors also feel ashamed, alone, or afraid to talk about what happened.

Shockingly, about 94% of survivors do not report sexual assault to the police. Many fear they won't be believed, or they feel embarrassed or unsafe. It's so important to create a culture where people feel safe to speak up. We can help by listening without judgment, speaking up against disrespect, and knowing where to go for support. Resources like Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) and local Sexual Assault Centres offer confidential help. Learning to ask for consent, respect boundaries, and respond with empathy can build safer schools and communities for everyone.

Change begins with education and compassion. Every person deserves respect and the right to control their own body and choices without fear or shame.

Till next time,
Amanda Lavoie

Comments:

Theo L. | July 9, 2025

Schools should also teach how to support friends after an assault.

Like Reply 14h ago



Ella M. | July 9, 2025

I didn't know consent could be taken back—this really changed how I see it.

Like Reply 7h ago

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Consent must be enthusiastic and can be taken back.	True	False
2) Sexual assault only affects women and girls.	True	False
3) Boundaries help protect personal comfort and safety.	True	False
4) Peer pressure can make it hard to give true consent.	True	False
5) PTSD is a possible result of sexual assault.	True	False

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) Why is it important to respect someone's boundaries in any relationship?

2) Why might some victims not report sexual assault to the police?

Yes- No- Maybe

Does each action show consent was given?

Actions	Yes	No	Maybe
1. Hugging a friend who is upset			
2. Sharing someone's photo online			
3. Asking a friend personal questions			
4. Holding someone's hand on a date			
5. Sending a flirty text to someone			

Activity: Setting Boundaries Dialogue

Objective

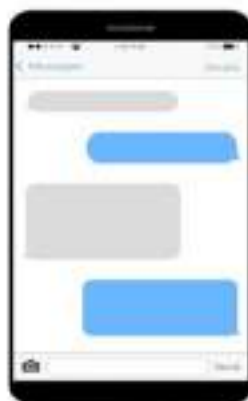
What are we learning about?

To help students practise using respectful, assertive language to set boundaries and respond to uncomfortable or unsafe situations related to consent and relationships.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Flipchart or large sheet of paper (based on the "Make Your Complaint" template)
- Pens or pencils

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Begin by introducing the idea of respectful communication, setting and explaining why it's an important skill in all types of relationships—with friends, classmates, romantic partners, or family members.
2. Show the class the three sample situations provided. These represent real-life challenges students may face.
3. Students choose one situation from the box that they feel they want to explore further. In the dialogue spaces provided, students write a back-and-forth conversation between two people. This could be between two friends, classmates, or any characters involved in the scenario.
4. The dialogue must include key respectful communication steps:
 - a. Say how you feel
 - b. Set your boundary clearly
 - c. Stay calm
 - d. Suggest a solution or request
 - e. Listen to the other person's response
5. Students can act out the dialogue in pairs or submit it in writing.
6. Optionally, allow students to write a reflection about how it felt to write or role-play a boundary-setting conversation.

Activity: Setting Boundaries Dialogue

Instructions: Choose one of the 3 situations in the box. Then write a respectful dialogue between two people where one person sets a boundary or speaks up about an uncomfortable situation. Your dialogue must include respectful steps you learned in class (e.g., speak clearly, stay calm, say how you feel, suggest a solution, listen to the response).

Someone keeps invading your personal space even after you ask them to stop.

A friend shared a photo of you online without asking.

Your friend makes you feel pressured to do something you're not ready for.

(You)



(Friend)



(You)



(Friend)



(You)



Write

Reflect on Your Experience During the Boundary-Setting Dialogue Activity.
Use the questions below to guide your response.

Draw your feelings:

How did you feel while writing the dialogue about setting a boundary?

**What happened?**

What steps did you do during the Boundary-Setting Dialogue activity?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How did writing or acting out _____ries _____

How will you use what you learned to speak up or support others in real life?

Activity: Spot The Risk In Workplace

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students identify common workplace hazards and understand why they are dangerous, encouraging awareness and responsibility in real work environments.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Pre-made worksheet
- Pencil or pen
- Highlighter or marker (optional for encircling hazards)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Take a close look at the entire picture provided. Observe not just the main actions, but also small details in the background, corners, or near equipment. Pay careful attention to what each worker is doing, how they are positioned, the tools or machinery they are using, and the overall environment.
2. Carefully search for anything that looks unsafe or potentially harmful to someone working in that space. These are the **hazards**. A hazard could be a sharp object left in the wrong place, someone wearing unsafe gear, or equipment being used incorrectly.
3. Once you spot a hazard, use a pencil or coloured pencil to **neatly circle** the hazard in the picture. Try to find as many hazards as you can, even the ones that seem small—they still matter! The more closely you look, the better your hazard-spotting skills will become.
4. After circling the hazards, use the lines below the picture to write a numbered list of what you found.
5. For each item on your list, explain in one or two sentences why that situation is dangerous and how it could lead to an accident or injury.
6. When you are finished, be prepared to compare your answers with a partner and have a short class discussion on how workplace safety helps prevent real injuries.

Spot The Risk In Workplace



How many safety risks or hazards can you spot in the picture? Write down each one you see and explain why it is dangerous.

Write

Use your completed Spot the Risk in the Workplace activity to reflect on what you observed. Use the questions below to guide your writing.

1. Which hazard stood out to you the most, and why?
2. How could this hazard cause harm in a real workplace?
3. What safety rule or law could prevent this risk?
4. What did you learn about the responsibilities of workers and employers?
5. How can staying alert help prevent injuries at work?
6. What would you do differently when thinking about safety in the future?

PREVIEW

The Link Between Healthy Eating and Mental Wellness

How Food Affects the Way We Feel

Most people know that food gives us energy, but did you know it also affects how we feel emotionally and mentally? The brain needs proper fuel to think clearly, stay focused, and manage emotions effectively. When we eat healthy food, we are not just helping our bodies—we are also supporting our mental well-being.



The brain uses about 20% of the body's total energy each day, and it depends on nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, iron, and protein to function properly. Without these important nutrients, students may feel more tired, easily irritated, and have trouble concentrating in school and completing tasks. Foods that are high in sugar and caffeine might give a quick energy boost, but they often lead to energy crashes, mood swings, and increased stress shortly afterward.

Research from the American Mental Health Association shows that people who eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are less likely to experience depression or serious mood issues. Healthy eating not only helps with mood, but also boosts memory, focus, and the ability to cope with stress, especially in school. A 2022 study by the University of Alberta found that teens who regularly ate healthy foods had 30% better performance in math and reading tests compared to those who skipped meals.

Key Nutrients That Help the Brain:

- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** – Improve mood and support brain function
Found in: salmon, flax seeds, chia seeds, walnuts
- **B Vitamins (B6, B12, folate)** – Help make brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine
Found in: whole grains, leafy greens, eggs, dairy
- **Iron** – Helps carry oxygen to the brain and reduces tiredness
Found in: red meat, beans, tofu, fortified cereals
- **Vitamin D** – Supports mood regulation and stable energy levels
Found in: fortified milk, sunlight, mushrooms, fish
- **Protein** – Balances blood sugar and builds neurotransmitters
Found in: poultry, legumes, nuts, yogurt



Healthy Choices for a Healthier Mind

Students who skip meals, especially breakfast, may struggle to stay focused or feel overwhelmed during the day. Drinking plenty of water, eating balanced snacks with protein, and reducing junk food can help students feel more alert, calm, and ready to learn. Learning to connect your daily food choices with your emotions can lead to better habits and a stronger, healthier mind. Making small changes—like swapping a sugary drink for water or adding more greens to your lunch—can make a big difference in how you feel.

Question

Why is it important to eat healthy for mental wellness?

Food Swap

List foods or drinks you often eat that may affect your mood or focus.
Write a healthier swap beside it.

Drink or Food Often Eaten	Healthier Swap

Fill in the blanks

Complete the sentences below.

1) Veggies and _____ help your brain.	chips	fruits
2) Skipping meals lowers your _____.	energy	height
3) Too much _____ causes crashes.	protein	sugar
4) _____ keeps your brain sharp.	soda	water
5) Healthy food supports _____.	Wellness	Weakness

Activity – Would You Rather?

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will recognize how food choices can affect mental health, energy, and mood. They will reflect on how peer influence, media, or habit can affect eating decisions and how to make thoughtful, wellness-focused choices.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Pre-written “Would You Rather?” scenario cards
- Blank index cards or small slips
- A pencil or pen for each student
- Open space for group discussion or movement (optional)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. The teacher introduces the connection between food choices and mental wellness, explaining how energy, focus, and mood can be affected by what we eat.
2. Each student receives or creates a “Would You Rather?” card with two choices (e.g., “Would you rather eat candy after lunch or have fruit?”).
3. Students write their personal choice and a short explanation of how it might affect their body and mind.
4. In small groups, students take turns reading their scenarios, but they wait to reveal their answers until after discussion.
5. The group talks about why someone might choose one option over the other (e.g., taste, peer pressure, time, cost, mood).
6. After discussion, each student reveals their original choice and explains if they would still stick with it or change their mind—and why.
7. The class reflects on how food decisions affect not just health, but energy, stress, and emotional well-being.

Scenario Cards

Cut out the topics below.

Would You Rather Scenario Card

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Would you rather eat a sugary snack for quick energy or a fruit for longer-lasting energy? | • Would you rather choose food based on what tastes good or what fuels your brain? |
| • Would you rather skip breakfast or eat something like a banana or toast? | • Would you rather eat lunch with friends who eat healthy or friends who pressure you to eat junk food? |
| • Would you rather drink soda or choose water every day? | • Would you rather fuel your brain before a test or skip eating because you feel nervous? |
| • Would you rather eat fast food every day or cook simple meals at home? | • Would you rather try a new veggie once a week or eat the same few foods all the time? |
| • Would you rather have chips during study time or a handful of nuts or trail mix? | • Would you rather eat breakfast at home or eat something quick on the way to school? |
| • Would you rather eat when you're bored or wait until you're actually hungry? | • Would you rather read nutrition labels before buying snacks or just go by what looks tasty? |
| • Would you rather plan your meals for the week or decide what to eat last minute? | • Would you rather learn to cook one healthy meal or eat instant noodles every night? |
| • Would you rather eat a big dinner late at night or have a lighter meal earlier? | • Would you rather talk to someone when stress makes you eat more or try to handle it alone? |

Response Sheet

Cut out the topics below.

Student Response Sheet

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

My Choice: _____

Why I chose this?

Exit Cards

Cut Out Cut out the exit cards below and have students complete them at the end of class.

Name: _____

Do you recognize the healthy habit or risk? Circle Yes or No.

1) I ate breakfast today.	Yes	No
2) I drink mostly water.	Yes	No
3) I skip meals often.	Yes	No
4) Food affects my mood.	Yes	No
5) I choose healthy snacks.	Yes	No

Name: _____

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Understanding the Science of Stress and the Brain

What Happens to the Brain During Stress

Stress is your body's natural reaction to something challenging, scary, or unfamiliar. It's a built-in survival system that helps you respond to danger quickly. When you feel threatened or overwhelmed, a part of the brain called the amygdala sounds the alarm. It's like an internal security system that reacts to fear or perceived danger. The amygdala alerts another part of the brain, the hypothalamus, which then sends signals throughout your body to prepare you for action. It tells your adrenal glands to release stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline.

These hormones help you respond by increasing your heart rate, tightening your muscles, and sharpening your senses. This process is known as the "fight, flight, or freeze" response. It prepares your body to either confront the problem, run away from it, or freeze in place if neither seems safe. This response can help you react quickly in emergencies, like during an emergency.

However, while you're reacting quickly to act, another part of the brain—the prefrontal cortex—becomes less active. This part of your brain helps with making decisions, thinking clearly, and solving problems. When you're stressed, your brain is more focused on reacting than thinking. That's why you might find yourself saying things you don't mean, making poor decisions, or reacting in ways you wouldn't normally. If you were

How Stress Affects Health and Emotions

Stress doesn't just affect the brain—it affects your whole body. While a little stress can be useful, like when preparing for a test or game, too much stress can become harmful. This is called chronic stress, and it can lead to serious problems.

Teens under chronic stress may:

- Have trouble sleeping or eating
- Get sick more often due to a weakened immune system
- Feel anxious, irritable, or deeply sad
- Struggle with focus, memory, or motivation
- Lose interest in activities they usually enjoy

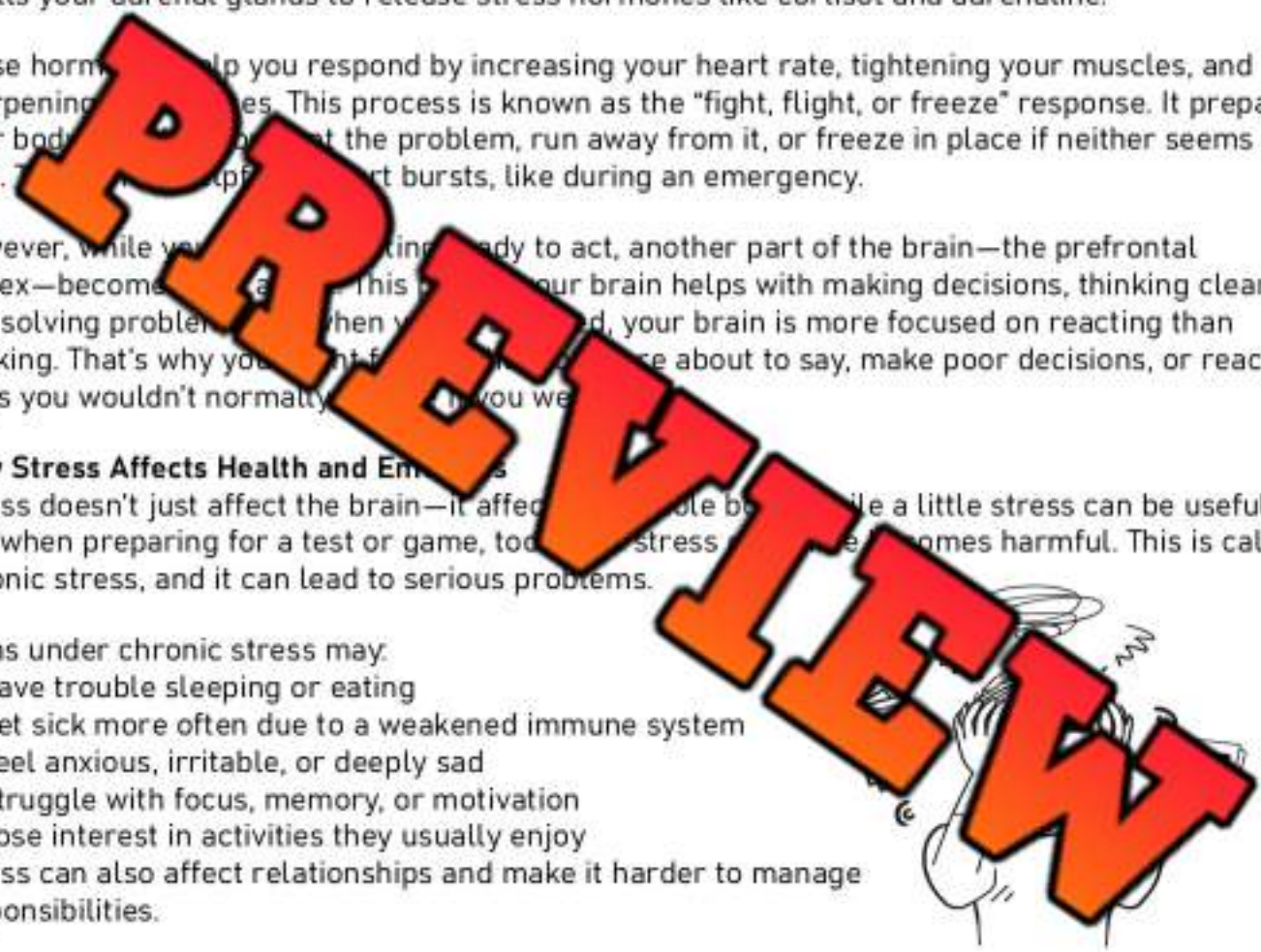
Stress can also affect relationships and make it harder to manage responsibilities.

How to Calm the Brain and Manage Stress

The brain can learn to respond better to stress through healthy habits. Try these five science-backed strategies:

- Deep breathing – Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, and out for 4
- Physical activity – Move your body to release built-up energy
- Reframing – Change negative thoughts into more positive ones
- Taking breaks – Rest your mind during schoolwork or conflict
- Talking to someone – Share your feelings with a trusted adult or friend

By understanding how stress works and practising calming techniques, you can better support your brain, body, and emotional well-being.



Fill in the blanks

Complete the sentences below.

1) The amygdala helps the brain detect _____.	danger	joy
2) Too much stress can lead to _____ problems.	health	estate
3) Chronic stress can weaken your _____ system.	immune	fuel
4) Physical activity helps your brain manage _____.	boredom	stress
5) Deep breathing can help your brain feel more _____.	calm	tired

Cause: _____
Effect: _____

Draw a diagram of a stressful event and draw arrows showing what can happen physically and emotionally.

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What happens in the brain when you feel stressed?

2) How does physical activity help reduce stress?

Story: The Impact of Drug Use on Decision-Making

It was supposed to be a regular Friday night. Jace and his friends were hanging out at a house party, music pumping, laughter echoing through the house, and snacks piled high on the kitchen table. The lights were low, and people danced or chatted in small groups.

As the evening went on, someone passed around vape pens and a small bottle labeled "edibles." Jace paused. He'd heard stories before—some harmless, some scary—but this was his first real chance to try cannabis firsthand. Everyone else seemed relaxed and curious. The pressure to join in was strong but strong.

His best friend leaned in and whispered, "Remember Health class? One hit can slow you down for hours." Jace chuckled, brushing it off. "It's just once. I'll be fine." That one moment of decision—quick, impulsive—set everything in motion.

After eating half the edibles, Jace felt strange. His head spun and his heart pounded in his chest. Time felt both fast and too slow at the same time. Then someone suggested going to a nearby restaurant. Jace, wanting to feel normal and in control, offered to drive.

What he didn't realize was that cannabis can seriously impair coordination, reaction time, and decision-making. According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, drivers who use cannabis are nearly twice as likely to be involved in a crash.

Jace didn't make it to the restaurant. He ran a stop sign and hit a parked car. The crash of metal and sudden jolt sent everyone into panic. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured, but the police were called immediately. Jace admitted what he had taken. Since he was only 16, he was charged under Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act.

He was suspended from school and had to complete a mandatory drug awareness program. His driver's license was revoked for a full year, and he was removed from the school's soccer team—a team he had worked hard to make. His reputation changed overnight.

During his counselling sessions, Jace reflected on his choice. "One decision," he said, "and everything changed." He also learned more about how substances affect teen brains. The brain keeps developing until around age 25, and using drugs during this time can seriously disrupt memory, focus, emotional control, and decision-making. Today, Jace speaks at school assemblies, sharing his story so others don't repeat his mistake.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) Why can drug use make it harder to make smart choices?

2) What parts of your life could be affected by poor decisions caused by drug use?

The Effect

Draw the effect of drug use on a healthy person's physical appearance.

Before drug use



After drug use

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Drug use can affect brain development in teens.

True

False

2) Marijuana and alcohol do not impair judgment.

True

False

3) Teens can be charged for having illegal drugs.

True

False

4) Peer pressure can lead to risky choices.

True

False

5) Using drugs once has no long-term effects.

True

False

Blog Post: Exploring School Policies That Keep Students Safe**Why School Safety Policies Matter**

Date: July 10, 2025

Author: Olivia Reyes

4-minute read

Have you ever wondered why your school has so many safety rules? From fire drills to dress codes to anti-bullying policies, these rules are all designed to protect students and create a positive learning environment. Most schools in Canada follow provincial safety standards, including lockdown procedures, fire safety drills, and emergency response plans. For example, Alberta schools are required to conduct at least six emergency drills each year. These drills prepare students and staff to stay calm and follow instructions in real emergencies.

Schools also focus on bullying prevention. According to a 2023 Government of Canada report, 1 in 4 Canadian students has experienced bullying—but schools with strong anti-bullying policies see a 30% reduction in incidents. Policies that promote kindness, student leadership, and peer support play a key role in creating safe hallways and classrooms.

Wellness and mental health are also priorities. Many schools now offer access to counsellors, mental health professionals, and support programs. A study by Teen Mental Wellness Canada found that schools with regular wellness check-ins and awareness campaigns saw a 25% rise in students reaching out for help.

Other safety policies include rules about vaping, alcohol, and substance use. With over 15% of Canadian teens trying vaping before age 15, schools are working to prevent harmful behaviours. Some also have digital safety guidelines to protect students online and prevent cyberbullying.

These policies aren't about punishment—they're about keeping students safe, included, and supported. When students understand the "why" behind the rules, they become partners in safety. So, the next time you hear a fire drill bell or attend a lockdown session, remember: it's all part of keeping school a safe place to grow, learn, and thrive. Knowing and following these rules helps you make better decisions, support your classmates, and make your school's safety culture.

Till next time,
Olivia Reyes

Comments:

Jordan Smith | July 10, 2025

Lockdown practice really helped us stay calm last year.

Like Reply 10h ago



Kayla Philipps | July 10, 2025

Rules help, but some dress codes feel unfair.

Like Reply 7h ago

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Dress codes are always fair to all students.	True	False
2) Wellness policies support student mental health.	True	False
3) Peer counselling is part of some school supports.	True	False
4) Safety policies only protect teachers, not students.	True	False
5) Safe schools lead to better learning for all.	True	False

WriteWrite an acrostic using the word **SAFETY**.

S - _____

A - _____

F - _____

E - _____

T - _____

Y - _____

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) How do strong anti-bullying policies help students?

2) What is one reason school safety rules are important?

Newspaper Article: Healthy Relationships and Conflict Skills

Teen Relationship Drama: When Trust Breaks and Respect Wins

Mapleview — What started as a disagreement in a group chat quickly turned into a friendship meltdown for 14-year-old Serena Lopez. "One of my friends kept making plans without me. When I brought it up, she said I was overreacting and too sensitive," she said. "It hurt because I thought I was close." Teen experts say this kind of conflict is more common than you think.

According to a 2023 survey by the Northern Wellness Centre, over 40% of Canadian teens have experienced being left out, lied to, or guilt-tripped by someone close to them. While teens often hear about the importance of making friends, fewer are taught how to recognize when a relationship turns unhealthy.

"Strong relationships are built on trust, honesty, and good communication," said Devon Marks, a youth counsellor at the Northern Wellness Centre. "Jealousy, control, and manipulation aren't signs of love—they're red flags." Family relationships can be just as tricky. Fifteen-year-old

Jamal Singh used to dread dinner conversations. "Every time I shared my opinion, my brother would shut me down or say I was wrong. I stopped speaking up," he said. But after attending a conflict management workshop, Jamal learned about assertive communication—using respectful tone and "I" statements to share his feelings without starting a fight.

Another key skill? Active listening. "When you listen just to reply, not to understand, things often blow up," said Marks. Teens who learn to manage disagreements calmly—without yelling, ghosting, or bottling up their emotions—tend to have stronger, longer-lasting relationships.

Many schools are now making room in their curricula for these important lessons.

At Lakeside Secondary, students recently played out scenarios where they had to disagree respectfully or spot signs of unhealthy behavior. "It was awkward at first," admitted student Mia Chen, "but then we realized how often these things happen in real life. It made us want to learn how to speak."

Serena, who eventually left the friendship, says she's still learning. "Now I look for people who let me be myself. I don't need drama—I need respect."

Experts also encourage teens to check in with themselves regularly. If a relationship causes more stress than support, it may be time to set boundaries or walk away. "You don't have to stay somewhere that makes you feel small," Marks added. "Knowing your worth is the first step to building healthy connections."



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Too much control in a friendship is a red flag.	True	False
2) Trust happens instantly when you meet someone.	True	False
3) Manipulation is a normal part of close relationships.	True	False
4) Staying calm helps when resolving disagreements.	True	False
5) Yelling often helps settle arguments faster.	True	False

Say This,

Change each phrase into a respectful and assertive version.

In Co	Assertive Version
"You never listen to me!"	
"You're always wrong."	
"Whatever, I don't care."	
"This is all your fault!"	
"I'm done talking!"	

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What are two signs of an unhealthy relationship?

2) What would you say to a friend who always tries to control your choices?

Activity – Class Reflection Blog

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students reflect on real-life relationships and practice healthy conflict strategies. This activity builds empathy, communication skills, and self-awareness by encouraging students to think about how they react in challenging situations, consider others' perspectives, and express themselves respectfully.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Printed blog template provided by teacher
- Pens or pencils

Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Choose one of the following relationship-based topics to reflect on:
 - A time you resolved a disagreement in a healthy way
 - A moment you showed honesty or trust in a friend
 - A time someone set a boundary with you and how you responded
 - A situation where you practised active listening
 - A time you recognized an unhealthy behaviour in a relationship
2. Write a reflection post (100–150 words) on your chosen topic. Include:
 - What happened and how it made you feel
 - How you responded and what worked or didn't
 - What you learned about yourself or others
 - How this experience might guide future relationships
3. Exchange your reflection with five classmates.
4. Read their reflections and write thoughtful, respectful comments. Focus on encouraging their insight or offering supportive suggestions.
5. After reading feedback, reflect on what you've learned from your classmates' experiences and add a final sentence about how this shaped your thinking.



Name: _____

96

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Title: _____

PREVIEW



Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) Draw two emojis that show how you felt before and after learning about healthy relationships and conflict resolution.

2) What values do you think are most important in a healthy friendship?

3) What skill or behaviour from the lesson was new to you or helped you to understand or try?

4) Think about someone you trust in real life. What qualities or actions helped grow that trust?

Navigating Romantic Relationships With Confidence

What Makes a Healthy Teen Relationship?

As teenagers begin to explore romantic relationships, it's important to understand the qualities that make a relationship safe, supportive, and healthy. A healthy relationship is built on mutual respect, honest and open communication, trust, and emotional safety. Both people should feel valued, accepted, and heard. They should be free to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of being judged, teased, or pressured to change who they are. Decisions in a healthy relationship are made together—both voices matter equally and no one should feel controlled, ignored, or left out.

According to the *2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, teens who feel respected in their relationships are more likely to experience better emotional well-being and less likely to engage in risky behaviours like substance use or skipping school.

Are You Ready for a Relationship?

Emotional readiness means thinking about whether you want to be in a relationship and whether you can handle the feelings and challenges that come with it. Being ready doesn't mean being perfect—it just means knowing what you're comfortable with. Some signs you might be ready include:

- You know how to express your feelings calmly and respectfully.
- You respect your own and others' boundaries.
- You can handle disagreements calmly and without anger.
- You're not entering a relationship just because your friend is or you're pressured to.

Understanding Consent and Boundaries

Consent is more than just saying "yes" once. It means both people agree, willingly, to any kind of physical or emotional contact. You can change your mind at any time, and boundaries should always be respected. Boundaries are the personal limits that help you feel safe.

What to Do When Things Go Wrong

Breakups and disagreements are part of life, especially as teens learn more about themselves and others. Ending a relationship or dealing with conflict should be done with maturity and kindness. It doesn't mean anyone failed—it just means the relationship changed. Avoid ghosting, name-calling, or spreading rumours, as these actions can leave lasting emotional harm.

Here are 5 tips for handling breakups or conflict in healthy ways:

- Be honest and calm when expressing your feelings.
- Listen to the other person's point of view.
- Avoid blaming, yelling, or threatening.
- Set space and take time to cool down if needed.
- Talk to a trusted adult if you feel unsafe or overwhelmed.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Consent must be clearly given in any relationship.	True	False
2) Teens should ignore their emotions in breakups.	True	False
3) Healthy relationships involve mutual respect and honesty.	True	False
4) Saying "no" is part of setting boundaries.	True	False
5) Jealousy is always a sign of love.	True	False

Identify if the scenario shows a healthy relationship X if it does not.

Scenarios	
1) Jamie respects their partner's personal space.	
2) Alex pressures someone to give them a ride home.	
3) Dana apologizes after raising their voice to their partner.	
4) Chris checks in with their partner's feelings regularly.	
5) Bella spreads private details after a breakup.	
6) Jordan listens without interrupting during disagreements.	
7) Fiona threatens to end the relationship to control decisions.	
8) Evan and their partner talk openly about boundaries.	

Question

Why is communication important in romantic relationships?

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Four Corners Activity: Navigating Healthy Relationship

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students understand the foundations of healthy romantic relationships, including boundaries, communication, consent, and emotional safety. This activity encourages critical thinking and respectful discussion around teen relationships.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- A list of questions
- Labels for each corner (A, B, C, D)

Instructions

How will you complete the activity?



1. Label each corner of the classroom with the letters A, B, C, and D. Make sure there is space in each corner for small groups of students to gather.
2. Explain to the class that you'll be reading out statements and questions about romantic relationships, including topics like consent, emotional readiness, healthy behaviours, and setting boundaries. Each question will have four possible answers, A, B, C, and D.
3. After each question, students will move to the corner that matches their chosen answer. Some questions may have correct answers, while others are opinion-based.
4. Once students are in their corners, they'll briefly discuss their choice with others in the same group. Then, invite a few students to share what their group discussed with the whole class.
5. If the question has a factual answer, reveal and explain it. For opinion-based questions, encourage students to listen to different perspectives respectfully.
6. Repeat this process with more questions to promote thoughtful discussion and help students better understand healthy relationships.

Question	A	B	C	D
1) What is a sign of a healthy relationship?	Constant texting	Trust and honesty	Jealousy and control	Avoiding arguments
2) What does consent mean in a relationship?	Giving in silently	Being clear and respectful	Ignoring the other person	Being told what to do
3) What is one benefit of setting personal boundaries?	Losing friends	Gaining control	Feeling safe and respected	Becoming more popular
4) What is a common reason for emotional readiness in relationships?	Being pressured by others	Understanding your feelings and limits	Saying yes to everything	Copying what others do
5) What is an unhealthy behaviour in relationships?	When someone catfishes	Controlling someone's actions	Listening actively	Respecting boundaries
6) What is a respectful way to deal with conflict?	Yelling to win	Walking away but not giving up	Active listening	Ignoring the issue forever
7) What should you do after a breakup?	Spread rumours	Respect their privacy	Post about it on social media	Spreading dating advice
8) What shows respect in a romantic relationship?	Lying to protect feelings	Trust and honesty	Hiding problems	Making all decisions alone
9) Why is communication important in relationships?	To always be right	To avoid all conflict	To understand each other and build trust	To keep secrets
10) What is peer pressure in dating?	Making your own choices	Friends helping you talk	Feeling forced to do something	Makes you famous

Question	A	B	C	D
11) What can help build trust in a relationship?	Breaking promises	Keeping secrets	Being consistent and honest	Ignoring texts
12) Which is an example of personal boundaries?	"I don't want to be hugged."	"Tell me who to talk to."	"I go where you go."	"I'll do whatever you want."
13) What is a sign of pressure in a relationship?	Being supported	Feeling rushed or forced	Feeling respected	Talking openly
14) Which of the following is a healthy way to handle a disagreement?	Ignoring the problem	"I guess I have to."	"I'm not comfortable with that."	"Whatever you want."
15) Why is it important to recognize red flags?	To avoid gossip	To protect your safety	To protect your safety	To be dramatic
16) What is one way to handle jealousy?	Trust your partner and talk it out	Stop seeing them	End the friendship	End the friendship
17) What's a sign someone respects your boundaries?	They test them often	They ignore them	They listen and respect	They listen and respect
18) Which is an example of unhealthy communication?	Listening without interrupting	Silent treatment to punish	Sharing your thoughts calmly	Using "I" statements
19) What should you do if you feel unsafe?	Say nothing	Stay quiet to avoid drama	Talk to someone you trust	Keep it a secret
20) Why is self-awareness important in relationships?	To blame others	To control the other person	To understand your needs and feelings	To copy what others do

Story: Building Success Today and Planning for Tomorrow**Janelle's Turning Point**

Janelle slammed her locker shut, heart pounding. Another late assignment. Another "see me after class" note from her teacher. She wasn't lazy—she just felt like life moved faster than she could keep up. Between volleyball, helping her younger brother, and constant social notifications, school always seemed to fall last. "I'm trying," she mumbled to herself, blinking back frustration.

That afternoon, teacher Mr. Singh handed back her math quiz, 48%. "Janelle, I know you're capable of better than this." Expecting another lecture, she dragged her feet to his desk. But instead, he handed her a goal-setting worksheet. "Ever tried organizing your week? Write down your goals and your chances of reaching them by over 40%." She took it—not convinced—but curious.

That night, Janelle sat at her desk. Goal: *Finish assignments on time*. She added three steps: plan her week by 30 minutes, ask for help when stuck. By the end of the week, something strange happened—she didn't get picked up for detention. She felt like she was in control.

A week later, Mr. Singh introduced a career exploration project. "Think beyond grades. Think you. What excites you? What are your strengths?" They took an online quiz. Janelle's results showed creativity, empathy, and communication. "Helping people through design," she thought. "Maybe art. Or counselling?"

Statistics shared in class opened her eyes: 65% of future jobs in Canada need college or university training. And 1 in 3 students don't explore options early enough. That night, Janelle started researching high school programs in media arts. She even found a weekend volunteer spot making posters for a local mental health walk.

One weekend, while working on a project about coping strategies for stress, she realized how different she felt. She had learned how to use planners, take breaks without guilt, and even talk to teachers when overwhelmed. Her friends began asking her how she kept it together. She smiled and said, "It's not about being perfect. It's about knowing what matters to you and working towards it."

She started seeing school differently—not just a chore, but a launch pad. Now, Janelle's planner is filled with colour-coded blocks and goals. She still messes up sometimes—but she always gets back on track. Because now, she's not just surviving the school year—she's designing her future.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Time management helps reduce school stress.	True	False
2) Setting goals improves academic focus.	True	False
3) All students learn the same way.	True	False
4) Exploring interests helps guide career choices.	True	False
5) Study habits don't affect long-term success.	True	False

Tips List

Write the tips you would give to a friend to help them succeed in school and plan for the future.

1)

2)

3)

Visualizing

Draw what you were picturing while you were reading the passage.

Activity – Interview a Peer

Objective

What are we learning about?

To better understand how using different personal strategies—like time management, goal-setting, and decision-making—can support students in achieving success at school and help them prepare for their future beyond graduation.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Printed copy of the interview question and answer sheet template

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Tell students that hearing how others manage their time and set goals can help them reflect on their own habits and feel more confident. Learning from each other can inspire better routines and stronger planning skills.
2. Distribute the printed interview question and answer sheets. Each student will choose a classmate or friend to interview about how they stay organized, set goals, and explore future plans like careers or high school programs.
3. During the interview, students will ask the provided questions and record their partner's responses. Encourage thoughtful listening and respectful conversation.
4. After the interview, students will reflect on three helpful things they learned and write a short summary about how they can apply those ideas to their own life and goals.
5. Wrap up with a class discussion. Invite a few students to share insights or strategies they heard. Highlight how different approaches can work for different people, and how planning today supports future success.

Interview Questions and Answers

1) What is one way you stay organized with school tasks or deadlines?

2) What are you working on right now?

3) What helps you stay motivated when you're busy at school?

4) What's a hobby you enjoy and why?

5) What advice would you give to someone who feels unsure about their future?

Name: _____

108

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Reflection

Name of Peer

Three things I learned from my peer's experiences:

How these lessons can apply to my life:

PREVIEW

Exit Cards

Cut Out Cut out the exit cards below and have students complete them at the end of class.

Name: _____

Why is it important to set goals and plan for your future?

Name: _____

Why is it important to set goals and plan for your future?

Name: _____

Why is it important to set goals and plan for your future?

Name: _____

Why is it important to set goals and plan for your future?

Blog Post: Learning From Mistakes and Bouncing Back**Navigating Choices and Risks in Teen Culture**

Date: July 11, 2025

Author: Jana tan

4-minute read

Everyone makes mistakes. In fact, failure is one of the most important parts of learning and personal growth. Whether it's failing a test, forgetting a school assignment, or saying something you regret to a friend, setbacks are a normal part of being human. What matters most is how you respond. This is where resilience comes in—your ability to bounce back and keep going, even when things get tough.

Students with a growth mindset—the belief that they can improve through effort and practice—tend to bounce back over time. Stanford professor Carol Dweck found that students with a growth mindset are motivated to work through challenges. They see mistakes not as signs of failure, but as steps toward learning.

Some of the world's most successful people failed many times before succeeding. Thomas Edison failed over 1,000 times before inventing the working lightbulb. Instead of giving up, he famously said, "I have not failed. I've just found 1,000 ways that won't work." His mindset helped him stay focused and creative.

In 2020, the American Psychological Association found that teens who reflect on mistakes positively are 40% more likely to improve their academic performance. That means learning from setbacks, rather than ignoring or feeling ashamed about them, can actually boost your confidence and results.

It's also important to talk about your feelings. If you're struggling with a mistake, reaching out to a teacher, friend, or counsellor can help you process your emotions and find your coping strategies. Mistakes don't mean you're a failure. They're just part of your learning path. The key is to ask yourself, What can I learn from this? and How can I grow from this? By trying, learning, and remembering—you are more than your mistakes. Every setback is a setup for a comeback. With effort, and the right mindset, you'll become stronger, wiser, and more capable of facing whatever comes ahead.

Till next time,
Jana Tan

Comments:

Marcus L. | July 11, 2025

Failing used to scare me, but now I see it helps me learn—especially with a growth mindset.

Like Reply 10h ago



Chloe S. | July 11, 2025

It's not always easy to bounce back. Schools should support students more after failure.

Like Reply 3h ago

**If I Could
Try Again...**

Think of mistakes you made and complete: "If I could try again, I would..."

If I could try again, I will...	
If I could try again, I will...	
If I could try again, I will...	

True or False Determine if each statement is true or false?

1) Mistakes help us build resilience and overcome challenges.	True	False
2) A growth mindset means believing abilities are fixed and cannot be developed.	True	False
3) Students who reflect improve their school performance.	True	False
4) Setbacks are signs of weakness or failure.	True	False
5) Your mindset affects how you respond to failure.	True	False

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What is a growth mindset, and why is it important?

2) How can failure help someone grow or succeed?

Activity: Bounce Back Strategies

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students identify personal strategies for coping with mistakes, setbacks, or emotional stress, and build resilience by reflecting on how they can bounce back in healthy ways.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Printed Bounce Back Basketball worksheet (the template you will use)
- Pencils or pens
- Crayons, coloured pencils, or markers (optional)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Start by having a short discussion with students about how they feel when they go as planned or when we make mistakes. Let them know these feelings are normal and learning to manage them is part of growing up.
2. Hand out the Bounce Back Basketball worksheet to each student. Each blank basketball is a space to write a personal coping strategy they do to calm down or feel better when they're upset. Examples might include taking deep breaths, talking to someone, drawing, listening to music, or taking a break.
3. After writing, students will decorate their basketballs with colours, patterns, or small drawings that reflect the meaning of each strategy. This adds creativity and helps them connect with their ideas.
4. When finished, invite students to cut out their basketballs (if scissors are allowed) and create a class "Bounce Back Wall." This wall will be a reminder that everyone has ways to recover from tough moments, and students can learn new strategies from each other.
5. End the activity with a short group discussion. Ask how it felt to think about their strategies. Remind them that coping looks different for everyone and it's okay to try different tools to find what works best.

Bounce Back Strategies

PREVIEW



Write

Reflect on today's activity about bouncing back from mistakes. Use the questions to explore resilience and healthy ways to handle challenges.

1. *What kind of situation usually makes you feel upset or discouraged?*
2. *How do you normally react when you make a mistake?*
3. *What coping strategies or tools help you bounce back the most?*
4. *What part of today's activity helped you think differently about failure?*
5. *What advice would you give a friend who is feeling down after a mistake?*
6. *What's something you'll try next time you're struggling with a setback?*

PREVIEW

Unit Test – Wellness Choices**Multiple Choice**

/10

1. How can your choices affect others? a) They can be hurt physically or emotionally b) They only affect you c) They can hurt your community d) They never cause problems	2. How does positive self-talk help? a) Lowers energy b) Builds self-esteem c) Creates drama d) Leads to jealousy
3. What is a healthy habit? a) Doing exercise regularly b) Copying other people c) Doing it once a month d) Avoiding it when busy	4. What is a danger of extreme dieting? a) Poor posture b) Losing friends c) Health risks d) Fast weight loss
5. Which is an alternative health practice? a) Surgery b) Antibiotics c) Acupuncture d) Cold medicine	6. What is a sign of peer pressure? a) Silently saying "yes" b) Saying "yes" to everything c) Avoiding the situation d) Pressure from friends
7. What most influences teen body image? a) Family pictures b) School c) Teachers d) Social media	8. What's in a wellness plan? a) Fashion tips b) Dietary supplements c) Coping strategies d) Social media influencers
9. What is a healthy way to manage stress? a) Yelling at someone b) Journaling c) Skipping meals d) Ignoring the problem	10. If a friend seems sad, you should: a) Tell everyone b) Laugh it off c) Ignore it d) Offer help and suggest support

Explain

Describe the different types of addictions.

Substance	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Digital	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Behavioural	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Identify

Write if the scenario shows digital, or behavioural addiction.

1) Lucas uses his phone late every night.	
2) Ava keeps shopping online and hides it.	
3) Ethan needs energy drinks every day.	
4) Sarah skips meals to play video games.	
5) Marcus smokes when he feels stressed.	
6) Zoe skips school to watch shows.	
7) Liam keeps gambling online after big losses.	
8) Tasha drinks alcohol alone at home.	
9) Ben checks social media every few minutes.	
10) Natalie lies to get more time at the arcade.	

1) Give three examples of negative self-talk and explain how you could change each one into a positive message. How might these changes improve confidence?

PREVIEW

2) List and explain three ways positive self-talk can help with confidence, or making good decisions.

PREVIEW



Google Slides Lessons Preview





Alberta Health and Wellness

Relationship Choices Unit – Grade 9

3-Part Lesson Format

Part 1 – Minds On!

- Learning Goals
- Discussion Questions
- Quotes
- And More!

Building a Positive Mindset

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think people are drawn to others who have a positive mindset?
2. How do you think positivity could help you in group projects or sports?
3. What makes it hard for some people to stay positive when things go wrong?

Sorting Activity: Positive VS Negative Mindset

Read each statement and decide if it shows a positive mindset (or negative mindset).

I try to learn from mistakes instead of giving up.	I believe I can change if given a chance.
I always repeat things to get better.	I don't think saying thank you really matters.
I use kind words with myself and others.	I believe being nice means I need success.
I ignore my feelings when I'm stressed or upset.	I'm thankful for small things every day.
I take deep breaths and wait until I feel calm before reacting.	I blame others when things go wrong.
I feel grateful for things I can do better than others at.	I never think about what I'm grateful for.

Part 2 – Action!

- Surveys/Polls
- Matching
- Drag and Drop
- Videos
- And More!

Part 3 – Consolidation!

- Exit Cards
- Quick Draw
- 3-2-1 Reflection
- One-Sentence Summary

Consolidation – Reflection

Complete these sentences to reflect on what you learned about building a positive mindset:

1. I realized that thinking positively can change how I _____.
2. One way I can build a more positive mindset is by _____.
3. When I feel discouraged, I can remind myself that _____.



Alberta Health and Wellness Relationship Choices Unit – Grade 9

Sorting: Stress Bucket

Instruction: Sort each item into the correct column to show what adds stress and what helps relieve it.

WAYS OF RELIEVING STRESS

STRESSORS THAT FILL THE BUCKET

Homework deadlines	Writing in a journal	Being late for work
Taking screen breaks	Deep breathing	Social media pressure
Talking to someone	Family arguments	Listening to music
Tests or sports	Friendship drama	Not enough sleep

Stress vs Burnout

Drag each symptom into the correct section of the Venn Diagram: Stress, Burnout, or Both.

Overworking	Tired all the time	Feeling numb	Low energy
Don't care anymore	Worrying a lot	No motivation	Feeling anxious
Headaches	Gossiping at others	Problems and losses	Poor sleep
Headaches	Getting sick often	Disconnected from everything	Too tired to try

Sort It: Communication Barriers

Drag and drop the items to show which does a **re** communication barriers.

Asking questions	Vague words
Phone distractions	Taking turns
Aggressive tone	Making assumptions
Eye contact	Nodding
Not listening	Talking too much
Interrupting	"I" statements
Calm voice	Judging quickly



Alberta Health and Wellness

Relationship Choices Unit – Grade 9

Doing What's Right: Integrity in Action

Instructions: Move the actions that show honesty and courage into the True Leadership column.

True Leadership	Statements
	Stands up when something is wrong
	Shares a private message without permission
	Protects others' personal information
	Pretends not to see a mean comment
	Speaks calmly and respectfully
	Thinks before replying in a group
	Adds jokes to embarrass a classmate
	Acts with kindness even when it's hard
	Apologizes after hurting someone
	Supports classmates during tough moments

Icons: A person, scales of justice, and a heart with a checkmark.

Sorting Responses

Drag each statement into the correct category: Healthy, Neutral, or Unhealthy Responses.

Healthy Responses	Neutral Responses	Unhealthy Responses
I walk away and say nothing.	I stay calm and talk it out.	I try to win the argument.
I yell to get my point across.	I change the subject to avoid conflict.	I blame the other person.
I let the other person explain.	I apologize when I'm wrong.	I listen before I respond.
I ignore the person completely.	I use sarcasm or rude comments.	I talk behind their back.
I avoid the issue and hope it goes away.	I give space without saying why.	

Before You Click: Smart Questions to Ask Yourself

Drag the smart questions you would consider before posting or clicking online.

Is this something my future self would be proud of?	Would I be okay if this got shared beyond who I intended?	Am I sharing this for attention?	Would this be misunderstood?	Can I read them back for fun?
Who might see this and how will they feel?	Is this respectful?	Should I reply right this second?	What's everyone else posting right now?	Will I regret this later?
Is this private information?	Does this message cross someone's boundary?	Am I posting out of anger or emotion?	Could this embarrass or hurt someone?	Would I say this in person?



Workbook Preview



Grade 9 – Health Unit

Relationship Choices

Learning Strategies		Students will develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.
	Skill and Procedures	Pages
R9.1	Identify appropriate strategies to foster positive feelings/attitudes	6-10, 51-55, 84-88, 103, 114-118, 128-132
R9.2	Analyze why individuals choose not to express or manage feelings in situations; e.g., using anger to	11-16, 51-62
R9.3	<div> <p>Preview of 80 pages from this product that contains 175 pages total.</p> </div>	9-98,
R9.4		9-102, 118
R9.5		development of unhealthy relationships, and develop strategies to deal with unhealthy relationships
R9.6		28-33, 75-79, 84-88, 103-108, 123-132
R9.7	Model integrity and honesty in accordance with ethical principles; e.g., develop strategies to behave in an ethical manner	34-38, 75-79, 89-98, 123-127
R9.8	Refine personal conflict management skills; e.g., negotiation, mediation strategies	39-43, 69-74, 109-113
R9.9	Analyze skills required to maintain individuality within a group; e.g., self-respect, assertiveness, refusal skills	44-50, 80-83, 119-122, 128-132
R9.9	Evaluate group effectiveness, and generate strategies to improve group effectiveness; e.g., develop skills in facilitating discussions or meetings	44-50, 109-113, 119-122, 133-136

NAME: _____

Relationship Choices



Building a Positive Mindset

What Is a Positive Mindset?

A positive mindset means thinking in a hopeful and confident way. It helps you focus on what's going well instead of just what's going wrong. This does not mean ignoring problems. It means believing you can learn from challenges and still move forward. When you think positively, it can improve your mood, your actions, and even your health. Having a positive mindset doesn't come naturally for everyone—it takes practice. Just like training a muscle, your brain needs regular habits to stay strong and positive.

Why Positive Matters in Daily Life

When you have a positive mindset, you feel better about yourself and the people around you. It helps with friendships, schoolwork, and even family. Here are some reasons positivity is important for Grade 9 students:

- Positive thinking helps reduce stress and anxiety.
- It improves your learning skills.
- People with positive outlooks are more likely to succeed in goals.
- Optimism helps with school projects and motivation.
- Positive emotions make it easier to build healthy relationships.



Three Tools for Positive Thinking

Here are three common and effective tools to build a positive mindset. Practising these each day can help train your brain to stay strong and positive.

- Gratitude – This means being thankful for what you have. You can practice this by:
- Write down 3 things you're thankful for each day.
- Say thank you more often, even for small things.



Notice the little things that make your day better. Optimism means expecting good things to happen in the future. You can focus on what could go right instead of what might go wrong and look at mistakes as chances to grow.

Affirmations are positive sentences you say to yourself to build confidence. Examples:

- "I am strong enough to handle this."
- "I deserve respect."
- "I can improve with effort."

How Emotions Affect Your Life

Your emotions don't just affect you—they affect everyone around you. When you stay positive:

- You are easier to talk to and work with.
- You bounce back quicker from arguments or setbacks.
- You treat yourself with more kindness and patience.

Learning to manage emotions like stress, anger, and sadness is part of building wellness and strong relationships. Positivity gives you tools to handle hard times without giving up.

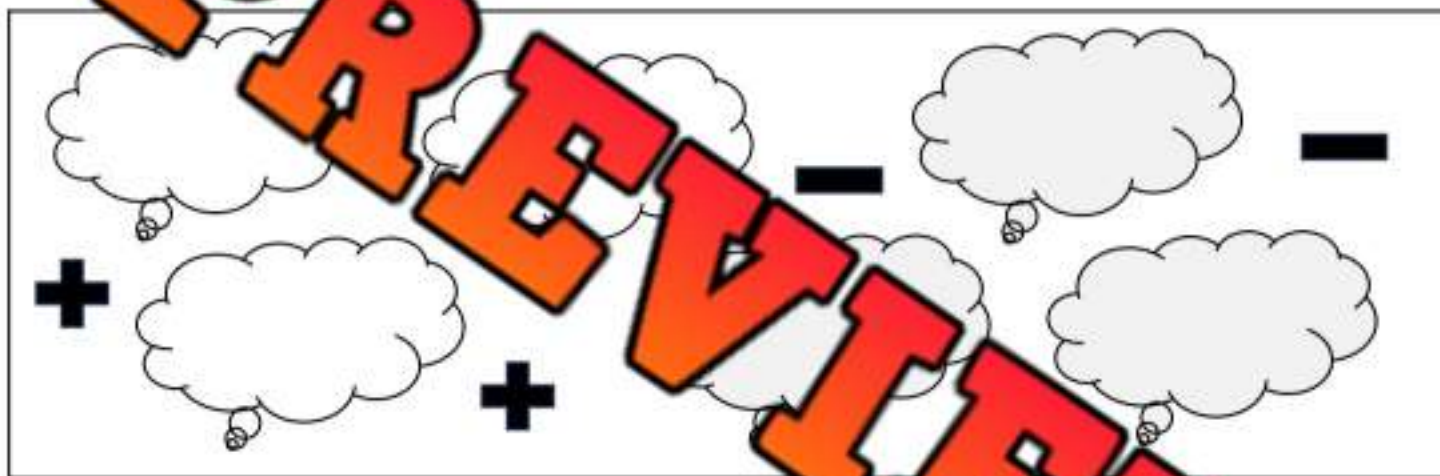
True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Positive thinking improves your problem-solving skills.	True	False
2) Gratitude means ignoring the bad things in life.	True	False
3) Affirmations are used to lower your confidence.	True	False
4) Optimism helps you expect good things to happen.	True	False
5) Positive people always avoid stress and failure.	True	False

Think

Write positive thoughts in + bubbles and negative thoughts in - bubbles.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What is one benefit of having a positive mindset?

2) Why is it important to manage emotions in relationships?

Activity – Reframe Your Thinking

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students understand how thoughts affect emotions, behaviour, and self-esteem. Students will learn how to recognize negative or unhelpful thoughts and reframe them into more positive, hopeful, or realistic alternatives. This practice builds a stronger, more resilient mindset and supports overall wellness and healthier relationships.

Material

What will you need for the activity?

- Printed worksheet titled "Instead of Thinking... / Think This Instead..."
- Pencil or pen
- (Optional) Eraser, highlighter, or markers for decoration or highlighting key ideas



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Start by focusing on the left column labeled "Instead of Thinking...". This is where you'll write down thoughts that are negative, unhelpful, or stressful. Think about moments in your life when you felt overwhelmed, frustrated, or disappointed. These could be situations related to school, friendships, body image, sports, or confidence.
2. Move over to the right column titled "Think This Instead...". For each negative thought on the left, rewrite it as a more positive, hopeful, or realistic statement.
3. Make sure you complete at least 8 full rows on the worksheet. Use a mix of real experiences from your life and common examples that many teens your age go through. Be honest and thoughtful in your answers.
4. Once you've completed the chart, take a few minutes to read over your responses. Reflect quietly on how your mindset could shift by thinking more positively.
5. If time allows, you may choose to share one example with a partner or write a quick journal entry about the thought that was hardest to reframe. Learning to shift your mindset is an important step in building confidence, resilience, and emotional wellness.

Reframe Your Thinking



Instead Of Thinking...



Think This Instead...

PREVIEW

Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) Which negative thought was the hardest for you to change? Why?

2) How did you learn to rewrite your thoughts into something more positive?

3) Do you think positive thoughts can change how you act or feel? Explain.

4) Which new thought do you want to remember and use in your life?

5) Why is it important to notice negative thoughts instead of ignoring them?

Story: The Power of Expression**The Pressure Jar**

Jaden sat at his desk, pretending to focus on math, but his mind was spinning. His parents had been fighting more lately, his grades were slipping, and his best friend had started hanging out with someone else. Still, every time someone asked if he was okay, he shrugged it off with a joke or changed the subject.

"I'm fine," he told his teacher last week. "Just tired." In truth, he wasn't feeling much at all. He stayed up late nights, not sleeping or scrolling on his phone, trying to distract himself from the heavy feeling in his chest never really going away.

At school, Jaden tried to keep it together. He smiled during group work and waved hello to friends in the hallway, but inside, he felt like a pressure cooker—ready to explode. Every time someone asked how he was, it added more pressure.

It wasn't until health class that something changed. The teacher, Ms. Lee, wrote a bold statistic on the board: "People who regularly express emotions in healthy ways have a lower risk of anxiety and depression." Jaden sat up a little straighter.

Ms. Lee explained how bottling up emotions can hurt both you and others. It can raise your blood pressure, weaken your immune system, and make it harder to sleep. She said that ignoring emotions doesn't make them disappear—it just makes them grow. Anger, stress, or physical pain.

Then she shared a real story about a student who kept her sadness to herself for months. She didn't want to seem weak, so she smiled all the time. But eventually, she started snapping at friends, failing tests, and getting stomachaches. A school counsellor helped her realize that hiding her feelings wasn't strength—it was fear.

Jaden felt like she was describing him. He realized he had been using silence to avoid feeling vulnerable. He wasn't "fine," and pretending wasn't helping.

That night, instead of brushing off his mom's concern, Jaden said, "Actually, I haven't been feeling great lately." The conversation was short, but it was honest—and it was a start.

According to mental health research, teens who talk about their feelings are 60% more likely to report good mental health than those who stay silent. Jaden still had a lot to work through, but finally letting some pressure out made all the difference.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Emotions are always accurate reflections of reality.	True	False
2) Interpretations can affect the intensity of emotions.	True	False
3) All emotional responses are based on logic.	True	False
4) Emotions cannot be managed or changed.	True	False
5) Reframing thoughts can reduce emotional distress.	True	False

Questions Write the answers to the questions below.

1) What is one belief you have about emotional experiences?

2) In your own words, explain what it means to reframe an emotion.

Emotion Radar

Choose an emotion that you recently felt and explain how you felt that.

Fear	Sadness
Happiness	Anger

Activity – “React & Regulate” Emotion Dice Game**Objective**

What are we learning about?

Students will practise identifying emotions in real-life situations and apply effective emotion regulation strategies by engaging in a randomized scenario activity using a die.

Material

What will you need for the activity?

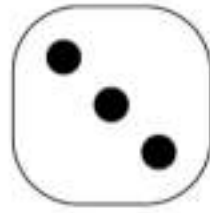
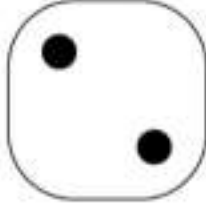
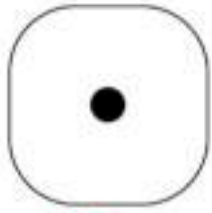
- One standard die (or one shared in pairs or passed around)
- Scenario list
- Student notebooks (or journals)
- Whiteboard/Smartboard (optional, for discussion)

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Briefly discuss why it's important to recognize and regulate emotions. Share examples of how unchecked emotions can affect relationships, learning, or well-being.
2. Rolling Time
 - The teacher calls on one student at a time.
 - The student rolls the die (physically or virtually).
 - The teacher reads one scenario from the corresponding number group.
 - The student must:
 - Name the emotion they'd likely feel in that situation.
 - Explain what thoughts or reactions might happen.
 - Suggest a healthy emotion regulation strategy they could use (e.g., deep breathing, taking a break, talking to someone, positive self-talk, etc.).
3. After a few rounds, have students pick their favourite scenario from the game and write:
 - The emotion they felt
 - Why it would be challenging
 - The strategy they would use in real life

Die Scenarios



You forget a part of
your presentation
in the room.

Your Wi-Fi cuts out
during an online
assignment.

A friend suddenly
stops talking to you.

You send a message
to the wrong group
chat.

You forget your group project
assignment and do
it late.

You didn't make the
sports team you tried
out for.

You have a big zit on
picture day when you
wanted to look your
best.

You lose points for a
late assignment you
handed in on time.

Your friend is sick and
you can't go to the
game.

You show up in
clothes that don't
match for Spirit Day.

You're stuck in traffic
and late for
something important.

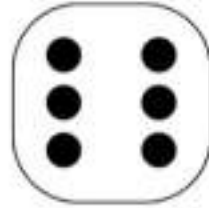
Someone made a
mean comment about
you online.

Your stomach growls
loudly during a quiet
test.

You keep making the
same mistake in math.

You miss a family
member who lives far
away.

Die Scenarios



You're supposed to speak
in a group.

Someone spreads a
rumour about you.

A classmate gets
praised for something
you worked hard on
too.

You're waiting to get a
test result back.

Your friend is a

Your friend hangs out
with someone else all
week.

You have three
assignments due
tomorrow.

A teacher accuses you
of cheating, but you
didn't.

Someone posts a
vacation photo that
makes you feel left

You're meeting
someone new for the
first time.

Your sibling goes into
your room without
asking.

You compare your
grades to others and
feel bad.

You lose something
important before
school.

You get blamed for
something you didn't
do.

You feel like everyone
else has their life
figured out but you
don't.

Write

Reflect on what you learned about your emotions during the Emotion Regulation activity. Use these questions to help guide your writing.

1. Which scenario did you respond to during the activity?
2. What emotion did you feel in that situation?
3. What made you feel that way—your thoughts, beliefs, or past experiences?
4. Did your emotion help or get in the way of solving the problem?
5. What strategy would help you manage this emotion better next time?
6. How can this strategy support you in real life at school or at home?

PREVIEW

Newspaper Article: Managing Stress in a Crisis**Storm Chaos at Coastal Carnival
Teaches Teens Real-Life Stress
Survival**

Sunny Shores, BC was supposed to be a day of fun and games on the beachfront fairgrounds, enjoying rides, games, and food stalls, when disaster struck around 3:15 PM. Without warning, the sound system cut out mid-song, rides stopped mid-motion, and the once-vibrant lights flickered off. Minutes later, dark clouds rolled overhead, bringing with them strong winds and a downpour that soaked the entire area in under ten minutes.

Over 500 visitors had gathered at the beachfront fairgrounds, enjoying rides, games, and food stalls, when disaster struck around 3:15 PM. Without warning, the sound system cut out mid-song, rides stopped mid-motion, and the once-vibrant lights flickered off. Minutes later, dark clouds rolled overhead, bringing with them strong winds and a downpour that soaked the entire area in under ten minutes.

"The Ferris wheel just froze," said 14-year-old Alicia Martin, who had been in line for cotton candy. "People were screaming, kids got separated from their families, and vendors were trying to keep their stalls from blowing over. It was total chaos."

Despite the panic, a group of teens from Sunny Shores Secondary turned the situation around. Having recently completed a unit on stress management and crisis response,

the students applied techniques they had learned in class—deep breathing, positive self-talk, and journaling—to keep themselves grounded and assist others.

"Instead of freaking out, I took a few deep breaths like we practised," said 15-year-old Malik Ruiz. "Then I looked around to see what I could actually do to help." Malik and his friends helped reunite lost children with their parents, offered dry towels, and even guided some elderly guests to shelter.

Some students found calm through writing. "I pulled out my notebook and just started journaling what was going on," said Kayla Nguyen. "It sounds strange, but writing helped clear my head so I could stay focused and

RCMP on site commended the teens for their quick thinking and ability to remain calm under pressure. These students didn't just survive the storm—they helped de-escalate the situation," said Constable Evan Price.

Leadership teacher Ms. [Name] was supervising her class. She was equally impressed. "We always teach students stress is something they can manage. This was the real test—and they passed with flying colours."

Psychologist Dr. Lena Graham added, "This situation is a reminder that teaching youth how to handle stress—whether through breathing, journaling, or focusing on manageable steps—isn't just schoolwork. It's preparing them for life."

Although the carnival was shut down early, many left with something even more valuable than prizes: confidence in their ability to handle a crisis—and bounce back stronger.

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Stress always has a negative impact on people.	True	False
2) Deep breathing can help calm your nervous system.	True	False
3) Journaling during a crisis is a waste of time.	True	False
4) Everyone reacts to stress in the same way.	True	False
5) Avoiding your feelings is a healthy way to cope.	True	False

Identify

Identify the symptoms of stress.

Headache	Doubtful thinking	Fever	Sweating hands
Withdrawing from others	Stomach issues	Racing heart	Fatigue
Broken bones	Loss of appetite	Stomach cramps	Shaky body
Difficulty focusing	Rash from an allergy	Stomach pain	Irritability

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) Why do some people panic during a stressful moment while others stay calm?

2) Why is it important to explore multiple ways of coping with stress?

Blog Post: Communication Habits That Matter

Speak Up the Right Way

Date: July 15, 2025

Author: Taylor Singh

4-minute read

Have you ever walked away from a conversation feeling misunderstood, ignored, or frustrated? You're not alone. How we communicate plays a big role in shaping our relationships. In fact, studies show that poor communication is one of the top reasons friendships, group work, and even family relationships break down. There are three main communication styles: passive, aggressive, and assertive. Passive communicators often avoid expressing their thoughts and feelings. They might say "it's fine" when it's not or stay silent to avoid conflict. The downside is they often build up resentment, and struggle to get their needs met.

Aggressive communicators, on the other hand, tend to be loud, demanding, and sometimes disrespectful. They often blame people, or raise their voices to get their way. While they may get what they want in the short term, this style often damages trust and pushes people away.

Assertive communicators express themselves clearly, confidently, and respectfully. They make eye contact, speak in a calm tone, and use phrases like "I feel upset when..." or "Can we work this out together?" Assertiveness is linked to better relationships, stronger friendships, and greater success in leadership roles. In a 2022 Canadian Youth Survey, 68% of teens said they struggle to speak up for themselves in group situations, while 87% felt confident using assertive communication regularly. That's a problem—there's also an opportunity. Good communication is a skill you can learn and improve over time.

Here's a quick tip: next time you need to express something, try using "I" statements like "I feel..." instead of "You always..." This keeps the conversation respectful and prevents the other person from getting defensive. Whether you're texting a friend, speaking up in school, or setting boundaries with someone close to you, your communication habits matter.

Till next time,
Taylor Singh

Comments:



Alden23 | July 15, 2025

I agree that assertive communication is important, but I think aggressive communication sometimes works when people aren't listening.

Like Reply 4h ago



Layla_Marie | July 15, 2025

Being calm and assertive earns more respect long-term.

Like Reply 2h ago

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) How does passive communication affect a person's relationships?

2) Why is it helpful to use "I" statements during conversations?

True or False

Write the statement as true or false?

1) Passive communicators always get what they need.	True	False
2) Communication styles affect how we work.	True	False
3) Good communication skills can be learned and improved.	True	False
4) Most teens feel confident using assertive communication.	True	False
5) Being loud is the same as being assertive.	True	False

Draw

Draw a "Communication Weather Forecast" and add a short description for each type.

Foggy for passive	Stormy for aggressive	Sunny for assertive

Activity – Say It Right

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students recognize different communication situations and practise responding using appropriate verbal skills such as assertiveness, empathy, and encouragement.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Printed worksheet
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: highlighters or colored pens for emphasizing key words in dialogue

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Read each scenario in the first column of the worksheet carefully. One describes a common communication situation you may encounter. The first one is done for you.
2. In the "Verbal Skill" column, write what type of communication style you think is best for that situation (e.g., assertiveness, empathy, encouragement, active listening, conflict resolution).
3. In the "Dialogue" column, write a sentence or short response you could realistically say in that situation. Try to make your dialogue clear, respectful, and appropriate to the tone of the scenario.
4. Be thoughtful with your word choices. Think about tone, body language, and how your words might affect the person you're speaking to.
5. If time allows, practise a few of your responses with a partner to hear how they sound when spoken aloud.

Scenario	Verbal Skill	Dialogue
Refusing somebody who is asking you to do their work	Assertiveness	<i>"I really wish to help you, but I have to finish an assignment today."</i>
Congratulating your friend on their birthday		
Asking for teacher extension on a deadline		
Disagreeing with a classmate during a group discussion.		
Apologizing to a friend after a misunderstanding.		
Encouraging a nervous friend before a school presentation.		
Giving constructive feedback to a groupmate who isn't contributing.		
Telling someone they hurt your feelings without starting an argument.		

Exit Cards

Cut Out Cut out the exit cards below and have students complete them at the end of class.

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

1) Assertive communication is respectful.	T	F
2) Aggressive communication helps build strong relationships.	T	F
3) "I" statements are part of being assertive.	T	F
4) You can't improve how you communicate with others.	T	F

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

1) Assertive communication is respectful.	T	F
2) Aggressive communication helps build strong relationships.	T	F
3) "I" statements are part of being assertive.	T	F
4) You can't improve how you communicate with others.	T	F

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

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3) "I" statements are part of being assertive.	T	F
4) You can't improve how you communicate with others.	T	F

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

1) Assertive communication is respectful.	T	F
2) Aggressive communication helps build strong relationships.	T	F
3) "I" statements are part of being assertive.	T	F
4) You can't improve how you communicate with others.	T	F

Spotting Unhealthy Relationships

What Makes a Relationship Unhealthy?

An unhealthy relationship is one where someone is disrespected or controlled or is being treated unfairly, —often over time. This can happen in any relationship: with a friend, a dating partner, or even someone in your family. It doesn't always look obvious. In fact, many teens don't realize they're in an unhealthy relationship until they feel anxious, scared, or stuck. That's why it's important to learn the warning signs early.

Unhealthy relationships often include things like controlling behaviour, dishonesty, or pressure. According to a 2023 Canadian survey, 1 in 3 teens said they've felt manipulated by someone close to them. Some also said that they stayed in the relationship because they were afraid of being judged or of losing a friendship. But ignoring the signs can lead to serious emotional or physical harm.



Warning Signs to Watch

Sometimes red flags are easy to spot, but other times they happen slowly. Here are some signs that a relationship may not be healthy.

You feel nervous, anxious, or scared around the person.

- The person constantly makes fun of you or your interests.
- They guilt-trip you or say things like, "If you loved me, you would do..."
- They pressure you to do things you're not ready for.
- They don't respect your boundaries, personal space, or privacy.
- You're afraid to say how you feel or tell the truth.
- They try to control what you wear, who you hang out with, or how you use your phone.
- They blame you for everything or twist your words.

Healthy relationships are built on mutual respect, trust, and support—not control or fear.

How to Respond Safely

If you notice any of these signs, there are things you can do to protect yourself and get help. Here are some smart steps:

- Talk to a safe adult like a parent, teacher, or school counsellor.
- Be clear about your boundaries and speak up calmly when something doesn't feel right.
- Stay close to supportive friends who respect you and won't judge.
- Use "I" statements to express yourself. For example, "I feel hurt when you ignore me."
- Leave the situation if it becomes unsafe. Your safety is the top priority.

According to Kids Help Phone, over 70% of teens who talked about a toxic relationship felt better after getting support. You don't have to deal with it alone—help is always available.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) Why is it important to talk to someone if a relationship feels unsafe?

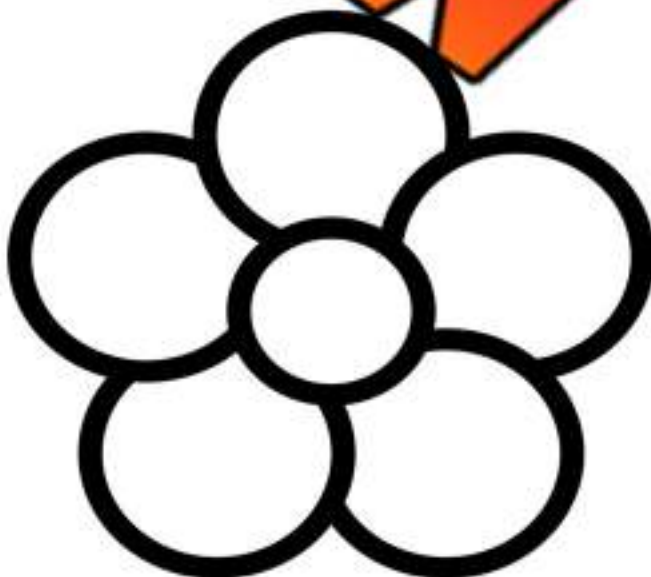
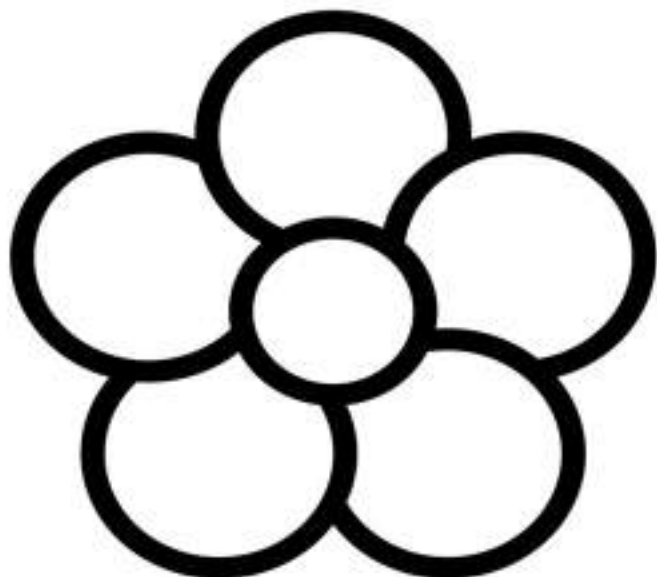
2) What is a healthy way to respond when someone crosses your boundaries?

True or False Statement or false?

1) Unhealthy relationships always start off as toxic.	True	False
2) Feeling scared or anxious around someone is a sign of a healthy relationship.	True	False
3) Manipulation can be part of an unhealthy relationship.	True	False
4) You should handle toxic situations completely on your own.	True	False
5) Leaving an unsafe relationship is the wrong choice.	True	False

Healthy Relationship Flowers

Fill the petals with traits showing a healthy relationship.



Student Talk Show: Relationship Flags

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students demonstrate their understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationship traits by role-playing real-life scenarios, asking thoughtful questions, and practising respectful communication in a talk-show setting.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Paper and pens for notes or notes
- Table and chairs for "talk show" setup
- Printed prompts (with questions)



Instructions

How will you implement this activity?

1. Form groups of 4–5 students. Each group will create a mini talk show segment (3–5 minutes) about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Assign roles:
 - 1 Talk Show Host
 - 2–3 Guests (e.g., a teen in an unhealthy relationship and giving advice, a school counsellor)
 - 1 Observer (optional, or rotate roles)
2. Plan your segment. Choose a topic or situation such as:
 - How to spot red flags in a friendship or dating relationship
 - Ways to respond when someone crosses a boundary
 - How healthy relationships show respect and support
3. Write short talking points or a script. Your host should ask questions, and guests should respond with examples, facts, or advice. You can use humour or drama—but keep it respectful and informative.
4. Include the following in your talk show:
 - At least 2 signs of an unhealthy relationship
 - At least 2 signs of a healthy relationship
 - 1 coping or help-seeking strategy (e.g., talking to an adult, setting boundaries)
5. Practise and perform. Groups will present their segments to the class. Watch other groups and take note of good advice or strategies shared.

Prompt Cards

Ask your guests any of the following questions during the show:

What does a healthy relationship look or feel like to you?

Can you give an example of a red flag in a friendship or dating relationship?

How do you safely respond to controlling or disrespectful behaviour?

What's the difference between setting a boundary and being rude?

What should you do if you're in an unhealthy relationship?

Why do people sometimes stay in bad relationships?

How can trust and honesty help a relationship?

What would you say to someone who feels stuck in a bad situation?

Can someone be controlling even if they don't yell or hit?

What role does communication play in healthy relationships?

Prompt Cards

Responses guests could make during the show:

"I started noticing they checked my phone without asking..."

"I didn't realize how much they guilt-tripped me until..."

"The things they said helped me feel more respected because..."

"When they told me I deserved better, I..."

"I knew something was wrong when I felt I had to speak up..."

"Talking to a counsellor helped me understand..."

"I've been in both healthy and unhealthy relationships, and the difference..."

"I thought jealousy meant love, but now I understand..."

"Leaving that relationship helped me focus on..."

"One thing I wish more teens knew is..."

Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) What is one new thing you learned about relationships from the talk show?

2) How did playing a role (host or guest) help you understand the topic better?

3) What warning signs of unhealthy relationships stood out to you the most?

4) How can you use what you learned to support a friend who is struggling with a relationship?

5) What would you do differently if you were in a tough relationship situation?

Newspaper Article: Handling Conflict with Respect

Heated Argument at Riverside Skate Park Turns Into Lesson in Respect

RIVERSIDE, ON – A tense confrontation between two teen skateboarders nearly boiled over into a physical fight last night at Riverside Skate Park, but instead, the moment turned into a powerful example of respect, maturity, and conflict resolution.

At around 10:15 p.m., two skateboarders were out enjoying the night. A 14-year-old Mary and a 15-year-old Jayden were scratched during a bump. The trick, attempted by Jayden, went off course and hit Mary's board. Witnesses say Mary shouted, and Jayden pushed back.

"They were yelling loud. You could feel the tension," said Maya Greene, 13, who was skating nearby. "People started circling around like something big was about to happen."

With voices raised and fists clenched, many expected a fight to break out. But then something unexpected happened—Mary paused. She took a deep breath, stepped back, and addressed the situation differently. "She said something like, 'I'm super mad, but I don't want to fight over this,'" another skater shared. "She said it's better to talk than mess things up more."

The two teens moved away from the crowd, sat on the edge of the ramp, and spent about 15 minutes calmly discussing the situation. Jayden admitted it was his fault, apologized, and even offered to help fix or replace the board. Mary accepted the apology and said the friendship mattered more than one mistake and crisis response.



Experts agree that this kind of resolution is rare but important. "Conflict doesn't have to mean broken relationships," said Dana Liu, a conflict resolution coach. "Using calm words, listening, and being honest about how you feel are key tools for resolving tension while maintaining respect."

According to a recent Youth Mental Health and Conflict Survey, teens say they've experienced conflict, but only 28% feel they handled it successfully. Learning to manage arguments is one of the most important skills teens can develop.

Youth counselor Kevin emphasized the importance of youth's decision. "They've chosen a healthy conflict looks like. It's not about winning. It's about understanding and moving forward."

By the end of the night, Mary and Jayden were skating side-by-side again—proving that respect and communication aren't just rules in school—they're skills for real life.

Their story has already sparked conversations online, with local students saying it made them rethink how they react to conflict. One Instagram comment read: "I wish more people handled things like that. Respect goes a long way."

Fact or Fiction – Handling Conflict

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students understand respectful ways to handle conflict, how emotions impact responses, and how to recognize effective and ineffective strategies. This activity builds critical thinking by helping students challenge common myths and choose communication tools that support healthy relationships.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- A list of statements about conflict resolution, communication, and emotions
- "Fact" and "Fiction" labels
- Space in the classroom for students to move to either side



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Your teacher will read a statement about handling conflict, communication, or respectful disagreement. These may involve common beliefs, facts, or myths.
2. Listen closely and think about what the statement means and how it connects to what you've learned.
3. Decide if you believe the statement is a FACT (true) or FICTION (not true).
4. Move to the side labeled "FACT" or "FICTION" to show your choice. Stand confidently but respectfully.
5. Wait quietly while others move. Everyone should be able to think without pressure.
6. Your teacher will then reveal the correct answer and offer a short explanation. This might include an example or tip for managing conflict respectfully.
7. Return to your seat and get ready for the next round. Stay focused so you can participate each time.
8. Think critically. The goal isn't just to be right—it's to learn how to solve disagreements with calm, respect, and understanding.

Fact or Fiction

Read the statements to the class.

#	Statement	Answer
1	Yelling is the fastest way to solve conflict.	Fiction
2	Listening is just as important as speaking in a disagreement.	Fact
3	Using "I" statements can help avoid blame.	Fact
4	Ignoring a problem always makes it go away.	Fiction
5	Winning a conflict shows weakness.	Fiction
6	Staying calm while you listen to your side.	Fact
7	Everyone has different points of view.	Fact
8	Body language doesn't matter during conflict.	Fiction
9	It's okay to take a break when you're upset.	Fact
10	All conflict is harmful and should be avoided.	Fiction
11	Conflict can lead to stronger relationships if handled.	Fact
12	Respectful tone can help keep a conversation calm.	Fact
13	The goal of conflict is to win the argument.	Fiction
14	People always remember what you say during an argument.	Fiction
15	Being right is more important than being kind.	Fiction
16	Compromise means both people give up something.	Fact
17	Apologizing shows maturity, not weakness.	Fact
18	Using sarcasm helps lighten conflict.	Fiction
19	You can learn conflict skills by practising.	Fact
20	Blaming others helps resolve things faster.	Fiction

Developing Emotional Intelligence

Understanding Emotions and Actions

Emotional intelligence (EI) is your ability to recognize your emotions, understand how they affect your actions, and respond in a healthy way. For students, this skill is especially important during teenage years when school, friendships, and life become more complex. Learning how to manage emotions helps improve mental health, relationships, and even academic performance.

Why It Matters

People with strong emotional intelligence are better at handling stress and solving problems. Instead of reacting quickly with anger or fear, they take a moment to pause, reflect, and respond with self-control. Emotional intelligence also helps people understand what others are feeling, called empathy. It's key for building friendships, resolving conflicts, and becoming a respectful communicator.



Facts You Should Know

Here are some important things to know about emotional intelligence, especially for teens in school:

- A Canadian Mental Health Study found that teens who report feeling overwhelmed often, but those who practise self-awareness are 40% more likely to feel in control of their emotions.
- Teens with high emotional intelligence tend to have stronger relationships and report fewer conflicts with friends and teachers.
- According to *Kids Help Phone*, teens who show empathy and emotional regulation are 25% more likely to avoid risky behaviour like substance use or fighting.
- Emotional intelligence is linked to better academic performance. Studies show students who practiced EI strategies improved their grades by an average of 10%.

The five main parts of emotional intelligence are:

- **Self-awareness** – Knowing your own feelings and being able to name them, like saying "I'm nervous" or "I'm excited."
- **Self-regulation** – Managing strong emotions like anger or stress in healthy ways, such as taking deep breaths or walking away to calm down.
- **Motivation** – Staying focused on your goals even when it gets tough. This includes being able to push through disappointment or failure.
- **Empathy** – Understanding and caring about how others feel. This helps you respond kindly, even if you don't agree with them.
- **Social skills** – Communicating clearly, listening well, working as a team, and solving disagreements respectfully.

How to Practice It

You can develop emotional intelligence just like a muscle—it takes practice. Try naming your feelings instead of hiding them, such as saying, "I feel frustrated because I didn't do well on that quiz." You can also use deep breathing, journaling, or talking to someone you trust. Empathy grows when you listen carefully, ask questions, and imagine how someone else might feel.

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Emotional intelligence helps you react quickly with anger.	True	False
2) Empathy helps you understand and care about others.	True	False
3) EI can be improved with practice over time.	True	False
4) Students with high EI often avoid risky behaviour.	True	False
5) Naming your emotions builds emotional intelligence.	True	False

Questions Answer the questions below.

1) Why is empathy important when solving disagreements with friends?

2) What are the benefits of emotional intelligence in your daily life?

My Toolbox

List or draw 5 EI "tools" you can use to handle difficult situations.



Story: Anger as a Mask Emotion**Draw**

Draw pictures that illustrate the story.

The Hidden Storm

It was a rainy Monday when Daniel slammed his locker shut so hard it echoed through the hallway. His classmates gave him space—he had a reputation for having a short temper. Just last week, he had yelled at his group members during a science project. To outsiders, Daniel just looked like a grumpy guy. But what most people didn't see was that just moments earlier, he had checked his phone and read a text from his dad cancelling their weekend plans—for the third time that month. Instead of talking about the disappointment building inside him, Daniel snapped at people around him. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, teens often express difficult emotions like fear, sadness, or rejection through anger, because it feels like the "safer" emotion to show.

PREVIEW

Later that day in Health class, Mr. Brooks started a lesson called "Anger as a Mask." He explained that anger is sometimes a cover for more vulnerable emotions—like embarrassment, guilt, or feeling left out. "It's like a shield," he said, drawing a mask on the whiteboard. "We wear it to protect ourselves from getting hurt even more." He shared that in a 2022 teen health survey, 66% of students said they feel pressured to hide their real feelings and instead act "tough" when things get hard. As Mr. Brooks passed out reflection sheets, Daniel stared down at the paper and felt something unfamiliar: curiosity. For the first time, he wondered what was really happening underneath his own outbursts. The next morning, Daniel tried something different. When his friend Jacob made a joke that stung, instead of yelling, Daniel paused. His fists clenched instinctively, but he took a breath and walked away.

Later, he wrote in his notebook, "I was mad because I felt humiliated. I didn't want people to see me as weak." It was the first time he had written something like that down. Studies show that teens who learn to name and understand their emotions are less likely to get into conflicts or act aggressively. Emotional awareness helps students build stronger relationships and even do better in school, according to research from the Centre for Emotional Intelligence. By Friday, Daniel found himself staying back after class to talk to Mr. Brooks. "I think I get it now," he said quietly. "I wasn't just mad—I felt ignored." Mr. Brooks nodded. "That's a powerful realization. Anger isn't the enemy. It's a signal—something's going on underneath." Daniel smiled, feeling a new kind of strength. Not the kind that slams lockers or shuts people out, but the kind that says, "I'm allowed to feel what I feel, and I don't have to hide behind anger anymore." For the first time in a long while, Daniel didn't just look calm—he felt it.

PREVIEW

PREVIEW

As he packed his bag, Daniel thought about the small wins from the week. He remembered the first time he stood up for himself, the first time he asked for help, even asking his mom to talk when things got overwhelming. These were small steps, but they felt like real progress. According to the Canadian Psychological Association, teens who learn emotional regulation techniques reduce their risk of anxiety and school-related stress by up to 40%. Daniel now understood that managing anger didn't mean ignoring it—it meant listening to it, understanding it, and then deciding how to act.

He left the classroom slowly, his earbuds in but no music playing—just quiet. A quiet that didn't feel lonely this time, but peaceful. It was like learning a new language, one that helped him translate confusion and pain into words he could actually use. And as he walked toward the bus stop, Daniel realized he didn't just survive the week—he changed during it.

Newspaper Article: Stress and Friendship

Stress Blow-Up Ends Friendship in Mall Meltdown

Mallville, Alberta — What should've been a fun weekend hangout turned into an unexpected friendship-ending moment at Maple Ridge Mall last Saturday. Around 1:30 p.m., longtime friends Kyle and Marcus, 15, were seen arguing loudly at the food court. Witnesses say the fight began with a sarcastic joke and quickly escalated, leaving a spilled drink and a stunned group of friends behind.

What really happened, sources say, is that the boys said that Kyle had been under a lot of academic stress for weeks. "He was pulling all-nighters, failing math class, and not sleeping well," said one classmate. "We knew it was getting to him like this." Mental health experts aren't surprised.

According to a 2023 *Canadian Youth Mental Health Survey*, 7 out of 10 teens report that high stress negatively affects how they treat their friends. What's more, many don't realize their reactions are caused by stress until it's too late.

"Anger is often a 'mask emotion'," says teen therapist Dana Lee. "It hides what's really going on underneath—like anxiety, hurt, or fear of failure. Teens may lash out at those closest to them, not because they're bad friends, but because they feel overwhelmed and don't know how to express it."

The fight between Kyle and Marcus wasn't about seating—it was about miscommunication, pressure, and unmet emotional needs. A recent *Youth Wellness Report* also found that teens who lack healthy coping strategies—like journaling, exercise, or talking to someone—are 43% more likely to experience conflict in their friendships.

The effects can be long-lasting. "Friendship breakdowns caused by stress can lead to loneliness and even more emotional strain," says Lee. "But the good news is they're fixable—if both people are willing to reflect and reconnect."

In a surprising turn, Kyle posted a public apology on his personal blog: *"I exploded because I didn't know how to ask for help. Marcus was just trying to be supportive. I hope one day we can talk about it."*

Marcus responded later that day with a message of his own: *"It hurt. But I understand now. Maybe we both needed a break—and a better way to talk about things."*

What happened at the mall reflects a bigger issue affecting teens across Canada. School deadlines, social media, and even family pressures are building up stress. While strong communication and empathy can help, the pressure is pulling teens apart. This story is a reminder for students everywhere: feelings are valid, and so are your friends. Don't let stress be the reason they break.

Stay tuned for follow-up stories with both teens as they explore healing and emotional growth—together or apart.



Fill in the blanks

Complete the sentences below.

1) Unmanaged _____ can hurt friendships.	stress	fun
2) Good friends show _____.	empathy	silence
3) It helps to _____ instead of giving advice right away.	ignore	listen
4) Feeling stressed might cause someone to act _____.	cheerful	distant
5) Checking in with friends shows _____.	care	blame

Check _____ a checklist of what you do when friends are stressed.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I listen	<input type="checkbox"/>	I give space
<input type="checkbox"/>	I show I care	<input type="checkbox"/>	I ask if they want to talk
<input type="checkbox"/>	I ignore them	<input type="checkbox"/>	I tell them to just "get over it."
<input type="checkbox"/>	I speak kindly	<input type="checkbox"/>	I give them their space.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I make jokes	<input type="checkbox"/>	I try to understand

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What are two ways stress can affect how we treat our friends?

2) How can empathy improve friendships during stressful times?

Role Play – Stress Test Challenge

Objective

What are we learning about?

To explore how stress affects friendships and how communication, empathy, and boundaries help us stay connected and supportive.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Printed role-play cards (with realistic situations)
- A safe space in the classroom for role-playing
- Optional: simple props (e.g., backpack, phone, chair, lunch tray)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Divide the class into small groups of 3 to 4 students.
2. Hand each group a role-play card describing a realistic situation that is dealing with stress and it's affecting the friendship.
3. Groups act out the scene, showing both helpful and unhelpful ways friends might respond.
4. During their skit, students should show strategies like offering help, respecting boundaries, validating feelings, checking in calmly, and avoiding judgment.
5. After each performance, ask the group to explain what happened, how it affected the friendship, and what responses worked well or could be improved.
6. End with a class reflection on how stress impacts relationships and how strong communication and empathy can keep friendships healthy, even during stressful times.

Scenario Cards

Cut out the topics below.

Scenario	Key Moments/Descriptions
Missed Messages	One friend hasn't replied to texts all week. The other feels ignored and is starting to get upset. In reality, the friend has been overwhelmed with school and family stress.
Test Pressure	Two friends are studying together. One is very anxious about an upcoming test and snaps at the other for not taking it seriously.
Changing Plans	A friend cancels plans at the last minute—for the third time. The other feels frustrated but doesn't know why the cancellations keep happening.
Group Project Conflict	One group member is dead on their feet and hasn't done their part of the project. The others are frustrated and talk behind their back.
Overreacting at Lunch	Someone has a small disagreement at lunch and suddenly yells or walks away. Their friends are confused and don't know how to respond.
Being Left Out	A student dealing with stress becomes quiet and distant. Their friends think they're mad at them and stop inviting them to things.

Scenario Cards

Cut out the topics below.

Scenario	Key Moments/Descriptions
Support or Space?	One friend wants to talk about their stress. The other isn't sure if they should give advice, just listen, or give them space.
Stress Dump	A friend vents all their stress every day without asking how the other is doing. The other friend feels invisible but doesn't want to be rude.
Joke Gone Wrong	One friend tries to cheer up their friend, but the friend gets offended and shuts off. The group has to figure out what happened.
Peer Pressure Under Stress	A friend suggests doing something risky (like skipping class) to escape stress. The other has to decide how to respond without ruining the friendship.
Birthday Blow-Up	One friend forgets the other's birthday during a very stressful week. The birthday friend feels hurt and accuses them of not caring, while the other feels guilty and overwhelmed.
One-Sided Friendship	One student always supports their friend through stress, but when they need help, the friend is too distracted with their own problems to notice.

Blog Post: The Role of Listening in Healthy Interactions

Why Listening Matters More Than You Think

Date: July 18, 2025

Author: Ava L. Mendoza

4-minute read

Have you ever felt like someone wasn't really hearing you, even though they were standing right in front of you? That's probably because they weren't *actively listening*. In healthy relationships—whether it's with family, friends, or classmates—listening is more than just staying quiet while someone else talks. It's about showing the speaker you care about what they're saying and making sure you truly understand them.

According to a study by the *International Listening Association*, people only retain about 25% of what they hear, which means if your friend tells you four important things, you're likely to remember only one. But if you're actively paying attention, the number goes up. Active listening includes using eye contact, nodding, paraphrasing (restating what someone said in your own words), and avoiding distractions like phone use or daydreaming.

In classrooms and at work, listening skills can improve collaboration. Research from the *University of Minnesota* shows that people who demonstrate strong listening skills have 30% fewer conflicts during group projects. This is because they're better at understanding instructions and working through misunderstandings before they become full-blown arguments.

Non-verbal cues matter too. A frown, a head tilt, or crossed arms can send a message—sometimes the wrong one. In fact, studies show that 55% of communication is non-verbal (Mehrabian, 1971). That means how you look, stand, and physically react can say more than your words. To become a better listener, try this: when someone is speaking, repeat back what you heard in your own words. For example, "So you're saying I was left out when we didn't invite you?" This shows you were listening and gives them a chance to clarify.

Active listening isn't just polite—it's a tool for building trust and strengthening relationships. So, the next time someone talks to you, try really listening. It just might make your relationships stronger.

Till next time,
Ava L. Mendoza

Comments:



Mike E. | July 18, 2025

I used to interrupt a lot, but paraphrasing helped. Listening improves group work.

Like Reply 4h ago



Zara G. | July 18, 2025

Eye contact can be tough for some. Let's include other ways to listen.

Like Reply 3h ago

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1. Active listening includes paraphrasing and eye contact.	True	False
2. Listening helps reduce group project conflicts by 70%.	True	False
3. Non-verbal cues are part of communication.	True	False
4. Paraphrasing shows you weren't listening carefully.	True	False
5. Trust can grow when people feel heard.	True	False

Question Answer the questions below.

1) According to the text, how much do people usually remember after listening?

2) Why is active listening important in building trust?

Feelings Chart

Fill in the chart with feelings caused by the listening situation.

Situation	Feelings
1) A friend interrupts you while you're trying to share a story.	
2) You speak up in class, and no one responds.	
3) Your partner paraphrases what you said in a respectful way.	
4) A classmate listens carefully and nods while you're speaking.	
5) You feel ignored during a group discussion.	
6) Someone misquotes you because they weren't paying attention.	

Activity: "Walk & Listen" Challenge**Objective**

What are we learning about?

Students will experience how active listening and paraphrasing strengthen understanding and reduce miscommunication. Through a simple, interactive partner activity, they will explore the power of eye contact, non-verbal cues, and reflective listening in building trust and connection in everyday conversations.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Strips of paper with open-ended questions
- A timer or stopwatch
- A pencil and worksheet for notes
- (Optional) Blindfolds for added focus training

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Pair students and assign one as the "Speaker" and the other as the "Listener."
2. Give the Speaker a question strip (e.g., "What's something that makes you feel proud?").
3. The Speaker answers the question for 1-2 minutes while the Listener listens without interrupting.
4. Once the time is up, the Listener paraphrases what they heard: "So you're saying..."
5. Switch roles and repeat with a new question.
6. For a challenge, have the pairs walk slowly side by side while doing the activity or use blindfolds (only for the Listener) to emphasize listening without relying on eye contact.
7. After both turns, have students reflect on how it felt to be heard and to listen actively.
8. Wrap up with a short class discussion or collect worksheets with the reflection questions.

Question Strips

Cut out the questions below.

What's something that makes you feel proud?

Who's someone you really trust, and why?

What's something you're working on right now?

What helps you feel better when you're upset?

What's a challenge you've faced, and how did you handle it?

What's something people often misunderstand about you?

When do you feel most confident or capable?

What do you wish more people would listen to about?

How do you handle it when someone disagrees with you?

What makes a good opinion?

What's something you've learned this year about communication?

How do you show someone that you care about what they're saying?

If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?

What do you think makes someone a great listener?

Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) How did it feel when your partner paraphrased what you said?

2) What was the hardest part of listening without interrupting?

3) Did paraphrasing help you understand your partner better? Why or why not?

4) How did body language or facial expression affect the conversation?

5) How can you use active listening in your daily life outside school?

Digital Boundaries and Respect Online

Why Online Boundaries Matter

When people communicate online—through texts, group chats, or social media—it's important to set and respect digital boundaries. These are the personal limits and social rules we follow about what we share, how we treat others, and how we expect to be treated. Without boundaries, problems like cyberbullying, ghosting, and oversharing can happen. Learning to use respectful online behaviour shows maturity and helps build strong, healthy digital relationships.

Respecting boundaries is about understanding how your actions affect others. Some people may be more comfortable with things you think are normal online. That's why it's important to think before you post, reply, or forward messages. Once something is shared online, it can be hard to take back.

Common Online Behaviours that Can Hurt Others

Many students use social media, messaging apps, or gaming chats every day. These tools help us connect, but not all online behaviours are respectful. Some behaviours can hurt others or cause emotional struggles.

- **Ghosting** – Suddenly cutting off all contact with someone without explanation
- **Oversharing** – Posting or sharing too much personal information online, such as emotional struggles, family issues, or photos of others
- **Cyberbullying** – Using technology to threaten, embarrass someone. This includes sending mean messages, spreading rumors, or posting screenshots without consent.

Did you know?

- Over 30% of Canadian teens have experienced cyberbullying.
- 1 in 4 students have seen someone post personal details online that made them uncomfortable.
- Students who face online bullying are 2 times more likely to skip school or feel unsafe.

How Digital Behaviour Shows Your Values

The way you treat people online reflects your values. Are you someone who respects privacy? Do you listen when someone sets a boundary? Respect, empathy, and honesty should guide your online choices. If you leave someone on read to make them feel bad or share someone's story without permission, it sends a message about your character.

Signs of Respectful Digital Behaviour:

- You ask before posting or tagging someone.
- You avoid forwarding private screenshots.
- You pause before responding to conflict online.
- You support friends who seem left out or upset.



Fill in the blanks

Complete the sentences below.

1) Digital behaviour reflects your personal _____.	values	name
2) Students who are bullied online may _____ school.	skip	enjoy
3) Being online gives you the _____ to say anything.	right	wrong
4) Oversharing online can lead to _____ problems.	imaginary	real
5) Respectful behaviour online helps build _____.	trust	home

Draw a picture and label three "red flag" signs of unhealthy digital communication.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What does it mean to have digital boundaries?

2) Why is it important to ask before posting someone's photo?

Activity: Navigating Online Boundaries**Objective**

What are we learning about?

Students will explore the importance of healthy digital boundaries and respectful online communication. By reflecting on key situations, students will develop strategies to respond thoughtfully and build safe online habits.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Printed worksheet
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: Internet safety anchor chart or discussion board

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Begin by briefly discussing what digital boundaries are and why they are important.
2. Ask students to complete the worksheet questions independently or with a trusted adult or peer.
3. Encourage students to think critically about each scenario before writing their answers.
4. After writing, allow students to pair up and share one insight or response they wrote.
5. As a class, highlight respectful online behaviours and common digital boundary violations.
6. Post student suggestions or reflections on a class board (optional).

Activity: Navigating Online Boundaries

Your actions online show who we are—even when we think no one is watching. Setting healthy digital boundaries and showing respect online helps protect relationships and build trust. Before you post, comment, or share, ask yourself: Is this respectful? Is this kind? Let's think about how to be a positive digital citizen!

Ask a parent, teacher, or a trusted adult to help you reflect on these questions. Use your answers to think about how to be safe, respectful, and thoughtful online.

Do not hurt others online or crossing boundaries that break trust.

When do digital actions become harmful?

What are examples of digital boundaries?

What are respectful ways to respond online?

Why ask before sharing or posting?

Write

Reflect on your class activity. Use the questions below to help you think deeply and share your thoughts.

1. *How can setting digital boundaries help protect friendships and trust?*
2. *What did you learn about the impact of online jokes or comments?*
3. *How can you tell when a message crosses a digital boundary?*
4. *What changes will you make to how you post, comment, or share online?*
5. *Why is it important to think before reacting to something online?*
6. *What advice would you give a friend about staying respectful online?*

PREVIEW

Newspaper Article: Recognizing Healthy Relationship Traits

Teen Influencer Walks Away from Toxic Friendship

Calgary, AB — It started with an unfollow. Fifteen-year-old Maya Cruz, a popular teen influencer with over 200,000 followers, quietly removed her longtime best friend from her social media accounts last week. While the action may have gone unnoticed at first, it was the post she wrote, which made headlines across Canada. Maya wrote an Instagram story titled,

"Outgrowing Someone." The message wasn't full of drama or accusation. It was raw, reflective, and honest. In it, she opened up about how she had been stuck in a friendship that wasn't safe or respectful. She described how she had constantly feel like the one at fault, always apologizing, always walking on eggshells. "She would brush off my feelings, make fun of things I cared about, and disappear when I needed support," Maya wrote. "I convinced myself I was being too sensitive. But real friendship shouldn't make you question your worth."

Within hours, thousands of teens began resharing her post. What followed was a flood of comments, duets, and personal stories from other youth who had been quietly experiencing similar struggles. The hashtags #HealthyFriendships, #ChooseRespect, and #FriendshipRedFlags began trending across Canada.

In one follow-up video, Maya explained that she didn't want to spread hate or cancel anyone.

According to *Kids Help Phone*, 26% of teens in Canada say they've felt stuck in a friendship that made them feel anxious, used, or emotionally unsupported.

Experts point out that unhealthy relationship dynamics—such as guilt-tripping, silent treatment, constant one-upping, or mocking personal goals—can be just as damaging as physical conflict.

Diana Yu, a licensed youth therapist, says that emotional harm is often harder to spot but leaves

strong an impact. "Teens need to know that if a relationship drains your energy or constantly lowers your self-esteem, it's worth looking out for. Healthy relationships are built on trust, respect, communication, and support."

In response to this post, many schools began holding lessons on mental health and class discussions about healthy friendships. Youth centers have organized campaigns where students create art and poems about the signs of respect and mutual care in relationships. Some teens even took to journaling and making digital collages expressing what they value most in their friendships.

Maya says she's overwhelmed by the response—but grateful the message is spreading. "Honestly, I thought I was alone. I thought maybe I was being dramatic. But now I see how many other people were carrying the same weight," she said in a recent livestream. She reminded her viewers that friendships should never feel like a competition, a guilt trap, or a secret struggle.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What does a healthy relationship look and feel like?

2) How can love and respect be shown in a friendship?

Word FormationDifferent words using the letters in **RELATIONSHIP**.**Relationship****True or False**

Is the statement true or false?

1) Respect means listening and valuing others' feelings.	True	False
2) Healthy friendships include control and competition.	True	False
3) Boundaries are important in all healthy relationships.	True	False
4) Being honest builds stronger friendships.	True	False
5) Real friends pressure you to change who you are.	True	False

Face to Face: Healthy vs. Toxic Relationship

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students recognize the traits of healthy and toxic relationships by reflecting on personal and social experiences and classifying relationship behaviours in a visual format.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Printed worksheet with two face outlines
- Pencils, pens, or fine-tip markers
- Optional: coloured pencils or markers for visual design



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Read the definitions of healthy and toxic relationships at the top of the page. Think about how these definitions connect to your own experiences or relationships you've seen in media or real life.
2. Look at the two face outlines below. The face on the left represents a Healthy Relationship, and the face on the right represents a Toxic Relationship.
3. Inside each face, write words, traits, or phrases that describe that type of relationship. You may include:
 - Emotional traits (e.g., trust, fear, support, guilt)
 - Actions or behaviours (e.g., listens, yells, encourages, lies)
 - Feelings that person might experience in that relationship
4. You may write in different directions or add small drawings or symbols if it helps show your ideas more clearly.
5. Once you're done, read over your words. Think about what kinds of relationships you want to build in your life and how you can recognize warning signs of an unhealthy connection.

Face to Face: Healthy vs. Toxic Relationships

A **healthy relationship** is a connection between people that is supportive, respectful, and safe. In a healthy relationship, both people feel valued, can communicate openly, and are free to be themselves without fear of judgment. Healthy relationships involve trust, kindness, and setting boundaries that are respected.

A **toxic relationship** is one that makes you feel sad, anxious, or unsafe most of the time. It may involve disrespect, control, or constant blame, and it can hurt your confidence and well-being.



Healthy Relationship

Toxic Relationship

Social Power and Emotional Manipulation

Understanding Social Power

Social power is the influence a person has over others in different situations. People can gain social power through popularity, confidence, knowledge, or leadership roles. In friendships and school groups, this power can sometimes be used in both helpful and harmful ways.

Someone with social power might help others speak up, make people feel included, or be a voice for fairness. But sometimes, people use their power to control others, get attention, or avoid blame. This is where emotional manipulation can happen—and it's important to learn to recognize it.



What is Emotional Manipulation?

Emotional manipulation is when someone uses guilt, fear, pressure, or even fake kindness in an unfair way to influence how someone else acts. The goal is usually to control a situation, avoid responsibility, or make someone feel unsure of themselves.

Emotional manipulators may always do it on purpose. Some people copy what they've seen from others or do it without meaning to. But even when it's not intentional, it can still be damaging. Teens are especially vulnerable to this type of influence because relationships and friendships are still growing and changing.

Common Examples of Emotional Manipulation

Here are some signs that someone might be trying to manipulate you emotionally:

- **Guilt-tripping:** Saying things like "I guess you don't care about my feelings."
- **Silent treatment:** Ignoring someone to punish them or make them feel anxious.
- **Love-bombing:** Giving lots of compliments or attention, then pulling away to confuse someone.
- **Gaslighting:** Making someone doubt their memory or feelings ("You're overreacting").
- **Blame shifting:** Never taking responsibility and always blaming others.

According to a 2023 Canadian youth behaviour survey:

- 1 in 4 teens reported being emotionally manipulated by a peer.
- 35% of students said they felt guilty into doing something they weren't comfortable with.
- 40% said they stayed in a toxic friendship because they didn't want to be seen as rude or dramatic.
- 62% of students said they want more lessons on recognizing and responding to emotional pressure.

How to Respond in a Healthy Way

- Recognize the signs—if it feels wrong, it probably is.
- Pause before reacting. Think about how the situation makes you feel.
- Set clear boundaries. You can say "I don't like being treated this way."
- Talk to someone. A teacher, counsellor, or friend can help.
- Practise self-respect. You are allowed to protect your feelings and speak up.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Manipulators may use guilt to control others.	True	False
2) All emotional manipulation is easy to spot.	True	False
3) Social power is always used in a harmful way.	True	False
4) Peer pressure is a form of emotional manipulation.	True	False
5) Being aware of manipulation can help protect you.	True	False

Think

Look at the person being emotionally manipulated and in the thought bubble, write what they might think or feel.

**Questions**

Answer the questions below.

1) How can peer pressure be a form of emotional manipulation?

2) Why is recognizing gaslighting important for teens?

Story: Crisis Communication

The Lunchroom Blow-Up

It was Tuesday, and the cafeteria at Maple Creek High was buzzing with chatter, the clatter of trays, and the smell of pizza slices and fruit cups. Jordan and his best friend Eli sat at their usual table surrounded by a group of friends. Everything was normal until Eli burst out laughing, his eyes glued to his phone screen.

"Bro, look at that picture of you in gym class—your face!" Eli showed the phone to everyone to see. Laughter erupted from the group.

Jordan's stomach clenched and his face flushed red. "Delete that," he said sharply.

Eli chuckled, not noticing Jordan's frustration. "Come on, it's just a joke."

Jordan shot up, his chair scraping against the floor. "Delete it!" His voice was sharp and angry. The lunchroom noise dulled for a moment. A nearby lunch monitor gave him a glance but didn't intervene. Jordan grabbed his trash can, threw it into the garbage, and stormed out of the room.

Later that day, Jordan sat in the school counsellor's office. Ms. Tran, the school's guidance counsellor, listened quietly as he explained what had happened.

"I didn't mean to blow up," he said. "But I felt embarrassed. I don't know what else to do." Ms. Tran nodded. "That makes sense. It's important to know that our bodies change when we're under stress. Your brain reacts quickly—sometimes too quickly. I explained how in high-stress moments, a part of the brain called the amygdala floods the body with stress chemicals like cortisol and adrenaline. That's why people yell, shut down, cry, or even say things they don't mean. In fact, a 2021 Canadian study showed that 68% of teens admitted they regretted how they reacted in tense moments—not because their feelings were wrong, but because they didn't know how to express them clearly.

She taught Jordan to breathe deeply before reacting and to use "I" statements like "I felt hurt" instead of blaming someone. She also said it's okay to ask for a break and come back to a tough conversation later.

The next morning, Jordan walked up to Eli's locker. "Hey," he said, "I didn't like when you showed that picture yesterday. I felt embarrassed."

Eli looked surprised. "I'm sorry, man. I didn't think it'd upset you."

"Let's just keep stuff like that between us."

"Yeah, totally."

Jordan smiled, realizing he hadn't just calmed the conflict—he'd grown from it.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Stress can make people talk louder or faster.	True	False
2) Listening is more important than speaking in a crisis.	True	False
3) Staying calm helps others feel safe too.	True	False
4) Interrupting someone helps solve conflict faster.	True	False
5) Clear tone and eye contact show confidence.	True	False

Word Venn Using the words from 'Crisis Communication,' write six connected words or phrases.



Question

Why is it important to stay calm in a stressful conversation?

Activity: Under Pressure - Communicate with Care**Objective**

What are we learning about?

Students will experience how communication shifts in high-stress situations and will practise staying calm, respectful, and clear while navigating a pressure-filled group activity. This activity helps them understand the importance of tone, word choice, body language, and active listening in crisis communication.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Paper for stop cards
- Paper and pen
- One simple task sheet per group
- Envelopes or folders to hold task sheets until the activity begins

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Divide the class into 3 groups.
2. Give each group a sealed envelope with a timed group challenge inside. Do not open yet.
3. Explain the scenario: "You are part of a team in a crisis situation. The challenge must be solved in 3 minutes. You must speak respectfully, stay calm, and work as a team."
4. Ask one person in each group to act as the "observer." Their job is to record examples of positive and negative communication during the challenge.
5. Start the timer and allow teams to begin.
6. When time is up, have groups stop. Let each "observer" share one strength and one challenge their group experienced while communicating.
7. Lead a brief whole-class discussion on how the pressure affected their communication.
8. Have each student independently complete the reflection sheet.

Under Pressure: Communicate with Care

Group 1

Task Questions	Answers
Riddle: "I speak without a mouth and hear without ears..."	An Echo
Word Scramble: CONOMMUIATCION	Communication
Number Pattern: 2 - 4 - 8 - 16 - __	32
Find a 4-letter word hidden in: PARENTING	paRENTing
Write 2 things that help you communicate better under pressure.	Answers may vary

Task Questions	Answers
Riddle: The more you take, the more you have left.	Footsteps
Word Scramble: TPANIEEC	Patience
Pattern: If yesterday was the day before Monday, what day is today?	Monday
Find a 4-letter word hidden in: REMARKABLE	reMARKABLE
Write 2 Body Language Cues	Answers may vary

Group 3

Task Questions	Answers
Riddle: What has keys but can't open locks?	Piano/Keyboard
Word Scramble: LAREC	Clear
Number Pattern: I am a two-digit number. My digits multiply to 12. I am greater than 30 but less than 50.	43
Find a 4-letter word hidden in: ENTIRELY	enTIREly
List one phrase that helps de-escalate conflict.	Answers may vary

Toxic Positivity vs. Real Support

Understanding Toxic Positivity

Sometimes, when someone is feeling sad, stressed, or angry, people respond with phrases like "just stay positive" or "everything happens for a reason." While these may sound supportive, they can make someone feel worse. This kind of reaction is called toxic positivity. Toxic positivity happens when people ignore or deny real emotions by forcing only happy or positive thoughts.

Instead of helping, toxic positivity shuts down honest conversations. When someone says, "it could be worse," or "just look on the bright side," it might feel like they are not really listening. People need to talk about their emotions without being judged or rushed to feel better. Over time, this can make someone feel more alone or even guilty for having feelings like sadness, frustration, or fear.

Toxic positivity also suggests that only "happy" emotions are acceptable. Feelings like anger, disappointment, and grief—are not a part of being human. Ignoring those feelings doesn't make them go away.



What Real Support Looks Like

Real emotional support means showing care, empathy, and accepting how someone feels. It helps people feel safe and respected. Instead of saying everything is fine, real support creates trust and understanding. When we show support, we are not trying to fix the problem—we are helping the person feel less alone while they work through it.

Here are some ways to offer real support:

- Listen without interrupting. Let them share their thoughts.
- Use kind words. Say things like "That sounds really hard" or "I'm here for you."
- Avoid judging. Don't say things like "You shouldn't feel that way."
- Ask how to help. Sometimes just asking "What do you need right now?" is enough.
- Stay present. You don't need to fix their problem—just being there helps.

You can also show real support by following up with someone later. Just checking in with a short message like "How are you doing today?" can mean a lot. Real support builds emotional safety over time.

Key Facts to Remember

- Toxic positivity ignores real emotions and can cause more stress.
- Real support accepts emotions and helps people feel connected.
- A 2021 study found people with strong emotional support had 33% lower stress levels.
- Saying "Cheer up!" or "Just smile" can feel fake or dismissive.
- Over 60% of teens in a 2022 survey said they feel better when someone just listens instead of giving advice.
- Students who feel heard are more likely to have better focus, attendance, and confidence in school.



Create

Create an acrostic poem using the word "SUPPORT".

S	
U	
P	
P	
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R	
T	

True or False

Statement is true or false?

1) Toxic positivity encourages people to ignore their feelings.	True	False
2) Saying "It could be worse" is a form of emotional support.	True	False
3) Real support means listening without interrupting.	True	False
4) Only happy emotions are healthy and acceptable.	True	False
5) Real support helps build trust and emotional connection.	True	False

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What is toxic positivity and why is it harmful?
2) Why is it important to allow space for real emotions? Give an example.

Newspaper Article: Leadership Without Controlling**Breaking News: Local Teen Leads Community Cleanup—Without Taking Over**

What started as a simple idea to clean up a local park turned into a powerful example of leadership without controlling, thanks to 14-year-old Erin, who proved that real leaders inspire people around to get things done.

It was Saturday morning, and a group of 12 teens gathered inside a park, armed with garbage bags, gloves, and reusable bins. The goal was to clear overgrown brush before the summer festival. But what caught attention wasn't just the cleanup—it was how the group worked together.

"Erin didn't stand there shouting orders," said Malia Cruz, 15. "She asked everyone what they were good at, split us into teams, and made sure no one was left out." Erin created small groups for sorting recycling, picking up trash, and trimming branches. She made sure each person had a role that matched their strengths.

Rather than taking over, Erin led with patience and fairness. When a few volunteers disagreed on where to start, Erin stepped in—not with commands, but with calm questions and suggestions. "I just reminded them that we're all here for the same reason," Erin said. "We can listen to each other and still get it done." According to witnesses, not once did she raise her voice or try to take credit. She made space for everyone's ideas—even letting a younger student lead a mini recycling station near the picnic tables. When someone forgot supplies, Erin didn't blame anyone—she calmly helped problem-solve.

Local Councillor James Lee, who stopped by to deliver water bottles, was impressed. "It's rare to see that kind of respect and cooperation in group settings, especially among youth. That's real leadership."

Experts say that controlling leaders often create tension and burnout, while supportive leaders build trust and teamwork. "Leadership without controlling is about guiding, not dominating," says school social worker Diane Tran. "It creates a space where everyone can shine."

By the end of the morning, the park was spotless—and the teamwork still buzzing. "Honestly, it felt good to be heard," said Aiden Y., 14. "Erin made us feel like a team, not a group of kids being told what to do."

In a world where leadership is often confused with being the loudest or most forceful voice, Erin showed that the quietest guides sometimes make the biggest impact.



What Erin demonstrated goes beyond park cleanups or school projects—it's the kind of leadership that builds trust in families, friend groups, and even online spaces. When people feel respected and included, they are more likely to contribute and care about the outcome. Teens like Erin prove that leadership isn't about control—it's about connection, communication, and creating a team where everyone feels valued. That's the kind of leadership our communities need more of—and it's already showing up in places as simple as a Saturday morning at the park.

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Good leaders include others instead of taking control.	True	False
2) A leader should always make all the decisions.	True	False
3) Listening to others builds trust in a group.	True	False
4) Leadership without controlling means giving no direction.	True	False
5) Respectful leaders help teams work better together.	True	False

Multiple Choice Circle the letter of the best answer for each question.

1. What does a good leader often do?		
A. Encourage others to follow	B. Give orders	C. Stay quiet
2. What is one sign of a poor leader?		
A. Ignoring ideas from others	B. Listening to others	C. Giving orders
3. Why is it important to listen to your team?		
A. To look like a nice leader	B. To avoid work	C. To value their input
4. What helps a team feel included?		
A. Clear communication	B. Shouting instructions	C. Doing everything alone
5. What does real leadership focus on?		
A. Connection and fairness	B. Being the loudest	C. Having control

Explain

Why is it important to lead with respect instead of control when working with others?

Story: Cost of Gossip

Whispers in the Hallway

At Maple Grove High, the hallways were always buzzing with conversations, but lately, something different was in the air—*whispers*. It all started after Ava told her best friend Tessa a secret about her family. She didn't expect it to leave their group chat.

By the next morning, people were looking at Ava strangely. At lunch, someone made a joke about "the drama," and she froze. Her heart dropped when she realized what had happened. Someone had shared her story.

Tessa's secret spread. She only told one person, "just to get advice," but that person told two more. Those two? They didn't see the harm in sharing it with five more friends. According to a Canadian youth study, 61 percent of students said they'd been hurt by gossip, and 70 percent admitted to passing on information they weren't sure was even true. That day, Ava skipped her last class.

"I just needed space," she told Ms. Clark, her guidance counsellor. "It's not even what was said—it's that I can't trust the people I care about." Ms. Clark nodded. "Gossip spreads fast. Research shows it can damage friendships. Once trust breaks, it takes a long time to rebuild."

In class the next week, their teacher, Mr. Danvers, decided to do a short unit on gossip and integrity. He explained that gossip isn't just "talking behind someone's back"—it's spreading information about others without their consent, even if it's true. He reminded them that small conversations can have big consequences.

"Gossip is often used to feel powerful or 'in the know,'" he said. "But it usually comes at someone else's expense." He shared that in a recent school-wide survey, 82 percent of students said gossip made their school feel less safe. Another 68 percent said they'd lost respect for someone after hearing them gossip. Surprisingly, only 27 percent said they felt confident standing up to a friend who was spreading gossip. That hit Tessa hard.

Later that day, she sat with Ava under the big oak tree outside the gym. "I messed up," she said quietly. "I should've protected your trust, not traded it for attention." Ava didn't speak for a while. Then she nodded. "Thanks for saying that. But you'll have to earn it back."

Tessa nodded, too. She knew that honesty doesn't fix gossip—but it's where healing begins.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Gossip always helps build stronger friendships.	True	False
2) Sharing private information can damage trust.	True	False
3) It's better to ask questions than assume stories are true.	True	False
4) Integrity means doing the right thing even when it's hard.	True	False
5) Choosing not to spread gossip shows respect.	True	False

Questions Answer the questions below.

1) Why does spreading gossip cause problems in a group or friendship?

2) What can you do if someone tries to tell you a secret?

Yes- No- Maybe

Check what you think is okay or not okay.

Actions	Yes	No	Maybe
1. Repeating a rumour			
2. Asking if someone's okay			
3. Sharing a friend's secret			
4. Ignoring gossip			
5. Posting private information			

Whisper Wars: The Gossip Challenge

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will explore how gossip can easily be distorted by passing through different people and learn the value of honesty and clear communication.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Gossip scenario
- Paper and pens for each group
- A timer or stopwatch (optional)
- Space for three lines or circles of students

**Instructions**

How will you complete the activity?

1. Divide the class into three equal groups. Each group forms a line or circle.
2. Secretly give the same short fake gossip scenario to the first person in each group. (Example: "Ali said they saw Jordan sneak out of class early to avoid math quiz.")
3. That first person whispers the message to the next person in line—once only, no repeats or clarifications.
4. The whisper continues down the line until it reaches the last student.
5. Each group's final student will write down or say aloud the message they received.
6. The teacher then reads the original version to the whole class.
7. Discuss or analyze which group kept the story most accurate, and what parts changed in each group.

Scenario Cards

Cut out the Scenario below.

Scenarios

"Ali said they saw Jordan sneak out of class early to avoid a math quiz."

"Someone heard that Ruby is getting suspended because she argued with a teacher in the hallway."

"Jayden told his friend that Jessica is moving so she's been failing too many tests."

"Sam thinks that Emma broke up with her partner just to focus on someone else in their science group."

"Kim was spotted talking to the principal after lunch—maybe she's in big trouble for vaping."

"Noah was in the bathroom, so it's because she reflected on youth."

"Eli told people that their parents are forcing them to change schools next semester."

"Somebody saw Noah and Alex arguing by the lockers and now people think they're not friends anymore."

"Liam hasn't been in school for three days—people are saying he got suspended for cheating."

"Leila told someone she's quitting the volleyball team, but others think it's because of drama with her teammates."

Write

Use the activity to reflect on what you learned about gossip, honesty, and how messages change over time.

1. *What happened to the message your group passed—did it change or stay the same?*
2. *Why do you think gossip often gets twisted or exaggerated?*
3. *How did it feel when you heard the final version of the gossip in your group?*
4. *What did this activity teach you about the impact of spreading incomplete stories?*
5. *What should someone do instead of passing along gossip they hear?*
6. *Why is it important to check facts before believing what others say?*

PREVIEW

Setting Emotional Boundaries

What Are Emotional Boundaries?

Emotional boundaries are the invisible lines we draw to protect our feelings and mental health. These boundaries help us decide what kind of behaviour we will accept from others and how much time or energy we're willing to give. When we have strong emotional boundaries, we feel more in control of our own lives. Without them, we may feel overwhelmed, stressed, or even that someone is taking advantage.

For teenagers, setting emotional boundaries is especially important. As friendships, school life, and family relations become more complex, it's easy to feel pressure from all directions. Emotional boundaries allow you to say "no" when needed, take space when you're feeling drained, and express your feelings without guilt.

Why It's Important

Many people struggle to set boundaries because they don't want to hurt someone's feelings or cause conflict. But the habit of saying "yes" when you really want to say "no" can lead to anxiety, resentment, and burnout. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) reports that more than **1 in 3** Canadians experience stress related to responsibilities or relationships, often because they don't know how to set healthy boundaries.

Having strong emotional boundaries can:

- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Help you sleep better and stay focused at school
- Build mutual respect in friendships and relationships
- Prevent emotional exhaustion and burnout
- Give you time for self-care and personal growth

How to Practise Setting Boundaries

Setting emotional boundaries is a skill that takes practice, just like learning to play an instrument. You don't have to be perfect, but being aware of your feelings is a good start. If someone's actions make you feel drained, nervous, or frustrated, it may be a sign that a boundary is being crossed.

5 Ways to Set Emotional Boundaries

- Pay attention to how you feel – If being around someone always leaves you stressed or upset, that's a sign.
- Be honest and clear – Say what you need without blaming or being mean.
- Learn to say "no" – You don't need to explain your reasons every time.
- Limit time with negative people – It's okay to take space from people who drain your energy.
- Respect others' boundaries too – It goes both ways. Listening and caring builds trust.

Even with close friends and family, boundaries matter. You can care about someone and still protect your peace. The more you practise setting limits, the more confident and emotionally strong you'll become.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Emotional boundaries protect your feelings and energy.	True	False
2) People with boundaries feel more confident and safer.	True	False
3) Setting boundaries always means cutting people off.	True	False
4) Feeling drained is a sign of weak boundaries.	True	False
5) Teens never need emotional boundaries.	True	False

Questions

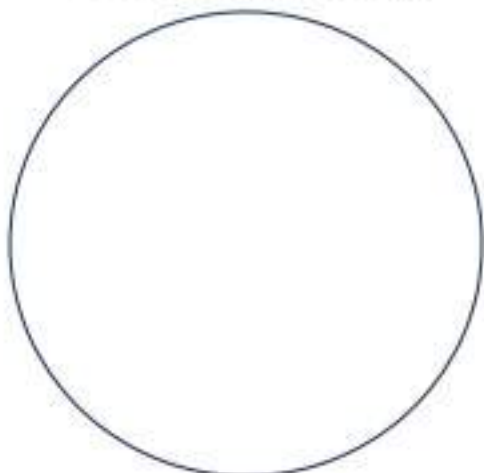
Answer the questions below.

1) What are emotional boundaries and why are they important?

2) What can happen when someone does not have boundaries?

Pie Chart

Draw a pie chart showing how you want to divide your energy (e.g., alone time, etc.) and explain your chart.

Protecting My Energy.

Activity: My Non-Negotiables

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will identify and define their personal emotional boundaries by creating a visual representation of their non-negotiables—behaviours, actions, or values they are not willing to compromise. This promotes self-awareness, healthy boundary-setting, and respectful communication in relationships.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Printed "My Non-Negotiables" circle template
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: coloured pens or markers for personalization



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Start by explaining what emotional boundaries are and why they matter. Use real-life examples like needing time alone after school or not wanting to be asked about personal topics, or not tolerating being ignored in a group.
2. Give each student a copy of the circle worksheet with the figure.
3. Ask students to think about what makes them feel emotionally safe, respected, and comfortable.
4. Inside the circle, students will write or draw 3 to 5 personal non-negotiables—these are limits they set to protect their mental or emotional health (e.g., "I don't like when people raise their voice at me," or "I need time to recharge after being around people").
5. If students want, they can decorate the circle with colours or symbols that represent their identity or emotional space.
6. Once finished, students can share one non-negotiable (only if comfortable) in a class discussion or partner share to foster connection and normalize boundary-setting.

Name: _____

131

Curriculum Connection
R9.1, R9.5, R9.8

My Non-Negotiables

PREVIEW



Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) Which non-negotiable did you feel was the most important to include, and why?

2) How do your boundaries help protect your emotional well-being?

3) Was it easy or difficult to set your boundaries? Explain.

4) How might clearly communicating your boundaries help your relationship?

5) What would you do if someone didn't respect one of your non-negotiables?

Unit Test – Relationship Choices**Multiple Choice**

/10

1. What does a positive mindset promote? a) Anger b) Fear c) Optimism d) Stress	2. What does it mean to lead with integrity? a) Lying to win b) Making fair choices c) Controlling others d) Ignoring the group
3. How can we express emotions? a) Bottling them b) Yelling at others c) Writing or talking d) Ignoring feelings	4. What helps resolve conflict? a) Blame b) Name-calling c) Calm discussion d) Aggressive treatment
5. What can reduce stress in a crisis? a) Panicking b) Journaling c) Avoiding the issue d) Blaming others	6. What is a refusal skill? a) Saying yes to please others b) Saying no c) Saying no politely d) Doing what you want
7. Sign of an unhealthy relationship? a) Respect b) Support c) Trust d) Manipulation	8. What is emotional intelligence? a) Honest talk b) Using feelings to control c) Kind feedback d) Open listening
9. It is an assertive communication trait. a) Eye rolling b) Shouting c) Speaking calmly d) Staying silent	10. What can gossip lead to? a) Strong friendships b) Better communication c) Broken trust d) Team success

Define

Explain what each word means in your own words:

Empathy	
Self-awareness	
Respect	
Control	

Matching Type

Match each statement:

1) Noticing what others feel.	A	Empathy
2) Treating people fairly.	B	Self-awareness
3) What sets off your strong feelings.	C	Respect
4) Understanding your own feelings.	D	Control
5) Thinking before reacting.	E	Assertiveness
6) Staying calm under pressure.	F	Choices
7) Picking a smart response.	G	Listening
8) Saying what you mean kindly.	H	Emotions
9) Naming what you feel.	I	Triggers
10) Paying attention when someone talks.	J	


Long Answer

Answer the questions below.

1) List three unspoken expectations that can cause misunderstandings in friendships. Explain how you could talk about each one clearly to avoid conflict.

PREVIEW

2) Give three examples of clear, direct communication you can use with a friend. How might these help build trust and avoid assumptions?





Google Slides Lessons Preview





Alberta Health and Wellness

Life Learning Choices Unit – Grade 9

3-Part Lesson Format

Part 1 – Minds On!

- Learning Goals
- Discussion Questions
- Quotes
- And More!

Building Better Study Routines

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do people think having a routine makes studying easier?
2. How can distractions, like phones or noise, affect how well someone studies?
3. Why do some students find it hard to stick to a study plan?

Sort Your Study Tasks by Priority

Drag each task into the box where it belongs:

Urgent	To Delay	Later

Legend:

- Urgent:** Tasks that need to be done now.
- To Delay:** Tasks that don't need to be done yet.
- Later:** Tasks that have no deadline or are low priority.

Tasks to be completed:

- Review notes for next week's test.
- Plan a weekend hangout with friends.
- Complete math homework.
- Finish reading the chapter assigned for today.
- Skateboard your skateboard.
- Submit the online quiz before midnight.
- Organize your study desk this weekend.
- Start researching for a project due in two weeks.
- Watch a new movie release.
- Practice guitar for an hour.
- Pick materials for tomorrow's science presentation.
- Write a script for the essay due next Friday.

Part 2 – Action!

- Surveys/Polls
- Matching
- Drag and Drop
- Videos
- And More!

Part 3 – Consolidation!

- Exit Cards
- Quick Draw
- 3-2-1 Reflection
- One-Sentence Summary

Consolidation - What Stuck With You?

Take a moment to think about what you learned today, complete this activity:

- One reason having a study routine is important.
- One question I still have about creating good study habits.
- One strategy I learned that makes studying easier.
- One way I can improve my current study routine.



Alberta Health and Wellness

Life Learning Choices Unit – Grade 9

Sorting: Helpful Strategies vs. Procrastination Traps

Drag each behaviour to the column where it fits best.

Helpful Strategies	Procrastination Traps

Waiting until the last minute to start	Turn off distractions like phone notifications	Multitasking with social media open	Start with the two-minute rule
Avoiding tasks because they feel overwhelming	Break tasks into smaller steps	Use the Pomodoro Technique	Telling yourself "I work better under pressure"
Create a to-do list and prioritize tasks	Starting with easy distractions instead of the real task	Reward yourself after making progress	Constantly reorganizing without actually starting the work

8 Career Paths


<input type="checkbox"/> Training	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Growth
<input type="checkbox"/> Job	<input type="checkbox"/> Career
<input type="checkbox"/> Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Values
<input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies	<input type="checkbox"/> Future
<input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity	<input type="checkbox"/> Passion

Word Search:

Z G A Q A A N A D Z S T H T O
T E I O R D H P L A N N I N G
R S D E W I S G O D J C L A O
A F J U P Q Z C X K D P E G C
I S U O C U R I O S I T Y R A
N K V T B A P A S S I O N O R
I I X A U P T C Z F I E K W E
N L C N L R W I T B K I I T E
G L E W Q U E V O Y E H D H R
R S R O I A E G O N W A V M B
S H O B B I E S O T W U Q O B

Sorting Activity – Causes of Stress During Change

Drag only the cards that show real causes of stress into the big circle.



Moving to a new school	Getting a surprise gift	Worrying about fitting in
Going on a fun vacation	Handling more responsibilities	Learning new rules
Adapting to new places	Leaving friends behind	Receiving praise from teachers
Spending time with close friends	Meeting new people	Feeling uncertain
Facing new routines	Missing old hobbies	Having extra time to relax



Alberta Health and Wellness

Life Learning Choices Unit – Grade 9

Sorting Activity - What Makes Us Grow?

Drag and place the actions that help growth onto the tree and leave the ones that do not help growth on the side.

Trying new activities	Avoiding all challenges	Being open to change	Meeting new people
Ignoring opportunities to learn	Facing small challenges	Relying only on what feels easy	Saying no to every new experience
Practicing uncomfortable tasks	Always staying in your comfort zone	Asking questions in class	Giving up after failure
Avoiding feedback	Learning from mistakes	Taking healthy risks	Refusing to try new things

Cause and Effect

Cause	Effect
Speaking in front of a group	Saying yes to a challenge
Joining a school club you've never tried	Exploring a new place on your own
Sharing your ideas during a discussion	Taking part in a competition
Asking for help when needed	Practicing a skill even when it's hard

Strengthen creative thinking
Builds courage to face new situations
Grows self-awareness and identity
Encourages persistence through difficulty

Match each action (cause) with the correct result (effect) to show how growth happens through new experiences.

Teaches problem-solving under pressure
Increases comfort in social situations
Improves public speaking confidence
Boosts leadership and decision-making skills

Sorting: Climbing the Steps to Success

Drag and place the actions that help achieve success onto the steps leading to the trophy.

Set clear goals	Take healthy risks	Build strong relationships
Manage your time well	Prioritizing tasks	Ignoring feedback
Avoiding challenges	Reflect and improve after failures	Comparing yourself to others
Giving up after setbacks	Practice self-care	Stay positive during challenges
Keep learning new skills	Stay disciplined	Blaming others for mistakes



Workbook Preview



Grade 9 – Health Unit

Life Learning Choices

Learning Strategies		Students will use resources effectively to manage and explore life roles and career opportunities and challenges.
	Skill and Procedures	Pages
L9.1	Apply personal time management skills to a variety of learning opportunities; e.g., develop strategies to overcome procrastination	6-10, 32-36, 92-95
L9.2	Relate the value of lifelong learning to personal	11-15, 42-46, 76-80,
L9.3		95,
L9.4	learning and career paths, e.g., investigate education programs including senior high school programs and those related to potential careers	2-46, 59-70, 76-85, 96-100
L9.5	Extend and improve a personal portfolio; e.g., include sample application form, personal résumé, answers to typical interview questions	27-31, 42-46, 65-75, 101-105
L9.6	Develop strategies to deal with transitional experiences; e.g., create a learning plan for transition to senior high school, keeping future career plans in mind	21-26, 37-41, 52-58, 92-95
L9.7	Analyze the potential impact of volunteerism on career opportunities	47-51
L9.8	Investigate personal safety procedures for working as a volunteer; e.g., work in pairs	47-51

Preview of 75 pages from
this product that contains
139 pages total.

NAME: _____

Life Learning Choices

PREVIEW



Building Better Study Routines

Why Good Study Habits Matter

Many students struggle with getting their schoolwork done on time, especially when they feel overwhelmed or distracted. Learning how to build a study routine can help students succeed in school and feel less stressed. Good study habits also teach responsibility, time management, and self-discipline—skills that are useful in both school and life.

Students who have regular study routines often perform better on tests, complete assignments faster, and are more confident in their abilities. According to a 2021 Canadian student survey, 74% of students said that poor time management was their biggest reason for falling behind in schoolwork. Without a routine, students are more likely to rush, forget important tasks, or lose motivation.

Common Distractions and How to Handle Them

One of the biggest challenges students face is staying focused. Many things can get in the way of learning:

- **Phone use:** Texting and scrolling on social media can break concentration.
- **Background noise:** Loud noises or music with lyrics make it hard to think clearly.
- **Multitasking:** Doing homework while watching videos or chatting reduces the quality of work.
- **Tiredness or hunger:** Being too tired or hungry can affect focus and memory.

To stay focused:

- Turn off notifications or use “Do Not Disturb” mode.
- Choose a quiet space for studying.
- Use headphones with calm, word-free music if needed.
- Take short breaks every 25–30 minutes to recharge.
- Eat a healthy snack and drink water before starting.

Time Management and Study Planning

Organizing your time is just as important as understanding the material. Students can use a daily or weekly planner to track their homework, projects, and test dates. One popular method is the **“Time Block” strategy**, where you schedule parts of your day for specific tasks.

Tips for Better Time Use:

- Write down all upcoming tasks and deadlines.
- Break big projects into smaller steps.
- Start with the hardest subject first when your energy is high.
- Set a timer to stay focused for short bursts of work (like 30 minutes).
- Reward yourself with a break or snack after a task is done.

Fighting Procrastination

It happens when we avoid doing work by doing something else instead. The best way to beat procrastination is to just start with a small task. Even five minutes of studying can help build momentum. A recent study from York University found that students who followed a routine and used a checklist were 45% more likely to finish assignments on time than those who didn't. Making small changes and sticking with them can lead to big improvements over time.

Name: _____

7

Curriculum Connection
L9.1,L9.4

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Good study habits boost confidence.	True	False
2) Multitasking improves focus and memory.	True	False
3) Phones are a big distraction.	True	False
4) Checklists help stop procrastination.	True	False
5) Routines lower school stress.	True	False

Distraction Radar List your top 3 distractions. Next to each, write one strategy to

Distraction	Strategy

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) How can students manage their time more effectively when studying?

2) What is one benefit of using a checklist during study sessions?

Story: The Power of Lifelong Learning

Kayla's Second Start

Kayla stared at the “Career Week” poster pinned outside her classroom. It was filled with photos of smiling professionals—engineers, artists, business owners. She sighed. “What if I’m not good at anything?” she muttered. Most of her classmates already had ideas: veterinarian, graphic designer, nurse. Kayla felt stuck in between “not sure” and “not ready.”

Later that week, her class listened to a guest speaker named Elena. She didn’t look much older than Kayla’s cousin, but her story surprised everyone. Elena had worked as a server for almost ten years. When COVID hit, she lost her job overnight. “I had no backup plan,” she said. “But instead of giving up, I started learning online. I took free digital marketing courses every night after finishing my normal work during the day.” Kayla leaned forward.

“Now I work full-time as a digital marketer,” Elena continued. “I built a skill I didn’t know I had. I’m still learning. That’s the secret—you never stop learning.”

That line echoed in Kayla’s mind for days. At home, she watched her brother Marcus typing away on his laptop. “Are you still playing games?” she asked.

“Nope,” he said, grinning. “I’m learning how to code. I’m taking a free course from MIT. I want to make my own app one day.”

Kayla raised an eyebrow. “But you already have a job.”
“I do,” Marcus said. “But the world keeps changing. I want to stay ahead. Lifelong learning isn’t just a buzzword—it’s a necessity.”

Her teacher confirmed it the next day. “In Canada, 54% of workers have retrained or learned new skills in the last five years. The World Economic Forum reports that by 2027, nearly 44% of core job skills will shift due to technology and automation.” That scared Kayla—but it also lit something inside her.

She remembered how much she loved baking as a kid. She spent the weekend watching YouTube tutorials, measuring out flour, cracking eggs, and laughing when her cupcakes flopped. Then they flopped a little less. Then... they rose perfectly.

By the end of the month, she had made dozens of treats. She even started a small Instagram page called *Kayla Bakes*. Friends from school were liking and sharing her photos. One classmate messaged her: “Can I buy a dozen for my sister’s party?”

Kayla was stunned. “People actually want something I made,” she whispered.

“You’re learning something valuable,” Marcus said, scrolling through her page. “And it’s making you happy. That’s the point.”

For the first time, the future didn’t feel like a test she hadn’t studied for. It felt like a recipe she was learning, one ingredient at a time.



Name: _____

12

Curriculum Connection
L9.2

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Learning doesn't stop after high school.	True	False
2) Lifelong learning only applies to university students.	True	False
3) Skills like baking or coding are valuable.	True	False
4) The job market is always the same.	True	False
5) Curiosity helps with lifelong learning.	True	False

Question Answer the questions below.

1) Why is it important to learn new skills as adults?

2) What are some reasons people avoid learning new skills?

Learning
Bucket List

Create a "bucket list" of 5 fun or useful things you'd like to learn in your life.

My Learning Bucket List

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Newspaper Article: Risk-Taking That Builds Confidence

Teen's Dare To Perform Goes Viral — And Builds Confidence

Mapleview, ON — July 23, 2025

It all started with a shaky mic and a last-minute sign-up. Grade 9 student *Liam Carter*, 14, had never sung in front of more than his bathroom. But last Friday, during Mapleview Youth Talent Night, Liam took a leap. In front of his classmates, impressed judges, and a completely changed way of thinking.

"I almost backed out," he said, "but after the show. 'My friends were there, I kept thinking—what if I failed?' He did. Liam's performance of a Shawn Mendes cover earned him a second place in the contest, and his videos when someone posted it to TikTok. He hadn't even told his parents he was performing until the moment his name was called. 'I wanted it to be a surprise. Or... in case I failed, I wouldn't have to explain,' he admitted.

Liam's story is part of a growing trend among teens choosing healthy risk-taking to build confidence. Experts say that safe challenges—like trying out for a team, entering competitions, or applying for leadership roles—can help teenagers develop self-esteem and prepare for adult responsibilities. "Risk-taking isn't always negative," says youth development coach Avery Sloane. "When it's done with support and safety, it can actually teach teens how to handle failure, bounce back, and succeed."

A recent Canadian Youth Survey found that 68% of students who took part in extracurricular activities felt more confident making decisions and dealing with pressure.



Risk-taking in healthy ways—such as auditioning, speaking in public, or trying something new—was directly linked to problem-solving and social growth.

"I don't think I would've tried out if my friends hadn't dared me. But now, I want to join school clubs. It's like... I unlocked a part of myself that was there." His teacher, Ms. Farley, noted the change immediately. "Liam is more confident now—even offered to speak at his cousin's wedding. Before this, he was shy in class."

Liam's teacher, Ms. Farley, shared a similar observation. "He went from being quiet and unsure to taking initiative in group projects. That performance sparked something bigger than just a musical moment—it showed him what he's capable of."

Experts encourage teens to look for small, everyday opportunities to build courage—like trying a new sport, learning to cook, starting a part-time job, or simply speaking up in class. These actions build what psychologists call "resilience," or the ability to recover after setbacks.

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Confidence only grows from easy, safe routines.	True	False
2) Joining a team is an example of risk-taking.	True	False
3) Avoiding failure is better than trying something new.	True	False
4) All risks are harmful and should be avoided.	True	False
5) Healthy risks can lead to personal growth.	True	False

Rate Your Willingness to take each risk by shading in the stars from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Situation	Rate Your Willingness to take risk
1. Speaking in front of a group	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
2. Trying out for a sports team	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
3. Sitting with someone new at lunch	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
4. Sharing your opinion in a group	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
5. Joining a new club or activity	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What is one example of a healthy risk a teen might take?

2) Why is it important to take risks even if you might fail?

Dare to Grow – Confidence Challenge

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will explore how taking small, safe risks can build confidence, courage, and social-emotional growth. Through a series of “mini dares,” students will step slightly out of their comfort zones in meaningful ways and reflect on what they learned from the experience.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- “Dare Cards” (a pre-made list of wholesome risk-based challenges)
- Pens or pencils
- Reflection worksheet (see book)
- Optional: a timer, sticky notes, and a stack of completed dares



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Start by discussing the idea of healthy risk-taking—what it means, why it matters, and how it builds confidence.
2. Each student will select 3 “Dare Cards” from a class set (or choose from a pre-made list). Each dare should be a small, meaningful challenge like “Give a compliment to someone you don’t usually talk to” or “Raise your hand in class today.”
3. Over the next 2–3 days, students will complete each dare in real life, keeping notes about how it felt and what happened.
4. After completing all three dares, students will return to class and reflect on their experience using guided questions.
5. (Optional) Students can share one of their dare stories with a classmate or small group.
6. Collect their reflections and use them to open up a class discussion about how growth often starts with discomfort—and how trying new things helps build resilience.

Dare to Grow – Confidence Challenge

Give a sincere compliment to someone outside your friend group.	Reach out to a friend you haven't spoken to in a while.
Raise your hand and share an idea in class.	Create a positive post or video about something meaningful to you.
Introduce yourself to someone you don't usually talk to.	Share a mistake you learned from with someone.
Ask a teacher for help or advice.	Volunteer to be the first to present or participate.
Join a group activity even if you feel nervous.	Run for a team, role, or club you've never joined.
Spend a full day being 100% honest and kind in everything you say.	Write a letter of appreciation to someone who has helped you.
Ask a teacher how their day is going.	Stay off social media for a day.
Try a new hobby or skill and share your experience.	Sit with a completely new group at lunch and start a conversation.
Tell a teacher or adult how they've made a difference to you.	Take the lead in a group project or task.
Volunteer to speak first during a class discussion or presentation.	Share a talent you usually keep hidden.

Reflection

Think about the three dares you completed and answer the questions below honestly and thoughtfully.

1) Which three dares did you choose to complete?

2) Which dare was the hardest for you? Why?

3) How did you feel when you completed each dare?

4) What happened when you actually completed the dare?

5) Did any of your dares lead to a positive or surprising outcome? Explain.

6) How did these small risks help build your confidence or courage?

Blog Post: My High School Path and Beyond

Planning Today for Tomorrow's Success

Date: July 23, 2025

Author: Alexis Tran

4-minute read

Grade 9 might feel early to be thinking about careers, but it's actually the perfect time to start mapping out your high school journey. The decisions you make now—like which courses to take—can shape the options you'll have in Grade 10, 11, and beyond.

In Alberta, high school is divided into two main streams: academic and knowledge and employability (K&E). Students on the academic track often pursue courses like English 10-1 or Math 10C to prepare them for post-secondary programs such as university or college. On the other hand, students who follow the K&E path may focus more on practical, hands-on learning to enter the workforce or trades.

According to Alberta Education, students need at least 100 credits to graduate with a high school diploma. These credits include core subjects like English, Social Studies, Science, Math, and Physical Education, as well as electives (like Career and Technology Studies), Fine Arts, or languages. Planning your courses early helps you meet graduation requirements *and* keep doors open for programs or careers that interest you.

Let's say you're interested in becoming a nurse. You'll need strong marks in Biology 30, Chemistry 30, and Math 30-1 or 30-2 to apply for nursing programs. Thinking of engineering? You'll likely need Math 30-1 and Physics 30. Want to be a chef? A mix of Food Studies and Work Experience courses can help you build skills and experience even before you graduate.

Don't forget—your high school path isn't just about grades. It's also about exploring your passions, setting realistic goals, and learning skills that matter. According to a 2024 Statistics Canada report, students who set goals and research career paths in high school are more likely to feel confident and motivated in senior high. So, what's your next step? Talk to your school counsellor. Research the career you're curious about. Look at the course requirements at your school and ask yourself: *What choices today will bring me closer to where I want to be?*

Till next time,
Alexis Tran

Comments:



RyanJ_87 | July 23, 2025

Totally agree. Planning in Grade 9 helped me prep for paramedic school early.

Like Reply 4h ago



MarieL_G | July 23, 2025

I think it's too early. Most teens change their minds by Grade 11 anyway.

Like Reply 2h ago

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What's one benefit of setting goals in junior high?

2) What is one way your course choices can affect your future career?

True or False

Write 'true' or 'false'?

1) You can only change your course choices after grade 10.

True

False

2) Most careers require the same course choices in high school.

True

False

3) Setting goals can help students stay motivated.

True

False

4) High school courses have no impact on future career choices.

True

False

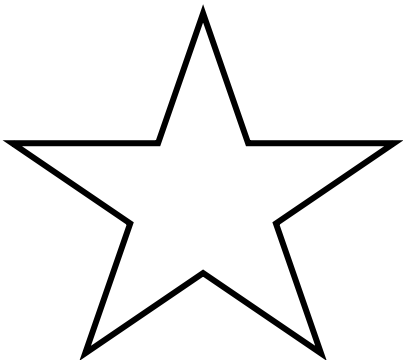
5) It's okay to explore different interests in high school.

True

False

Draw

Write one academic goal in the centre of the star. In each point, write one action step to help reach it.

Future You – Student Profile Poster

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will imagine themselves as Grade 12 graduates and design a “profile poster” that reflects their course choices, career goals, accomplishments, and personal growth. This activity builds self-awareness, planning skills, and motivation.

Materials: What do we need for the activity?

- Poster paper or blank sheet of paper
- Markers, coloured pencils, or pens
- Rulers and glue (optional)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Ask students to imagine it's their final year of high school and they are preparing to graduate.
2. On their poster, they will create a profile of their “Future Self.” The profile should include:
 - Name
 - Intended career or field
 - High school courses completed
 - A proudest moment or achievement
 - Advice they'd give to their Grade 9 self
3. Encourage students to be creative: they can include photos, icons, doodles, or even mock social media profiles that represent who they've become.
4. Once completed, students can do a silent gallery walk or present highlights to a small group.
5. End with guided reflection questions to connect the creative work to their real goals and interests.

Future You – Student Profile Poster

Name	
------	--

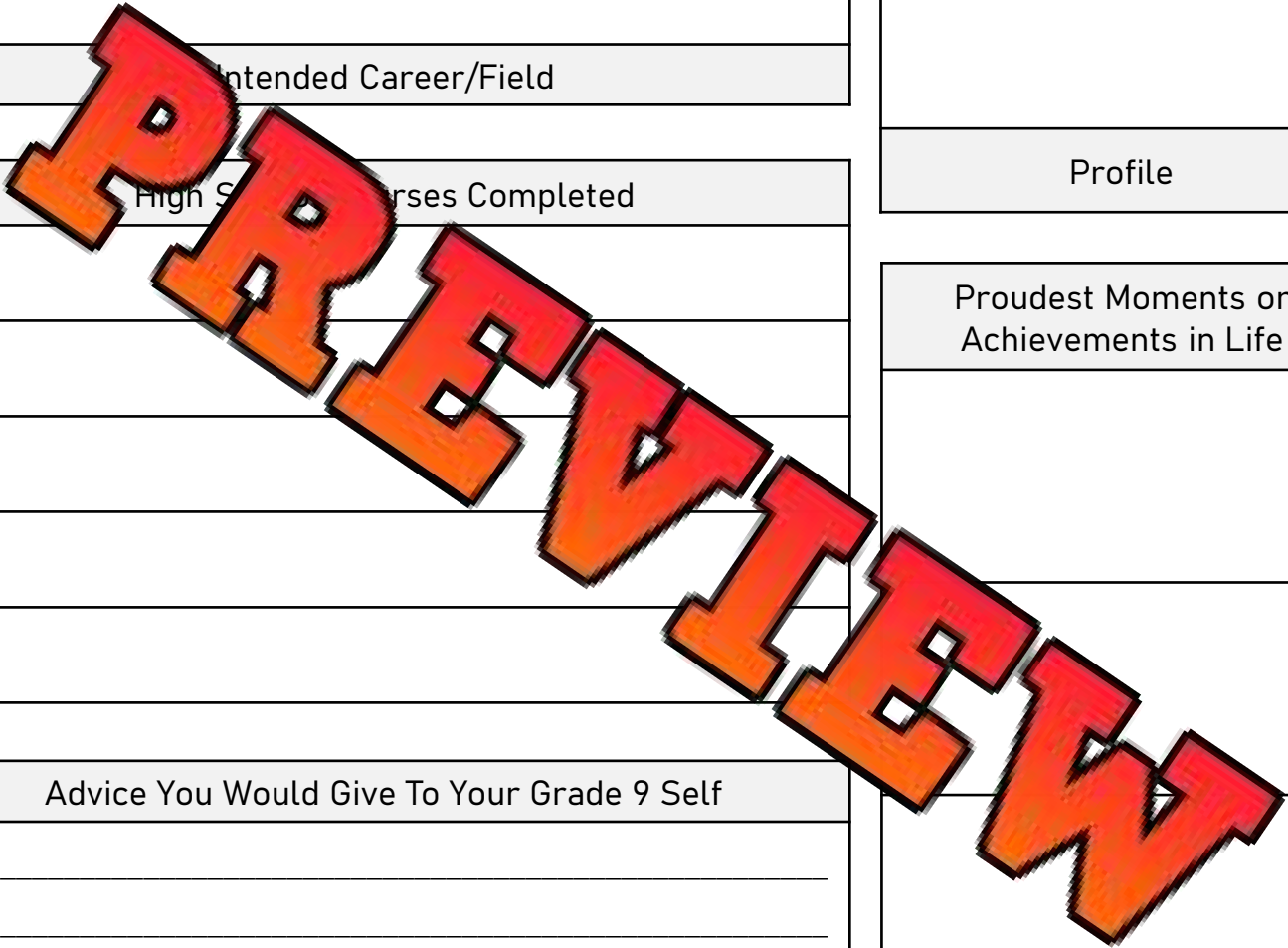
Intended Career/Field

High School Courses Completed

Advice You Would Give To Your Grade 9 Self

Profile

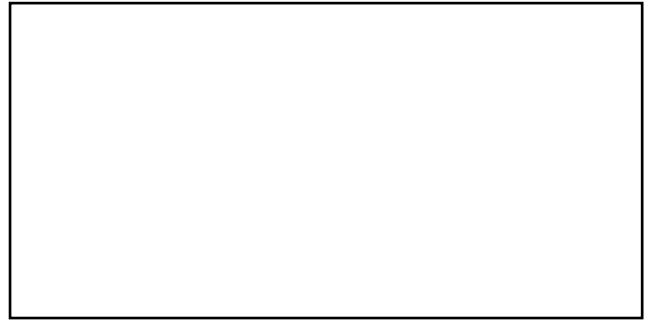
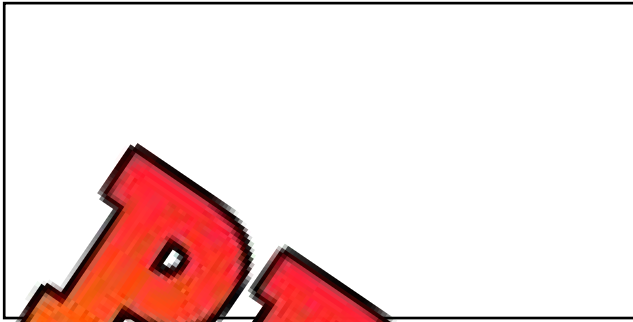
Proudest Moments or Achievements in Life



Reflection

Answer the questions below.

- 1) Draw two emojis that show how you felt before and after completing the Future You – Student Profile Poster Activity.



- 2) What steps will you need to take to make your profile a reality?

- 3) Which high school courses do you think would help you reach your goals?

- 4) What strengths do you already have that will help you reach your goals?

Exit Cards

Cut Out Cut out the exit cards below and have students complete them at the end of class.

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

1) Planning courses can help avoid regrets.	True	False
2) Electives don't affect future careers.	True	False
3) Options help you explore interests..	True	False
4) Grade 9 is too early to plan.	True	False

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

1) Planning courses can help avoid regrets.	True	False
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3) Options help you explore interests..	True	False
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Name: _____

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1) Planning courses can help avoid regrets.	True	False
2) Electives don't affect future careers.	True	False
3) Options help you explore interests..	True	False
4) Grade 9 is too early to plan.	True	False

Understanding and Creating My First Résumé

Why a Résumé Matters

A résumé is a short, organized document that highlights your experience, education, and skills. Even if you're still in school and don't have a formal job, a résumé can show others that you are responsible, motivated, and ready to work or volunteer. Employers, coaches, youth programs, and even scholarship committees often ask to see a résumé when you're applying.

Creating a résumé in Grade 9 helps you recognize your strengths and keep track of your growing experience. According to Youth Employment Services (YES) Canada, teens who apply with a résumé are **more likely** to be invited for an interview. A résumé can also help you reflect on your goals and be more confident during job interviews or school leadership applications. Many students use a résumé for summer jobs, internships, and volunteer placements.

What to Include in a Student Résumé

Even without formal work experience, you have a lot to offer! Below are common sections in a student résumé.

- **Contact Information:** Include your name, address, city, phone number, and a professional email address. Avoid something silly like funnyguy123@email.com.
- **Career Goal or Objective:** This short statement explains what kind of role you are seeking and why you want it.
- **Education:** List your current school, grade, and any awards, honours, clubs, or special classes (e.g., sports, STEM, coding course).
- **Skills:** Mention your strengths such as time management, organization, computer skills, teamwork, or communication. You can also list tools like Canva, Google Docs, or coding basics.
- **Experience:** Think broadly. You can include babysitting, tutoring, volunteer work, school projects, or helping out in your community or family.
- **Hobbies and Interests:** These show your personality and passions. Mention activities like reading, baking, gaming—anything that shows dedication and creativity.

Tips to Make Your Résumé Strong

- Keep it one page long with neat spacing and clear headings.
- Use bullet points to organize each section.
- Start each item with a strong action word like “led,” “created,” or “supported.”
- Double-check spelling and grammar.
- Ask someone (a teacher or parent) to review it.

A 2023 CareerBuilder survey reported that **77% of employers reject résumés** with typos. A clean, honest résumé shows effort and helps open doors—even if it's just your first step forward. You're building your future one experience at a time.

You can also update your résumé every few months to include new achievements, school projects, or leadership roles. Keeping it current saves time when you need to apply quickly for a job or opportunity. It also reminds you of how much you've grown, even in a short time.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What does "objective" mean on a résumé?

2) How can a résumé grow or change over time?

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) A résumé is used to list hobbies.	True	False
2) Using bullet points makes a résumé easy to read.	True	False
3) A résumé must be at least two full pages.	True	False
4) Spelling errors are okay if the content is strong.	True	False
5) Including a career goal helps show direction.	True	False

Word Search

Find and circle all the career-related words.

<input type="checkbox"/> Contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Summary
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/> Reference	<input type="checkbox"/> Work
<input type="checkbox"/> Job	<input type="checkbox"/> Resume
<input type="checkbox"/> Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Format
<input type="checkbox"/> Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Education

W	C	A	R	O	B	J	E	C	T	V	E	V	A	
N	O	É	T	R	G	S	F	P	I	E	X	M	O	S
X	N	S	M	Y	W	E	X	J	P	M	W	M	L	U
Q	T	Y	O	R	E	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	U	M
J	A	K	Z	I	É	B	U	W	Y	F	H	A	N	M
J	C	F	N	X	Z	S	V	I	O	I	X	É	T	A
I	T	U	J	U	C	N	U	V	J	R	Z	A	E	R
J	O	B	É	Y	Y	M	Z	M	L	G	K	A	E	Y
S	K	I	L	L	S	V	E	W	É	C	D	P	R	J
A	E	X	P	E	R	I	E	N	C	E	A	C	J	R
E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N	F	O	R	M	A	T

Activity: Creating My First Résumé

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will learn how to organize and present their current education, experiences, interests, and goals in a professional résumé format. This activity encourages self-reflection, communication skills, and prepares students for future job and volunteer opportunities.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Printed résumé worksheet (provided)
- Pen or pencil



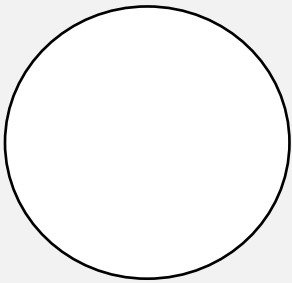
Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Write your full name in the box at the top of the page and draw your face in the circle on the left. Make your sketch neat and creative.
2. Fill in your contact information beside the icons on the right (e.g., phone number, email address, and location). Use made-up but realistic details if needed.
3. Under the Education section, write your current school's name and grade clearly.
4. In the Career Goal section, write 2–3 full sentences explaining what you hope to do in the future (e.g., a job, a goal, or something you're passionate about).
5. List any work experiences you've had—even informal ones like babysitting, tutoring, or helping in a family business.
6. Under Volunteer Works and Achievements, list meaningful things you've done inside or outside school. Be honest and try to show what you've learned.
7. Add any awards you've earned and hobbies/interests that show what kind of person you are. Make sure your writing is organized, neat, and complete before submitting.

Name: _____

30



Education

Current School :

Grade Level :

Awards :

- _____
- _____
- _____

Hobbies/Interests

- _____
- _____
- _____

Full Name

Career Goal

Work Experience

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Volunteer Works:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Achievements

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) What part of your résumé are you most proud of, and why?

2) Which part was hardest to fill out? What made it challenging?

3) What new things did you learn about yourself while making your résumé?

4) How do you think this résumé might change in the future?

5) Why is it important to present yourself well when applying for a job or opportunity?

Story: Conquering Procrastination

Racing the Clock

It was already 10:11 p.m. when Zephyr finally opened his Chromebook. The glowing screen stared back at him—empty, just like his brain. His science project on renewable energy was due the next morning. He had known for two weeks. And yet... here he was, starting from scratch.

He told himself the same lie every time: "I work better under pressure." But truthfully, he just couldn't get started. The moment he sat down to work, his mind wandered. He'd scroll through memes, share articles he didn't need, or suddenly decide to reorganize his entire backpack. Zephyr was not alone. Studies from the Canadian Mental Health Association show that over **70% of high school students** are regularly putting off their schoolwork—even when they know it makes them more stressed. Experts call this procrastination a "time trap," and it often comes from anxiety or just not knowing where to begin.

Earlier that week, Zephyr had watched a video on how to beat procrastination. It said the best way to start was to break the task into small steps. Take one step. Zephyr remembered something called the **"two-minute rule"**: if a task takes two minutes or less to begin, just do it—like writing the title or opening a document.

So, Zephyr started small. He wrote the title. Then a second. Suddenly, he wasn't stuck anymore. He also remembered the **Pomodoro technique**—a time management trick where you work for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. Zephyr downloaded a free timer app and challenged himself: no phone, no tabs, just the assignment. After 25 minutes, he had half a page written. He took a break, stretched, got a snack, and came back.

He repeated the cycle. Work. Break. Work. Break. By midnight, he had written two pages, added a bar graph on solar power, and even edited for grammar. His brain wasn't as tired as he thought, and he didn't feel overwhelmed or panicked. He felt in control.

The next morning, Zephyr handed in his project to Ms. Levesque with quiet pride. A few days later, she returned it with a comment: "Well-researched and on time—great job using your strategies!" That evening, Zephyr opened his planner and wrote a note to himself: *Start early next time—even 10 minutes helps.* He also made a mini checklist:

- Turn off distractions
- Set small goals
- Use a timer
- Reward yourself

Procrastination wasn't just a bad habit—it was a barrier to his success. But now, he knew he had the tools to fight it. It wasn't about being perfect. It was about showing up, even when it was hard and this time, Zephyr wasn't racing panic—he was racing the clock and winning.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Procrastination always means you're lazy.	True	False
2) Breaking big tasks into small steps can help.	True	False
3) Social media is never a source of distraction.	True	False
4) Planning ahead reduces last-minute stress.	True	False
5) Avoiding work makes you more productive.	True	False

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of best answer for each question.

1. What is procrastination?		
A. Finishing all your tasks	B. Delaying tasks	C. Skipping everything
2. What helps stop procrastinating?		
A. Wait to feel ready	B. Watch the clock	C. Use a checklist
3. Why do students delay work?		
A. Forgetfulness	B. Fear of failure	C. Deadline love
4. What shows you're procrastinating?		
A. Avoiding tasks	B. Starting early	C. Staying on track
5. What habit helps you stay on track?		
A. Blaming others	B. Taking naps	C. Making a plan

Explain

How does overcoming procrastination help you succeed in school and life?

Activity – My Focus Playlist

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students understand how music can support concentration and reduce procrastination by selecting songs that boost their focus, mood, and motivation.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Playlist
- Pencil
- Optional: digital music access (Spotify, YouTube, etc.)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Begin by thinking about songs that usually help you feel more focused, calm, or energized when you're trying to work on something important. These songs should help you stay on track instead of getting distracted.
2. Select six songs that you believe are helpful when you're trying to complete assignments, or trying to get started on a task you've been putting off.
3. On the worksheet, write down the full title of each song and the name of the artist or band that performs it in the spaces provided beneath each number.
4. Look at the music player buttons (play, pause, rewind, fast-forward) and imagine designing your own personalized playlist app—feel free to decorate or add your own small drawings to make it reflect your style.
5. In the space at the bottom of the sheet, write a few sentences explaining how the songs you selected help you overcome procrastination. Think about whether they give you energy, calm you down, or improve your focus.
6. Once you've completed your playlist, find a classmate to share it with. Discuss why you chose those songs and how they help you stay motivated or manage your time better.
7. Keep this worksheet somewhere visible—like inside your binder or study space—so you can use your playlist the next time you need music to help you get things done.

Activity – My Focus Playlist

Music helps fight procrastination. It boosts focus, lifts your mood, and makes boring tasks feel easier. The right songs can help you start, keep going, and finish what you need to do.

Song Title _____

Singer _____



Song Title _____

Singer _____



Song Title _____

Singer _____



Song Title _____

Singer _____



Song Title _____

Singer _____



Song _____

Singer _____



Explain how these songs help you overcome procrastination.

Name: _____

36

Curriculum Connection
L9.1

My Name _____

Peer Being Assessed _____

Peer Assessment

Use this checklist to assess your classmate's focus playlist.

Criteria	Description	Stars (1: Worst, 5: Best)
Song Choices	The student selected music that suits studying or boosting focus.	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Connections	The playlist clearly links music to overcoming procrastination.	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Personal Reflection	The student explains how real thought about the music helps them stay on task.	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Creativity	The playlist design shows originality or a unique style.	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Completion	All parts of the worksheet are filled out thoughtfully and completely.	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Glow and Grow

Glow: Write two things your classmate did really well at.
Grow: Suggest one way they can improve.

Glow	<hr/> <hr/>
Glow	<hr/> <hr/>
Grow	<hr/> <hr/>

Newspaper Article: Preparing for High School Transitions

Gear Up for the Big Move: “Operation Grade 10” Begins Now

Metro North – In a quiet neighbourhood on the west end of Calgary, chaos erupted in the living room of 14-year-old Ethan Cruz—but not the kind that makes the news for the wrong reasons.

“I realized I didn’t know how many courses I had to take next year!” he said, frantically scribbling on a school handout titled *Transitioning to Grade 10*. What followed was a checklist, a family discussion, and a lot of sleepless nights. Across the province, students like Ethan are preparing to leap into the unfamiliar world of high school. While it may not be as terrifying as it sounds, experts say the transition can be overwhelming without proper planning.



“It’s not just about what classes to take,” explains guidance counsellor Ms. Priya Nadar. “It’s also about managing the mental shift. High school comes with new teachers, more independence, and greater expectations.”

A 2023 Alberta Education survey revealed that 62% of students felt unprepared when entering Grade 10.

That number drops significantly—to 28%—when students had access to a structured transition plan. “We’re seeing better emotional readiness and fewer dropouts when kids plan ahead,” Ms. Nadar added.

To fight that anxiety, schools across Canada are launching programs like *My Transition Toolkit*, helping students build personalized checklists that include researching course prerequisites for future careers, understanding credit requirements and diploma goals, visiting school websites or campuses, talking to older students or teachers, and planning time for academics, clubs, and self-care.

Some schools are even offering peer-led info sessions where Grade 10 students share tips on navigating hallways, organizing assignments, and managing homework. Some students, like Alyza Mendoza, are already applying these skills. “I want to be a scientist, so I need science and math courses,” she says. “Knowing what to expect makes me feel more in control.” She also enjoys shadowing her cousin, who is in clinical research, to gain real-world experience.

Parents, too, play a key role. Ethan’s mom and he built the checklist together. “It was a chance to talk about his hopes—and his fears.” Educators encourage families to talk early and often. “The earlier students think about Grade 10, the better their choices will be,” said principal Darren Liu. “It’s not just about getting in—it’s about staying on track.” With September around the corner, the message is clear: preparation is power. Whether it’s organizing a binder, learning to ask for help, or researching clubs and electives, Grade 9s across Canada are stepping into the unknown—one checklist at a time. Stay tuned for our follow-up story: “Top 5 Mistakes to Avoid in Grade 10.”

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Transitioning to high school requires no advance planning.	True	False
2) A structured plan helps reduce student anxiety.	True	False
3) Talking to older students can be helpful.	True	False
4) Most students enjoy making transition checklists.	True	False
5) Parents should not be involved in planning.	True	False

Question

What could happen if a student doesn't plan their course selections carefully?

PREVIEW

Course Choice
Ranking

List the top 5 courses you want to take next year and rank them by excitement or importance.

PREVIEW

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Blog Post: What Makes A Career Right For Me?

Finding Your Future

Date: July 24, 2025

Author: Natasha Lim

4-minute read

Have you ever wondered what job you'll do in the future? You're not alone! Grade 9 is the perfect time to get curious about careers, especially since the decisions you make in high school can shape your path. Creating a "Career Curiosity Board" is one way to start. You can list 3 to 5 careers you're interested in, then explore what it takes to get there. For example, if you're curious about being a video game designer, you might need a degree in computer science or game development. A nurse, on the other hand, requires specialized healthcare training and registration with a regulatory body like the Canadian Nurses Association. And if you're eyeing a career in trades, you'll likely start with an apprenticeship after high school.

But how do you even choose what careers to explore? That's where understanding your interests and values comes in. According to a recent study from Canada's Job Bank, people are more satisfied in jobs that align with their personal interests. For example, someone who enjoys helping others may thrive in social careers like nursing or counselling, while someone who loves working with tools may prefer trades.

A 2023 *Statistics Canada* study found that people who felt their job matched their interests reported 40% higher job satisfaction than those who didn't. That's a huge difference! Here's a tip: try matching your top hobbies and favourite subjects with possible jobs. If you love art and storytelling, graphic design might be a great match. If you're into science and nature, you might explore careers in environmental research. Also, don't forget to ask: What level of education does this job require? Does it match my values (like creativity, helping others, stability)? Is it a growing field in Canada? The more you know, the more confident you'll feel making decisions about high school and beyond. So, grab a pen and paper, make a list, and start dreaming!

Career exploration isn't about locking yourself into one job—it's about learning more about you. Your ideas will grow and change, and that's okay! By starting early, you'll discover new possibilities, and avoid feeling stuck later on. Your future begins with curiosity, so take the first step now.

Till next time,
Natasha Lim

Comments:



Jason Liu | July 24, 2025

Choosing now feels early. What if I change my mind?

Like Reply 14h ago



Sarah Johnson | July 24, 2025

Exploring isn't deciding! Stats show planning early boosts success.

Like Reply 7h ago

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Career curiosity boards help you explore job options.	True	False
2) Hobbies have no connection to future careers.	True	False
3) A career that matches your personality can increase happiness.	True	False
4) You should ignore job trends when planning your future.	True	False
5) Career planning only starts after high school.	True	False

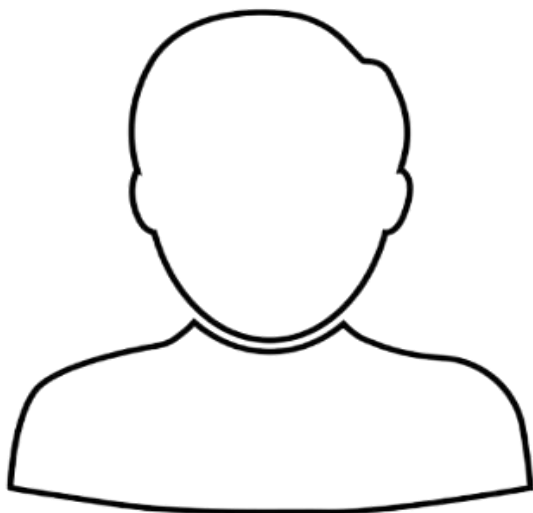
Questions Answer the questions below.

1) How can personality help in choosing a career?

2) What is one career you are curious about?

Sketch

Draw yourself working in one of the careers you explored and chose it.



Activity: My Career Curiosity Board

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will explore 3–5 careers they are curious about and identify the education, experience, and skills needed for each. They will organize their findings visually to better understand career pathways and reflect on what aligns with their interests.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Blank sheet of paper or poster board
- Markers, pencils, or pens
- Career research (larger print or printed job profiles)
- Scissors and glue (optional for cutting out icons or job titles)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Choose 3 to 5 careers that you are curious about or want to learn more about.
2. Research each career and find out the following: job description, education/training, skills needed, and average salary in Canada.
3. On your paper or board, create a section for each career using drawings, headings, symbols, or cut-out pictures.
4. Write a short summary of each career under its section, including at least three facts for each (such as education, experience, or interesting tasks).
5. Compare the similarities and differences between the careers you chose.
6. Think about how each career fits with your personality, interests, and values.
7. Add a "Top Choice" stamp or star beside the career you feel most connected to right now.

Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) In what ways did building your Career Curiosity Board help you better understand the careers that match your interests, values, and personality?

2) Describe 3 careers or facts you discovered during your research. How did these influence the way you think about your future?

	Impact
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Exit Cards

Cut Out Cut out the exit cards below and have students complete them at the end of class.

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One question in my mind

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One question in my mind

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One question in my mind

Name: _____

One thing I have learned

One thing I have enjoyed

One question in my mind

Building Skills Through Safe Volunteering

Why Volunteering Builds Character

Volunteering is more than just doing something nice. It helps students grow in ways that classroom learning alone can't. When teens offer their time and effort to help others, they often gain confidence, life skills, and a better understanding of the world around them. These experiences don't just make you feel good—they build character.

According to Volunteer Canada, **58% of youth aged 15–24** participate in some form of volunteer activity each year. These students report higher self-esteem, stronger social skills, and better teamwork. Volunteering also gives you a chance to explore career paths, build leadership skills, and meet people from different backgrounds.

Skills

Volunteering is one of the best ways to get experience before your first job. It gives you a chance to learn new skills while also helping others. Whether you're helping with fundraising, tutoring young students, or cleaning up in a park, you're gaining skills that matter.

Here are five important skills you can build through volunteering:

- **Communication** – Speaking, listening, and understanding others are all skills you can learn through volunteering.
- **Empathy** – Helping people in need teaches you to understand and care for other people's feelings and situations.
- **Teamwork** – Many volunteer tasks involve working with others, which helps build trust and collaboration.
- **Problem Solving** – You'll learn to think quickly and make smart decisions.
- **Responsibility** – Showing up on time and completing tasks teaches discipline and maturity.



Many high school programs also count volunteer hours toward graduation. While not mandatory, some schools encourage students to complete **at least 25 hours** of volunteering for resumes or scholarship applications.

Safety First: Volunteering Smart

As valuable as volunteering is, students must be aware of safety. Not all jobs are right for every age group, and it's important to know your limits. Follow these safety tips to protect yourself while still making a difference:

- **Use the buddy system.** Volunteering with a friend is safer and more fun.
- **Let someone know.** Always tell a trusted adult where you'll be and when.
- **Respect all safety rules.** Whether it's wearing gloves or staying in assigned areas, safety comes first.
- **Speak up.** If you're asked to do something unsafe or uncomfortable, talk to a supervisor right away.
- **Sign in and out.** This keeps you accounted for during your shift.
- Volunteering is a powerful way to build your character, but it should always be done wisely and with care.

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) All volunteer work is unpaid and always safe.	True	False
2) The buddy system helps keep volunteers safe.	True	False
3) Volunteer work can help build your résumé.	True	False
4) Teens should accept any task without asking questions.	True	False
5) Helping others builds character and confidence.	True	False

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What are some important safety guidelines while volunteering?

2) What should you do if a volunteer task makes you uncomfortable?

Boundaries
List

Write a short list of 5 personal boundaries you would set while volunteering.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Story: How to Handle Stress During Change

Draw

Draw pictures that illustrate the story.

Riding the Waves of Change

When fourteen-year-old Liam found out he was moving across the province just before starting Grade 9, it felt like someone had pressed pause on everything he knew. He was leaving behind his childhood home, his soccer team, and his best friends who had been with him since kindergarten. Before the move, he stared at the ceiling, thinking about how it would feel to walk into a new school where no one knew his name. When he arrived at Evergreen High, nothing was familiar. The school was almost double the size of his old one. The bell sounded different, and the hallway echoed in a strange way. Lunchtime was the hardest. He would sit quietly, searching for a place to sit, but the cafeteria was so busy. According to *Youth Mental Health Canada*, over 60% of students experience high levels of stress during major transitions, such as changing schools or moving to a new city. Liam felt the weight of that statistic—his sleep was inconsistent, he couldn't concentrate in class, and he was starting to lose interest in his favourite hobbies.

PREVIEW

One day during Health class, the teacher introduced a lesson on coping with change and handed out a resource guide from the *Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)*. It outlined how emotional stress during life transitions affects about 1 in 5 teens in Grades 7–12. That number shocked Liam—he thought everyone else had it together. As part of the lesson, the class learned several practical tools: deep breathing, short walks, journaling, and talking to a trusted adult. That evening, Liam tried journaling for the first time. At first, it felt a bit silly, but he kept at it. Over the next few weeks, he noticed that putting his emotions into words helped him process what he was feeling instead of ignoring it. His thoughts became clearer, and he started to understand that his stress came from feeling disconnected—not from any actual failure or weakness.

Encouraged by his journal progress, Liam challenged himself to join at least one extracurricular group. He settled on the robotics club, even though he knew very little about robots. It didn't require tryouts or any prior experience. At the first meeting, he mostly listened, but he kept showing up. By the third week, he was helping wire a simple motor car and laughing along with his teammates. Research shows that students who form new social connections within the first three months of school are 40% more likely to report lower stress levels. His teacher also introduced a free app called *MindShift*, which guided students through calming exercises and helped build mindfulness skills. Liam used it before tests and whenever he felt overwhelmed. Slowly, he started to notice his anxiety fading. His marks improved. He was proud. Most importantly, he felt like he belonged again.

PREVIEW

PREVIEW

By October, Liam wasn't just coping—he was thriving. He even started helping another new student, Jamal, who had just moved from Winnipeg. Liam gave him a tour, shared lunch, and encouraged him to join the robotics team. “You’ll get used to it,” he told Jamal. “I thought I never would—but I did.” Through the ups and downs of transition, Liam learned that change is hard, but it’s also a chance to grow. Staying focused on small goals, connecting with others, and understanding your stress can turn difficult changes into opportunities for confidence and self-discovery. For any Grade 9 student facing new beginnings, Liam’s story is proof that things really do get better—one small step at a time.

Newspaper Article: Choosing the Right High School Courses

Wrong Turn or Wake-Up Call? Teen's Career Dreams Shift After Elective Surprise

Edmonton, AB — When 14-year-old Naomi Castillo walked into Room 3B on the first day of school, she thought she was heading into the Creative Writing elective she'd dreamed of all summer.

Instead, she was staring at a whiteboard that read "Introduction to Business & Entrepreneurship." "I panicked," Naomi said. "I thought there'd been a mistake. I checked my schedule three times. But there it was—Business Writing."

The mistake was real. Due to a scheduling error, her creative writing class had been replaced with a business elective she'd never signed up for. At first, she was devastated. Naomi, a quiet, artistic student who had already started writing her own fantasy novella during summer break, had no interest in spreadsheets, startup budgets, or elevator pitches.

"I didn't know how to tell anyone," she admitted. "All my friends were in cool electives—film, drama, graphic design. I felt stuck. Like I'd been left behind."

Naomi considered speaking to her guidance counsellor but didn't want to cause trouble. "Everyone else seemed to love the class. I didn't want to be the one who complained." But as the weeks passed, something unexpected happened.

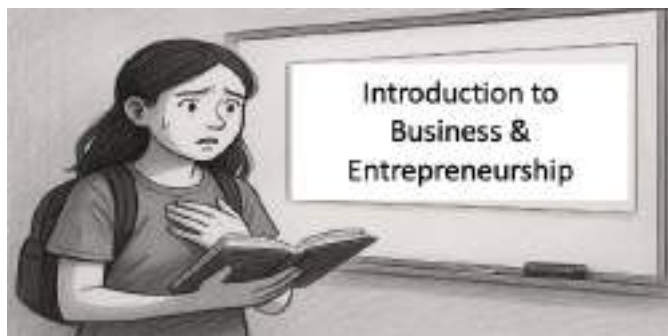
Their first major assignment was to design a mock business and pitch it to the class. Naomi reluctantly teamed up with two classmates, Zoe and Malik, who wanted to create a bookstore café concept. They named it The Quiet Corner.

"I offered to write the pitch script since I like writing," Naomi said. "Then they asked if I could help with the logo and product names. I realized I could still be creative—just in a different way."

As the group worked late into lunch hours and after school, Naomi found herself enjoying the process. They wrote taglines, brainstormed menu names, and mapped out a customer experience. Their final pitch earned first place in the class vote, and their teacher, Mr. Reilly, singled Naomi out for her storytelling and branding ideas.

"She didn't just complete the assignment," Mr. Reilly said. "She brought heart and voice into her business plan. That's a rare skill."

Naomi's experience opened her eyes to new possibilities. "I used to think writing was just about books," she said. "Now I know it can be part of business, media, advertising—it can even lead to social change." She now plays a starring role in both Creative Writing and Business Writing this semester. Her friends have already asked for help with their campaigns for the Student Council. Guidance counsellor Ms. Chen says Naomi's story is a good reminder. "Sometimes, what feels like a detour becomes the path forward. Electives aren't just about checking boxes—they're opportunities to discover yourself." Naomi agrees. "I still love stories," she smiled. "But now I know there's more than one way to tell them."



Fill in the blanks

Complete the sentences below.

1) The right _____ can shape your future.	courses	friends
2) Electives show your _____.	strengths	grades
3) More courses mean more _____ to explore.	rules	careers
4) Choosing to fit in may feel _____.	unmotivated	confident
5) Thinking _____ makes choices more _____.	random	intentional

Check _____ Put a mark beside what you think when choosing electives.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I choose _____ sounds fun	<input type="checkbox"/>	I ask for advice from a teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	I ask myself what I _____ is	<input type="checkbox"/>	I reflect on what I'm good at
<input type="checkbox"/>	I follow what my friend _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	I just pick what's easy
<input type="checkbox"/>	I think about my future goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	I follow what my parents advise
<input type="checkbox"/>	I pick classes to avoid homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	I pick _____ to have a favourite teacher

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What are two reasons why choosing the right high school course is important?

2) How can exploring different electives help you in the future?

Role Play – Choosing the Right Courses

Objective

What are we learning about?

To explore how elective choices affect student well-being, confidence, and future goals, and how self-reflection, communication, and planning support smarter course decisions.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Print role-play cards with course-choice situations.
- A space in the classroom for acting.
- Optional: props for scenarios (e.g., timer, school map, phone, backpack)



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Divide the class into small groups of 3 to 4 students.
2. Hand each group a role-play card describing a real-life scenario, such as choosing electives under peer pressure, being unsure about interest in a course that better fits a goal.
3. Each group acts out the situation, showing both helpful and unhelpful responses from students, teachers, or parents.
4. During their skit, students should show strategies like asking for advice, reflecting on goals, standing up for their interests, or explaining their choices to others.
5. After each role-play, have the group explain what happened, how the choice affected their future or well-being, and what better decisions or conversations could have helped.
6. Finish with a class reflection on why elective choices matter and how planning, curiosity, and courage can lead to more meaningful learning experiences.

Scenario Cards

Cut out the topics below.

Scenario	Key Moments/Descriptions
The Peer Pressure Pick	A student chooses an elective just because all their friends are taking it, even though they're not interested. Later, they feel bored and left out.
The Surprise Switch	A student is accidentally placed in an elective they didn't choose. They consider staying quiet or speaking up to ask for a schedule change.
The Parent Push	A student's parents make them take Business even though the student loves Music. The student wants to follow their passion but doesn't want to disappoint their family.
The "Easy A" Mindset	A student chooses an elective just because they think it's easy. Later, they regret not taking something that would have helped with their future plans.
The Hidden Talent	A student is unsure about taking Art, but a teacher sees their sketches and encourages them. The student must decide whether to take the risk.
The Career Goal Conflict	Two students want to take different electives, but one tries to convince the other to change for the sake of staying together in class.

Scenario Cards

Cut out the topics below.

Scenario	Key Moments/Descriptions
The Last-Minute Decision	A student waits until the last day to choose electives and panics. They rush their choices without thinking them through.
The Quiet Voice	A student is excited to take Drama but is afraid of being judged. Their friends call it “weird,” and the student has to decide whether to stand by their interest.
The Schedule Clash	A student wants both Robotics and Cooking, but the classes are at the same time. They ask a counsellor for advice on how to decide.
The Future Planner	A student researches careers and realizes they need a science elective. Their friends want to go to a different school together, and they feel torn.
The Newcomer	A new student doesn’t understand the elective system and is too shy to ask questions. A peer or teacher offers support.
The Second Chance	A student takes a class they thought they wouldn’t like—and ends up loving it. They reflect on how trying new things helped them grow.

Interview Practice Questions and Answers

Why Interviews Matter

Interviews are an important step when applying for jobs, volunteer roles, co-op programs, or scholarships. They give someone the chance to meet you in person (or online) and ask questions to learn more about who you are—not just what's written on your application or résumé. In Canada, many teens start applying for part-time jobs in Grade 9 or 10. These jobs might include working at fast food restaurants, grocery stores, tutoring younger students, or helping at a rec centre. Most employers will want to speak with you face-to-face when the interview comes in.



A strong interview can stand out, even if you don't have much experience. A 2022 Canadian Youth Employment Survey found that 63% of employers who hire teenagers said they care more about attitude and experience than past work experience. Attitude means showing that you are polite, prepared, and willing to learn is a big plus.

Questions You Should Expect

Most interviews include a few common questions. To practise your answers, you'll feel more confident and less nervous when the time comes for the interview. Here are five questions you're likely to be asked, and what the interviewer wants to know.

- **"Tell me about yourself."** – Share your school interests, hobbies, and a few strengths. Keep it short and positive.
- **"Why do you want this job?"** – Be honest and show that you know something about the job or company.
- **"What are your strengths and weaknesses?"** – Give one thing you're good at and one thing you're working to improve.
- **"Tell me about a time you solved a problem."** – Use a real example from school or a group project and explain how you handled it.
- **"Do you have any questions for us?"** – Always say yes! Ask about training or what a typical day looks like.

What Employers Look For

Employers want to hire people who are responsible and respectful. Here are some things that make a strong candidate:

- Shows up on time and ready
- Makes eye contact and listens
- Speaks clearly and stays calm
- Has a clean and neat appearance
- Brings a positive and friendly attitude
- Shows interest by asking questions



You don't need to be perfect, but practising ahead of time helps a lot. Ask a friend, family member, or teacher to practise with you. The more you prepare, the more confident you'll feel when the time comes. Interviews can be scary at first—but with practice, you can handle them like a pro.

Fill in the Blanks

Complete the sentences below.

1) Interviews help employers learn more about your _____.	skills	grades
2) A good answer includes real _____.	examples	excuses
3) A strong candidate shows good attitude and _____.	popularity	effort
4) You should always prepare _____ the interview.	before	after
5) Employers like when you ask thoughtful _____.	questions	jokes

One Job _____ and write down 3 soft skills (like communication or
Three Skills _____ would help you succeed in that role.

Skills	

Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What is one reason interviews are important?

2) Why is it a good idea to practise interview answers?

Activity: Mock Interview Challenge

Objective

What are we learning about?

To help students build confidence and communication skills by practising responses to common interview questions. Students will rotate through different categories of prompts and take turns as both interviewer and candidate.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- Printed interview questions worksheet (1 per student or pair)
- Pencils or pens
- Desks or chairs arranged in groups
- Optional: printed name tags or name cards



Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Begin with a brief class discussion about why interview skills are important and how these skills apply to part-time jobs, volunteer work, leadership opportunities.
2. Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Give each group one interview questions worksheet.
3. Assign roles in each pair: one student will be the interviewer, the other the candidate. They will switch roles after a few questions.
4. In each round, the interviewer chooses 2–3 questions from a different category on the sheet (e.g., “Motivation and Interest” or “Problem Solving”). The candidate answers them as if they were in a real interview.
5. The interviewer listens actively and can take short notes or offer brief positive feedback afterward.
6. After 5–6 minutes, students switch roles and repeat with new questions. Rotate roles or partners every 10–15 minutes for variety and practice.
7. After students have practised several rounds, bring the class together to discuss what they found helpful, surprising, or challenging.

Interview Prompts

Basic Introduction Questions

Tell me about yourself.

What are your favourite subjects in school and why?

How would your friends or teachers describe you?

Motivation and Interest

Why do you want this job or opportunity?

What do you hope to learn from this experience?

What made you apply to this specific position?

Strengths and Awareness

What is one strength you're proud of?

What is one thing you're looking to improve?

How do you usually handle feedback or criticism?

Problem Solving and Situations

Tell me about a time you solved a problem.

What would you do if a customer was upset with you?

How would you handle making a mistake at work?

Teamwork and Collaboration

Describe a time you worked well on a team.

How do you deal with someone who isn't doing their part?

What role do you usually take during group projects?

Responsibility and Time Management

How do you balance school and other responsibilities?

Have you ever been responsible for something important?

How do you stay organized when you're busy?

Job Readiness

Are you comfortable working on weekends or evenings?

What would you wear to your first day of work?

How would you prepare for your first shift?

Closing the Interview

Do you have any questions for me?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

What is one goal you have for your future?

Three Stars
and a Cloud

- **For each star**, write about something that went well during the activity.
- **For the cloud**, write one thing you would change or improve next time.

Title Of The Activity	
Section	Description
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PREVIEW

Story: From Hobby to Career

From Beats to Blueprints: Aiden's Path

Aiden never thought much about the future—at least not beyond the next level of his favourite video game or the next track he'd mix on his free beat-making app.

His teacher asked the class to list their hobbies and match them with real-world careers. Most students scribbled answers quickly, but Aiden hesitated. Could “music mixing” really count? Later that night, he went down a rabbit hole of online research. He discovered careers like audio engineer, sound designer, and music producer—jobs that paid well and were in demand. According to the Government of Canada Job Bank, sound engineers can earn between \$42,000 and \$89,000 annually. In the creative industries, gaming, and broadcasting are always seeking fresh talent. That's when Aiden realized that his “hobby” could actually lead to a career. He started small. Aiden downloaded a free trial of FL Studio and began watching YouTube tutorials after school.

At school, he asked his guidance counsellor if his interests would support his interest. She recommended Digital Media, a course that teaches video production and audio production. Aiden signed up immediately. By the end of the year, Aiden had produced five original tracks and uploaded them to his SoundCloud. He nervously shared the link with his Digital Media teacher, Mr. Zhao, who responded the next day with more than just feedback. “I know someone at the local radio station who takes student interns,” he said. “If you're serious, I can help connect you.”

That summer, Aiden spent three days a week learning how to edit interviews, clean up audio clips, and help run live shows at the station. It wasn't glamorous, but every day felt like a step forward. He learned terms like compression, EQ, and decibel range—the language of professionals. He also discovered that 93% of employers in creative industries value practical experience over grades alone, a stat that gave him the confidence to focus on building his portfolio, not just acing every test.

At the station, Aiden met Lara, who was studying Audio Post-Production at Humber College. “Don't wait until after high school,” she advised. “There are tons of workshops, contests, and teen programs that can get you noticed now.” Inspired, Aiden entered a youth beat-making contest online—and won third place. His prize? A one-on-one session with a Toronto-based producer who told him, “You've got potential. Keep going.” By the time Grade 10 started, Aiden had mapped out a full learning plan. He picked electives in Communications Technology, Business, and Music, and began volunteering at the school's theater club to run sound during performances.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) Why is it important to explore your hobbies when thinking about careers?

2) What skills can you take in school to turn an interest into a future job?

Visualizing

Draw what the picture you were reading. Explain the picture.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Hobbies like music or gaming can become real careers.	True	False
2) Good grades are the only way to succeed in the future.	True	False
3) Building a portfolio shows your skills to future employers.	True	False
4) Exploring your interests can help you choose a job path.	True	False
5) Joining clubs and contests can open career opportunities.	True	False

Activity – Branching Into Careers

Objective

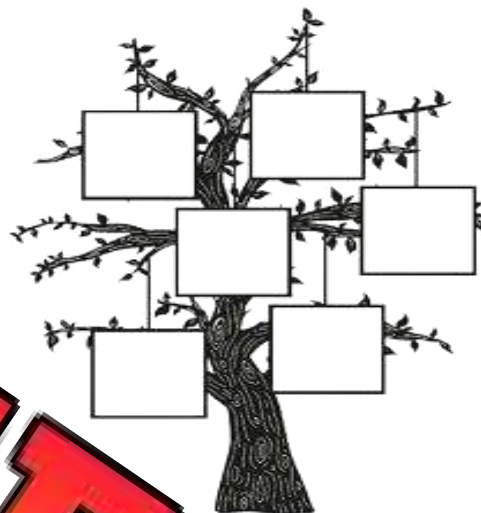
What are we learning about?

To help students discover how a personal interest or hobby can lead to various career paths. This activity encourages students to think creatively about their future and make real-world connections between what they love and possible job options.

Materials

What do we need for the activity?

- Printed hobby tree worksheet
- Pencil or pen
- Optional: markers or pencils for colour

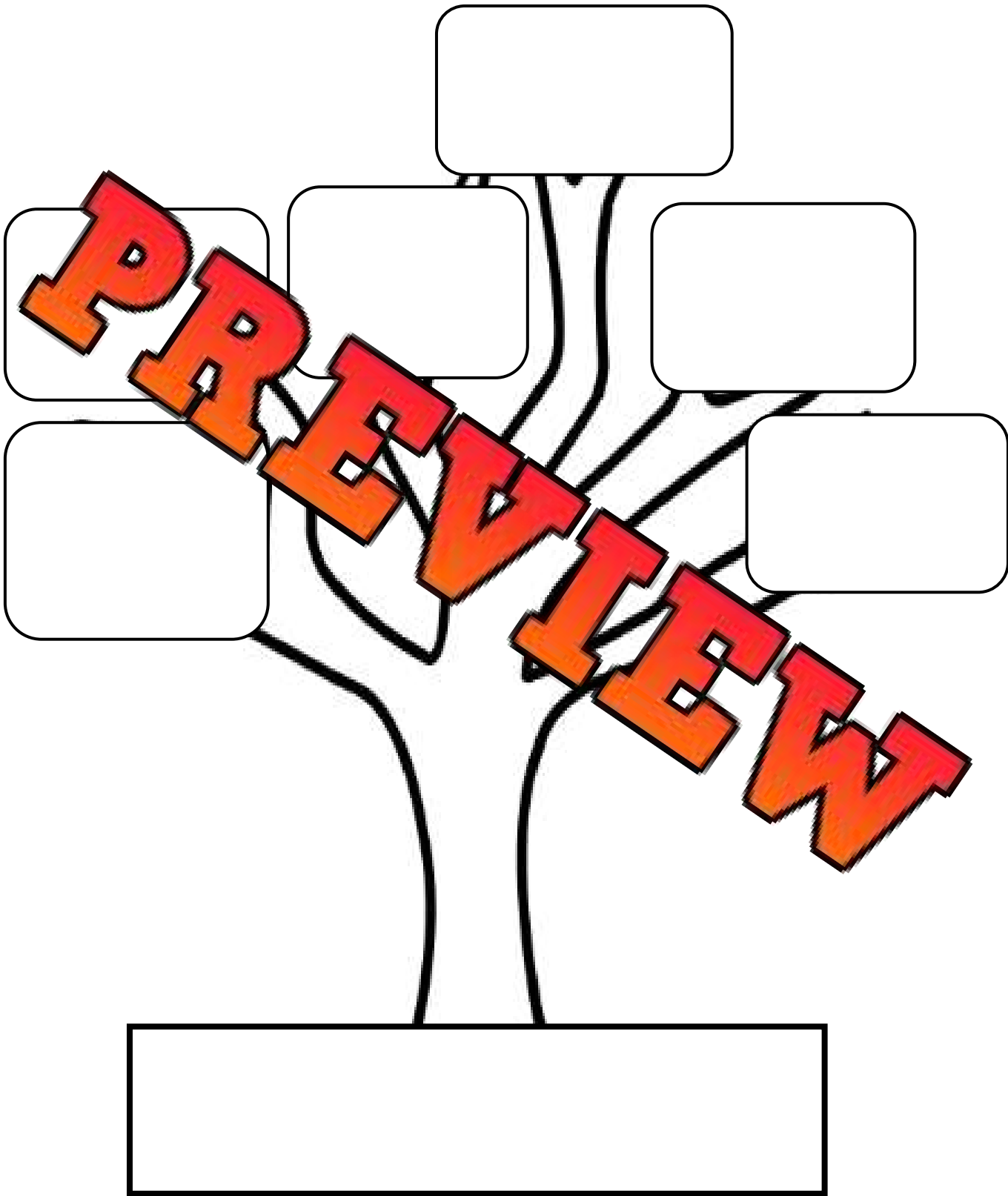


Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. At the bottom box (the base of the tree), write down a hobby or interest you enjoy (e.g., drawing, playing video games, cooking, photography, etc.).
2. In each of the six boxes on the branches, Draw or write one career path connected to your hobby. Think about how this interest could grow into something you might do professionally in the future.
3. Try to include a mix of creative, practical, and technical jobs. Don't just stick to one type—expand your thinking to explore careers you might not have considered before.
4. Add simple designs or colour if time allows. You can decorate your tree with symbols or small images that reflect the hobby or careers you've written about. This makes your tree more personalized and fun to look at.
5. Be ready to share one surprising career you learned about from your hobby. Think about how your interests might shape your future in ways you didn't expect, and be open to hearing what others found, too.

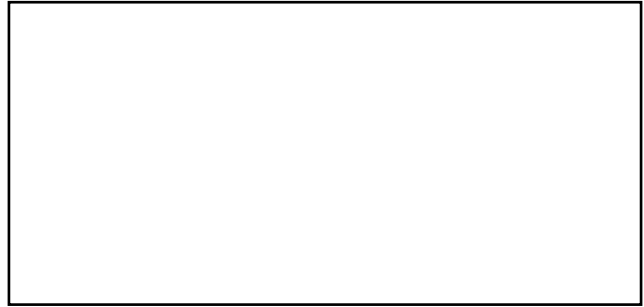
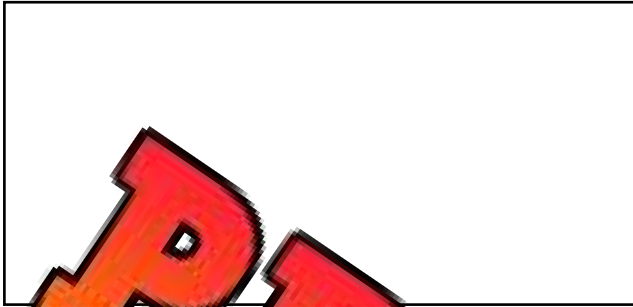
Branching Into Careers



Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) Draw two emojis that show how you felt before and after completing your Hobby to Career Tree.



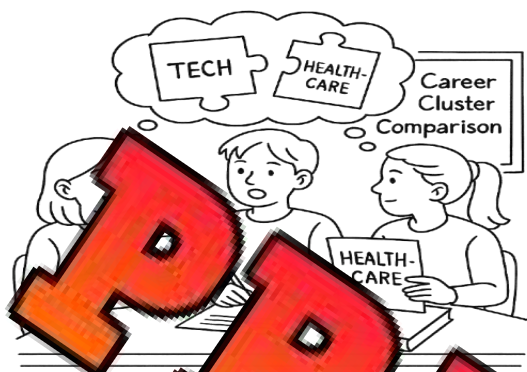
2) Which part of the activity helped you think differently about your future? Why?

3) What surprised you the most about the career connection to your hobby?

4) How can this activity help you make decisions about high school courses or electives?

Newspaper Article: Comparing Career Clusters

Tech vs. Healthcare: Grade 9 Students Weigh Career Futures



Across Canada, Grade 9 students are taking part in a unique activity: comparing two career clusters—Information Technology and Healthcare. Part of a project for the Career Exploration Challenge, students were asked to research, analyze, and compare real data from the Government of Canada Job Bank, including education requirements, key skills, job growth, and salary projections.

At Centennial Middle School in Calgary, students gathered in groups to explore both fields. The findings were eye-opening. Tech careers, like software developers and cybersecurity analysts, can earn between \$65,000 and \$120,000 per year depending on experience and location. Healthcare careers, including registered nurses and respiratory therapists, earn between \$61,000 and \$100,000 annually.

But salary wasn't the only focus. Students compared the years of schooling required for each path. Tech jobs often need a college diploma or university degree in computer science or a related field. Additional certifications, like CompTIA+ or Cisco, are common for advancement.

On the other hand, careers in healthcare require a bachelor's degree in nursing or science, clinical hours, and licensing exams like the NCLEX for nurses. Job growth was another deciding factor. IT jobs are expected to grow by 25% over the next five years due to increasing demand for digital security and artificial intelligence. Meanwhile, healthcare is expanding due to an aging population and rising mental health needs. Over 500,000 new healthcare jobs are predicted to open by 2030 across Canada.

In a class discussion, 14-year-old Maya Liu pointed out the contrast in daily tasks. "IT jobs are usually behind a screen, while healthcare jobs are hands-on and involve direct patient care," she said. "It really depends on what environment you prefer."

Students listed the personal qualities needed for each. Healthcare careers demand strong communication, empathy, problem-solving, and emotional resilience. Tech careers require logical thinking, decision-making, and adaptability to constant change.

Career advisor Mr. De Luca says the comparison helps students understand the match between their interests and the realities of each career. "Students don't always realize how their hobbies—like gaming or helping others—can link to real careers," he explained.

For many Grade 9 students, the activity wasn't just about picking a career—it was about seeing their future more clearly. "I used to think I had to decide now," said student Jordan Fields. "But now I know I can explore, learn, and prepare step by step. It's about finding what fits."

Questions

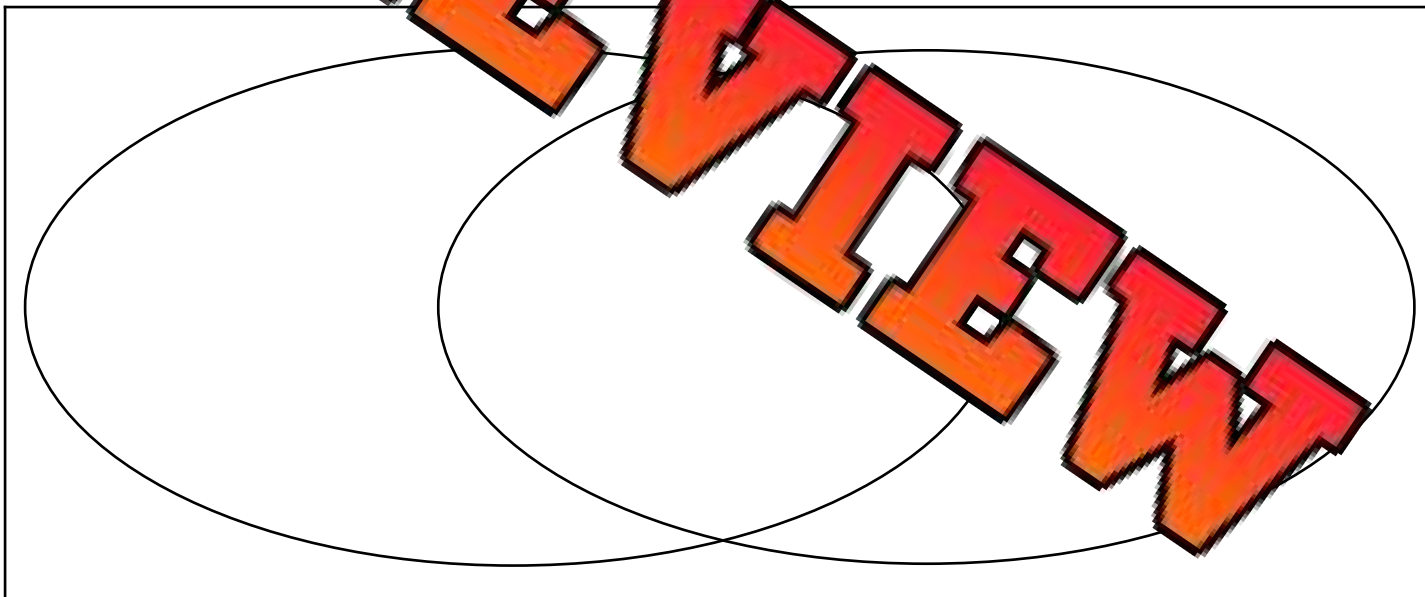
Answer the questions below.

1) How can job growth rates influence your career choice?

2) Why is it useful to compare two career paths?

Venn Diagram

Two careers can be compared by their differences in education, skills, and outlook.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Career clusters group jobs with shared traits..	True	False
2) All careers require the same level of education.	True	False
3) High job growth means fewer available positions.	True	False
4) Soft skills are not important in technical careers.	True	False
5) Salary is one factor when comparing careers.	True	False

Blog Post: Growth Through New Experiences

Why Getting Uncomfortable Can Help You Grow

Date: July 26, 2025

Author: Allison Kramer

4-minute read

Trying something unfamiliar can feel awkward or even scary, especially during the teenage years. Whether it's speaking in front of your class, joining a new group, or applying for a part-time job, these uncomfortable moments often lead to growth. According to the American Psychological Association, personal development is most likely to happen in the "stretch zone"—the area just outside our comfort zone but short of panic. This is where confidence, resilience, and problem-solving abilities are the most. Psychologists believe that teenagers who face small challenges regularly are better prepared for adult responsibilities later in life.

In a University of Chicago study, researchers discovered that students who took part in unfamiliar extracurriculars showed a 25% increase in self-esteem compared to those who stayed in their comfort zones. A survey by the Canadian Mental Health Association revealed that teens who voluntarily took on new experiences were 27% more likely to handle school-related stress effectively.

Growth doesn't require a dramatic leap. It can be as simple as trying a new recipe, asking a question in class, or introducing yourself to a new person. These small steps can lead to better social skills, greater independence, and a stronger sense of self. A 2022 Youth Mental Health Canada report noted that teens who frequently engage in new tasks are 35% more likely to set long-term goals and stick with them. By practising discomfort in small doses, students prepare themselves for real-life challenges in university, the workplace, and relationships. Fear is natural, but it doesn't need to stop you. Success builds confidence, and failure builds experience. The key is showing up, trying, and being willing to step outside your comfort zone today might open doors to new friendships, new opportunities, and even a career path you hadn't imagined.

Till next time,
Allison Kramer

Comments:



Sofia Real July 26, 2025

This blog hit home for me. I joined the track team last year even though I had never run before. Totally agree with the idea that growth happens in discomfort!

Like Reply 10h ago



Mary Johnson | July 26, 2025

I see your point, but I disagree slightly. Some people feel pressured to try new things and it can backfire.

Like Reply 7h ago

True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Trying new things helps build resilience in teens.	True	False
2) Growth only happens after huge life changes.	True	False
3) Fear is a normal part of trying something new.	True	False
4) Self-esteem stays the same when we try new activities.	True	False
5) Students who try new things manage stress better.	True	False

Doodle Text Decorate the word GROWTH in a way that shows what it means to you.



Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) Name one benefit of trying something outside your comfort zone.

2) How does the author suggest we deal with fear?

Activity: Discovering My Growth Zones

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will identify personal activities or experiences and categorize them into three zones—Comfort, Stretch, and Panic—to better understand how different challenges contribute to personal growth, self-confidence, and emotional development.

Materials

What do you need for the activity?

- Printed “Step Into the Stretch” template (as shown above)
- Pencil or pen
- Optional: Coloured pencils or markers

Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Start by thinking of 6 to 9 activities you've done or might do, such as trying a new sport, presenting in class, talking to someone new, or joining a club.
2. Write each activity in the “Activities” table at the bottom of the worksheet.
3. Next, look at the three circles labeled Comfort Zone, Stretch Zone, and Panic Zone and decide how each activity makes you feel right now.
 - If it feels easy and familiar, it belongs in the Comfort Zone.
 - If it feels challenging but possible, it goes in the Stretch Zone.
 - If it feels overwhelming or scary, place it in the Panic Zone.
4. Write or draw each activity in the appropriate part of the target diagram. You may use different colours to show what you've already done vs. what you haven't tried yet.
5. After placing all your activities, take 2 minutes to silently reflect on one activity you'd like to move from the Stretch Zone to your Comfort Zone this year.



Discovering My Growth Zones

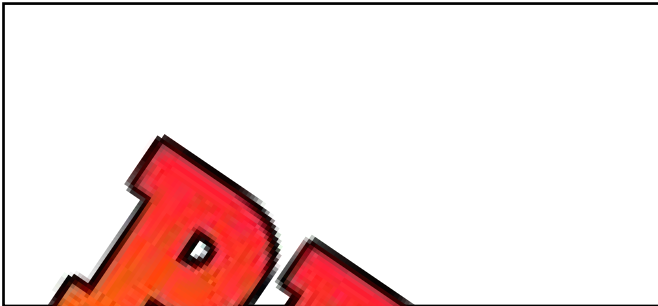


Activities			

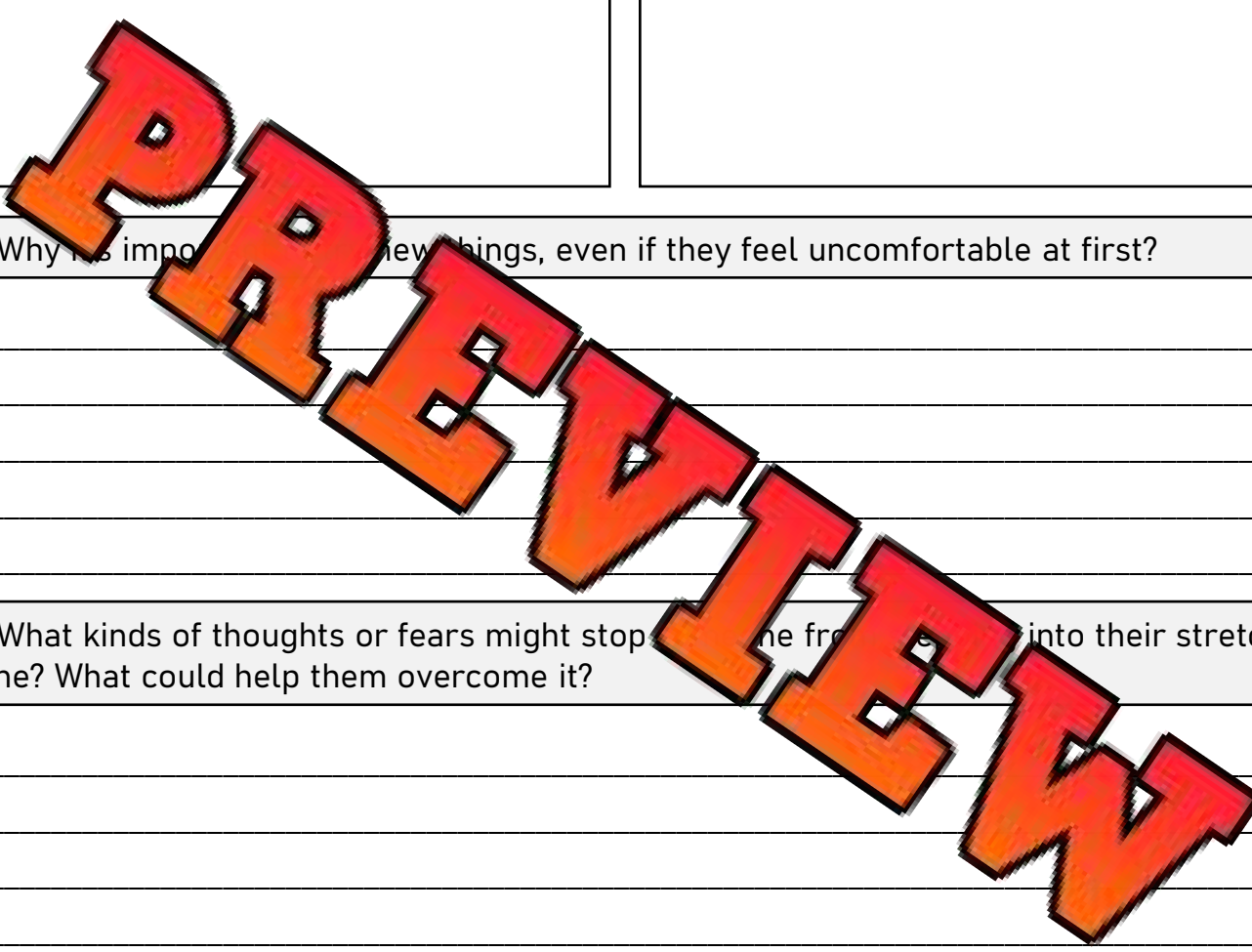
Reflection

Answer the questions below.

1) Draw two emojis that show how you felt before and after trying something outside your comfort zone.



2) Why is it important to try new things, even if they feel uncomfortable at first?



3) What kinds of thoughts or fears might stop someone from getting into their stretch zone? What could help them overcome it?

4) Think of a time when you tried something challenging. How did it help you grow?

Exit Cards

Cut Out Cut out the exit cards below and have students complete them at the end of class.

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

1) Trying new things can help build self-confidence.	True	False
2) Staying in your comfort zone always leads to growth.	True	False
3) Learning from failure is a part of growing.	True	False
4) You must succeed at something for it to help you grow.	True	False

Name: _____

Is the statement true or false?

1) Trying new things can help build self-confidence.	True	False
2) Staying in your comfort zone always leads to growth.	True	False
3) Learning from failure is a part of growing.	True	False
4) You must succeed at something for it to help you grow.	True	False

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3) Learning from failure is a part of growing.	True	False
4) You must succeed at something for it to help you grow.	True	False

Facing Setbacks: Learning, Failing, and Bouncing Back

What Is a Setback and Why Does It Happen?

A setback is something that gets in the way of your progress. For students, setbacks can include getting a bad grade, missing a homework deadline, failing a test, or even struggling with a group project. These moments can feel disappointing or embarrassing, but they are a normal part of learning and growing. According to the Canadian Psychological Association, about 65% of students say they've had at least one academic setback that made them question their abilities. The important part is not the failure—it's what happens next.

Many setbacks happen because of things we can control, like procrastinating or not studying enough. But sometimes, setbacks occur due to circumstances, or unexpected events like illness or family issues. Knowing something happened helps you avoid the same mistake in the future.



How Failure Helps You Grow

Failure can actually help you become a stronger student and a stronger person. When something goes wrong, you have a chance to learn and figure out what you can do differently next time. This builds resilience, which is your ability to bounce back after a challenge. It also teaches responsibility, because you begin to understand how your actions affect your results. In fact, research shows that students who learn from their mistakes improve their performance by up to 30% on future tasks. Failing a test might teach you better study strategies. Missing a deadline might help you manage your time better next time. Every setback is a chance to learn something useful.

Healthy Ways to Respond to Setbacks

When you face a setback, it's important to respond in a healthy and helpful way. Here are some smart strategies students can use:

- Take a break to cool down, especially if you feel upset or embarrassed.
- Talk to someone you trust, like a teacher, friend, or family member.
- Write down what happened and why it happened—this helps you understand the problem.
- Make a new plan, including what you'll try differently next time.
- Set smaller, realistic goals that are easier to manage.
- Celebrate progress, even if it's small.

What Science Says About Mistakes

You may not know this, but your brain actually grows when you make mistakes. A study by Stanford University found that students who viewed mistakes as learning opportunities had higher math and reading scores over time. Mistakes activate the part of your brain called the prefrontal cortex, which is connected to decision-making and problem-solving. This means that failure is not the end—it's the beginning of better thinking.

Everyone faces setbacks, but how you respond can shape your future success in school and beyond.



True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) A setback is always caused by laziness.	True	False
2) Resilience means bouncing back from a challenge.	True	False
3) Deadlines are not a common source of setbacks.	True	False
4) Failure can lead to personal and academic growth.	True	False
5) Avoiding mistakes makes you a better learner.	True	False

Steps to
Bounce Back

For each step, write an action that helps someone recover from failure.

B	
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Questions

Answer the questions below.

1) What are some common setbacks students might experience in school?

2) How can reflecting on failure improve future performance?

Story: My Top 3 Personal Goals

Three Goals and a Deadline

Jaya stared at the wrinkled worksheet on her desk. It read: *"What are your top personal goals this term?"* Around her, classmates were already writing, but her page stayed blank. She had ideas, sure—but turning them into something real felt like a lot. She wasn't even sure where to start. After staring for what felt like forever, she wrote three goals she actually cared about: make the volleyball team, raise her math grade to at least 80%, and save up enough money—\$150—to launch her phone case business.

At first, it felt like a list. But then her homeroom teacher, Mr. Santos, shared something that made her think. "Only three percent of people write down their goals," he said. "But research shows that those who do are ten percent more likely to achieve them. That number stuck with her. Could writing things down make that big a difference?

That evening, she decided to give it a try. She opened her school planner and turned her goals into a weekly plan. Volleyball practice on Mondays and Wednesdays. Math review videos on Thursdays. Babysitting every weekend with earnings going straight into her savings jar. She even created a colour-coded checklist to track her progress. Every time she checked something off, it gave her a tiny boost.

The first volleyball tryout didn't go as planned. She tripped during warm-ups, and her serves hit the net twice. She felt embarrassed and wanted to quit. But when she told her older cousin, they just laughed gently and said, "You're supposed to mess up the first time. That means you're trying." Later, Jaya found a stat from Statistics Canada: students who commit to a goal are 32 percent more likely to succeed in the long run. That helped her push through the tough days. She also reached out to her math teacher, Mr. Aziz, who agreed to tutor her during Thursday lunch hours. Slowly, her quiz scores climbed—from 66 to 74, then to 82. Her math wasn't just working.

Her savings jar grew too. After three weeks, she had \$48 saved. She realized that saving \$10 a week was more realistic than pushing for \$15 and burning out. Mr. Santos reminded the class that goals work best when they are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. By the end of the term, Jaya had made the volleyball team. Her math grade was holding steady at 82 percent. She had \$162 saved—enough to order supplies and test her first three phone case designs.

As she looked at her crumpled, check-marked goal sheet, she smiled. The worksheet that once felt like a chore had quietly become her roadmap. She finally understood goals aren't just wishes.

They're decisions backed by effort, patience, and bounce-back energy. And the best place to start? Putting them down on paper.

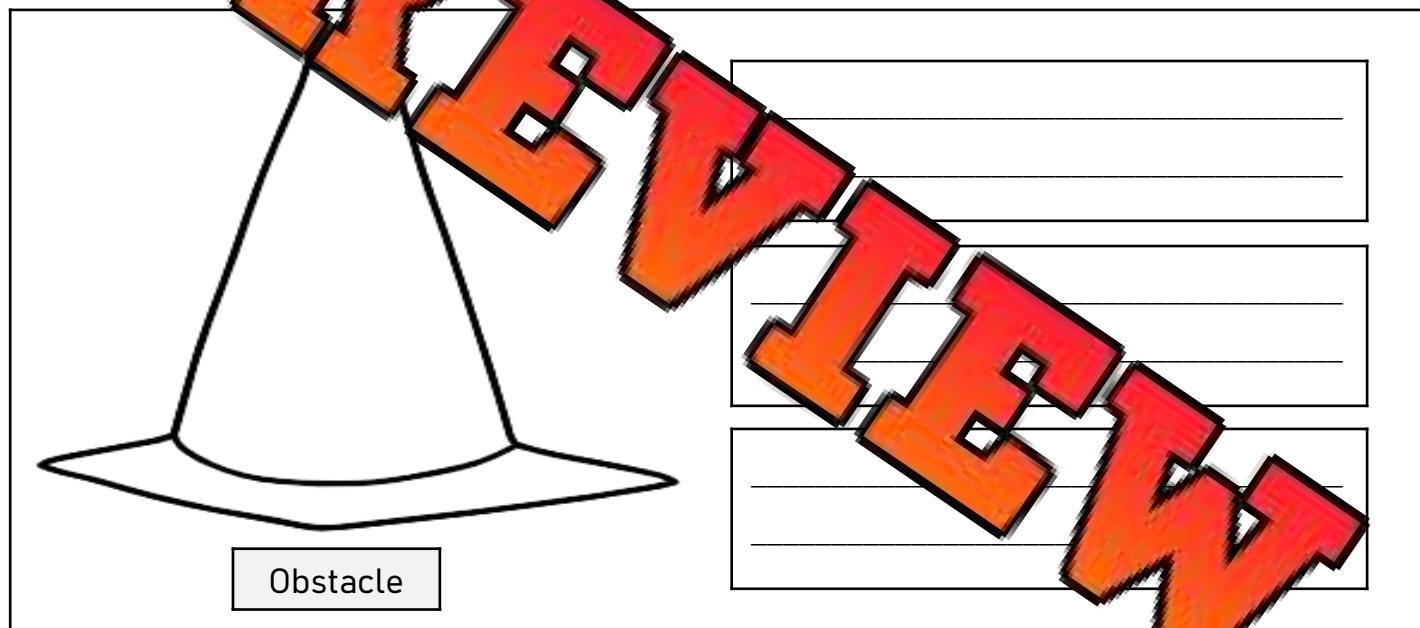


True or False

Is the statement true or false?

1) Writing down goals makes them easier to forget.	True	False
2) Setting a deadline can help track progress.	True	False
3) Goals that matter are often personal and specific.	True	False
4) Having too many goals can feel overwhelming.	True	False
5) Saving _____ can be a goal with a timeline.	True	False

Obstacle _____ that could get in your way when reaching your goal and beside
 Buster _____, write _____ solutions to avoid it.



Obstacle

Question

Why should goals be personal rather than chosen by others?

Creating a Digital Portfolio

Building Your Digital Portfolio

Creating a digital portfolio is like building a showcase of your skills and accomplishments. It's a collection of your best work, achievements, and interests, all organized in one convenient place. Think of it as a dynamic résumé that you can update throughout your school years and beyond. It's a valuable tool that can help you in applying for jobs, scholarships, or even just to reflect on your progress.



Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

- **Shows your best work:** A portfolio lets you highlight your strongest pieces, demonstrating your abilities in a way that a simple grade doesn't.
- **Easily updated and shared:** Unlike a physical portfolio, a digital one is easily updated and shared with potential employers or universities. You can add new projects and achievements as you go.
- **Organizes your work:** It helps you keep track of all your assignments, projects, and accomplishments in one place, making it easier to find what you need when you need it.
- **Demonstrates your skills:** It allows you to showcase a variety of skills, including creativity, problem-solving, and technical abilities, depending on the content you include.
- **Prepares you for the future:** Creating a portfolio helps you develop valuable skills in self-promotion and organization, skills that will serve you throughout your life.

What to Include in Your Digital Portfolio:

- **Academic Work:** Include your best assignments, projects, and papers from various subjects. Choose work that demonstrates your understanding and ability to apply your knowledge.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Showcase your involvement in sports, volunteer work, or other extracurricular activities. Include photos, descriptions, and any awards or recognition you received.
- **Creative Projects:** If you have any creative projects like artwork, writing, music, or coding, this is a great place to share them.
- **Skills and Achievements:** List any special skills you possess, such as proficiency in a particular software, language, or instrument. Include any awards, scholarships, or recognitions you've received.
- **Personal Interests:** Include hobbies or interests that showcase your personality and passions. This can help you stand out and make your portfolio more engaging.

Platforms for Your Digital Portfolio:

- **Google Sites:** Easy to use and free.
- **WordPress:** More customizable but might require some technical knowledge.
- **Canva:** Allows for visually appealing designs. (Many free templates are available!)

Remember, your digital portfolio is a work in progress. Update it regularly to reflect your growth and achievements. It's a valuable asset that will serve you well throughout your education and career.

Activity – My Digital Portfolio: A Sneak Peek

Objective

What are we learning about?

Students will brainstorm and plan the content and structure of their digital portfolios, considering the types of projects and achievements to include, and how to organize them for maximum impact.

Materials

What will you need for the activity?

- The provided worksheet (printed)
- Pens or pencils






Instructions

How will you complete the activity?

1. Carefully review the four sections of the portfolio: "Academic Work," "Extracurriculars & Hobbies," "Skills & Achievements," and "About Me." Consider the purpose of each section.
2. In the "Academic Work" section, list three of your best school projects or assignments. Briefly describe why you selected them (e.g., "Skills & Knowledge do these demonstrate?").
3. In the "Extracurriculars & Hobbies" section, list two extracurricular hobbies you are involved in. Explain how your participation demonstrates skills or qualities relevant to a future employer or university.
4. In the "Skills & Achievements" section, list three skills you possess (e.g., writing, coding, public speaking, teamwork). Provide specific examples demonstrating your proficiency. Record any awards or achievements you've received.
5. In the "About Me" section, write a concise paragraph about yourself, your goals, and why you are creating a digital portfolio. Consider what you want to communicate to someone viewing your portfolio.
6. Once completed, review your entries. Consider how you might visually represent this information in a digital format. Think about the overall impression you want to create.

Activity – My Digital Portfolio: A Sneak Peek

 Academic Work	 Extracurriculars & Hobbies
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
 Skills & Achievements	
1.	
2.	
3.	
<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

PREVIEW

Write

Reflect on today's activity. Use the questions to think about how planning and organizing content affects the overall impact of your digital portfolio.

1. *What was easiest about planning your portfolio? Why?*
2. *What was most challenging? Why?*
3. *How did thinking about visuals affect your content choices?*
4. *Did planning change your view of portfolio organization? Explain.*
5. *How would you improve your "About Me" section?*
6. *What are your next steps in creating your portfolio?*

PREVIEW

Unit Test – Life Learning Choices

Multiple Choice

/10

<p>1. What helps avoid study distractions?</p> <p>a) Phone alerts</p> <p>b) Background videos</p> <p>c) Timed breaks</p> <p>d) Late-night</p>	<p>2. What's in a digital portfolio?</p> <p>a) Games</p> <p>b) Awards</p> <p>c) Old tests</p> <p>d) Notes</p>
<p>3. Why is it useful?</p> <p>a) Fills free time</p> <p>b) Avoids real world</p> <p>c) Follows trends</p> <p>d) Adapts to change</p>	<p>4. Safe way to volunteer?</p> <p>a) Hide plans</p> <p>b) Go solo</p> <p>c) Skip help</p> <p>d) Find a buddy</p>
<p>5. Which is a healthy risk?</p> <p>a) Trying out</p> <p>b) Cheating</p> <p>c) Skipping class</p> <p>d) Lying</p>	<p>6. Why volunteer?</p> <p>a) Popularity</p> <p>b) New stuff</p> <p>c) Get skills</p> <p>d) Avoid taxes</p>
<p>7. Best way to choose courses?</p> <p>a) What friends take</p> <p>b) What's easiest</p> <p>c) Match goals</p> <p>d) Avoid homework</p>	<p>8. What changes in high school?</p> <p>a) Fewer courses</p> <p>b) More options</p> <p>c) Less choice</p> <p>d) No planning</p>
<p>9. What belongs in a résumé?</p> <p>a) Hobbies only</p> <p>b) Grades and roles</p> <p>c) Social media</p> <p>d) Slogans</p>	<p>10. How to beat procrastination?</p> <p>a) Delay it</p> <p>b) Do other tasks</p> <p>c) Wait for mood</p> <p>d) Break jobs into steps</p>

Table Completion

Complete the table below.

Your Hobbies or Interests	Career Areas You're Curious About	How This Interest Could Lead to a Job
1.		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2.		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3.		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Identify

Circle YES if the action shows how interests relate to careers.
Circle NO if it does not.

1. Turning a hobby into a side business.	YES	NO
2) Ignoring hobbies when choosing courses.	YES	NO
3) Exploring jobs connected to your interests.	YES	NO
4) Choosing a job only for money	YES	NO
5) Asking how your hobbies connect to careers.	YES	NO
6) Avoiding classes linked to your interests.	YES	NO
7) Joining a club to build hobby-related skills.	YES	NO
8) Practising your hobby with a career in mind.	YES	NO
9) Refusing to try new interests.	YES	NO
10) Researching training options for your hobbies.	YES	NO

Long Answer

Answer the questions below.

1) List three healthy risks someone your age could take to grow confidence. Explain how each risk might help you become more responsible or prepare for future changes.

2) Give three situations where you took (or could take) a safe choice. How might these choices help you grow, even if they feel scary at first?