

STANDING TALL:

Learning Assertiveness Skills

STANDING TALL:
LEARNING ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS

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TEACHER'S RESOURCE BOOK

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STANDING TALL: LEARNING ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS

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Teasing, bullying, peer pressure... these behaviors are challenging for all middle school kids to contend with—and can be especially difficult for shy students. How should kids respond when bullies, cliques and even their own friends make them feel bad or treat them disrespectfully? The answer is, they must learn how to be assertive. Unfortunately, many kids don't understand what assertiveness is, or how it differs from the aggressive behavior that other people may be displaying toward them. Or they may have the mistaken notion that displaying a passive attitude will help them in dealing with conflicts. In reality, remaining passive often makes the situation worse.

When teens don't stand up for themselves—when they are non-assertive or passive—they often allow others to determine what happens in their lives. The realization that this is happening can make them angry or depressed; it can produce feelings of helplessness and low self-esteem. In the opposite situation, kids may go too far in asserting themselves, to the point where they trample on the rights of others and show no respect for other people. While they may get their way by humiliating the other person, they will often lose that person's respect and inevitably will cause significant harm to the relationship.

Assertiveness can be defined as a way of thinking and behaving that allows a person to stand up for his or her rights while respecting the rights of others. It involves expressing one's thoughts and feelings in an honest and appropriate way and trying to create a “win-win” situation in which the needs of both parties are met. Assertive behavior shows that we respect ourselves as well as others. This, in turn, causes others to respect us. Assertiveness promotes self-control, self-confidence and positive feelings of self-worth.

To be sure, children are not born assertive. It is a skill which must be learned, especially by non-assertive people. To become more assertive, people must first realize that they have the right to see that their own needs are met in life. They need to learn and practice assertive thinking and behavior. When done in a supportive atmosphere, among people they trust, young people can acquire the skills of assertiveness and, in many cases, develop a whole new outlook on life.

The program *Standing Tall: Learning Assertiveness Skills* was created to help young people understand what constitutes assertive behavior, and why such behavior is necessary in order to foster and maintain healthy relationships. The video and activities in this Teacher's Resource Book will help students evaluate their assertiveness skills and learn ways to develop and improve them. Students are also asked to consider the extended outcomes of being non-assertive—passive or aggressive—including lack of self-esteem, guilt, shyness and inability to establish solid friendships. The program encourages young people to assess their relationships and their behavior toward others. In this way they are not only educated about the benefits of assertiveness, but also motivated to learn assertiveness skills and put them into practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After watching the video *Standing Tall: Learning Assertiveness Skills* and participating in the class activities included in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- understand the meaning of assertiveness
- know the difference between being assertive and being passive or aggressive
- understand the advantages of using assertive behavior
- recognize that assertiveness skills can be learned
- examine their own assertiveness skills
- practice developing assertive skills
- understand the necessity of respecting the needs and feelings of others while being assertive
- learn the importance of body language
- practice body language techniques
- identify situations which call for assertive behavior

Standing Tall: Learning Assertiveness Skills opens with a series of clips showing teens insulting one another: “That’s a dumb idea,” “Your hair is too long,” “You’re a jerk” and more. Two teen hosts appear on-screen after this montage. They ask why some people think that it’s okay to be so disrespectful, especially since insulting language can really hurt. They tell viewers that they can learn how to shut down disrespectful behavior and make others treat them with respect and consideration. This is called being assertive, and it’s a skill that anyone can learn.

The hosts introduce Naomi Drew, an expert in conflict resolution, who acknowledges that teens often get picked on for all sorts of things—being too short, too tall, too stylish, not stylish enough, being gay or being handicapped. She says that it’s important for kids to stand up for themselves. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Naomi Drew and the teen hosts discuss what it means to be assertive: speaking your mind in a way that is firm but not aggressive, standing up for your needs while still respecting the needs of others, and being able to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner.

The video, which will ultimately highlight six young people struggling with assertiveness issues, next introduces each of the teens to viewers. Each teen makes a statement about his or her unique problem.

The first teen profile begins with an off-screen narrator introducing the teen as if he were on trial: “*Defendant is accused of listening to the wrong music and wearing weird clothes.*” Alex tells his story to viewers. He recognizes that he’s not assertive and that he wants everyone to like him. He admits that it can be hard for him to say no to his peers. One day some friends started teasing him about the music he was listening to and asked to borrow his CD player. Alex reluctantly handed it over. The kids started tossing the CD player back and forth until it broke. Alex ends his narrative by saying that people like that are so intimidating, and have so much power, that it starts to chip away at your pride—you want to react violently, even hurt them, but you know this would be wrong.

At this point the hosts appear on-screen to discuss Alex’s problem. They talk about the differences between being assertive, aggressive, and passive. They point out that Alex’s reaction to the situation was a passive one.

A second teen profile follows: “*Defendant is accused of avoiding a potentially dangerous situation.*” Tiffany relates the story of how she and her friends were having a lot of fun at a block party until some older boys started to bother them. The boys wanted to know where they lived and kept inviting them to come with them and have a drink. Tiffany was nervous because the boys were bigger and stronger and she didn’t know what might happen. Her friends considered going with the boys, but Tiffany stood her ground. She called her mom to come and pick her up. “You always have to stand up for yourself,” she said, “or things can get out of hand.”

The hosts ask viewers to decide whether they think that Tiffany was being passive, aggressive or assertive. Her response was clearly a healthy, assertive one. The hosts also ask viewers, “Are you assertive?” Three questions appear on-screen. Viewers are invited to take a break to discuss their answers to these questions:

When you disagree with someone, are you able to speak up and share your own point of view?

Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests made by your friends?

When you have a disagreement, do you try to find a solution that works for everyone?

When the video resumes, the hosts explain that anyone who answered “no” to any of the three questions needs to learn how to be more assertive. There are six specific tips that young people can use to develop assertiveness.

TIP 1: CHILL OUT

Calm down, take a deep breath, and walk away if necessary. Think of someone you admire for being assertive and ask yourself how that person would react. Viewers hear from Naomi Drew, who says that the person she thinks of as a model of assertiveness is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

TIP 2: CHOOSE SMART WORDS

Respond respectfully and use “I” statements instead of “you” statements in order to explain how you feel rather than putting the blame on someone else. Naomi Drew explains the difference between “I” and “you” statements and gives specific examples.

At this point, another teen profile is introduced by the narrator: “*Defendant is accused of having a mole on her lips.*” A girl tells how she has been tormented by others because of a mole on her lip. When she was onstage in a school play she heard kids laughing at her and almost ran off the stage. Another girl asked her about her disfigurement in front of a group of teens and everyone thought it was funny. Finally she told the girl how much the remark had hurt her, and the girl apologized. The host reminds viewers that the girl’s response was an assertive one, because she relied upon an “I” statement to express herself.

TIP 3: PLEASE DON’T SCREAM

Choose your tone of voice carefully. A firm, steady tone gives the other person an incentive to listen. Naomi Drew comments on this point.

The fourth teen profile begins with these words: *“Defendant is accused of being a loser.”* Viewers hear from Vinny, who recalls how he was heading home when he met some of his friends who were smoking pot. When they asked him to join them, Vinny said no. His friends started making fun of him, calling him a loser. Instead of getting rattled, Vinny remained calm, told them he didn’t agree with what they were doing, and went on his way. “I think I was very assertive,” he says. “I was confident in my decision and I went through with it.” The hosts remind viewers that Vinny did well by using a calm and assertive voice.

TIP 4: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Assertiveness is a skill like any other—the more you practice, the easier it becomes. Naomi Drew discusses ways in which assertive behavior can be practiced.

The fifth profile is identified in this way: *“Defendant is accused of being too skinny.”* Casey remembers how a mysterious stomach ailment caused her to lose a great deal of weight. Some of her classmates began spreading rumors that she was anorexic. She went to six doctors until she was finally diagnosed with an allergy to wheat and other grains. In the meantime, a group of Casey’s peers continued to make fun of her and even resorted to crank phone calls to her parents. When Casey finally started gaining back the weight she lost, she began standing up for herself and telling her classmates how much their rumors had hurt her. “Dealing with a problem makes you feel better about yourself,” she says. The hosts reiterate that practicing assertiveness over and over will help to improve this skill.

TIP 5: STAND TALL

Viewers are told that body language often plays a role in showing assertiveness. Naomi Drew discusses what body language means, and gives specific examples. The right demeanor, facial expressions, eye contact and posture can help to project a sense of power. Assertive body language can be practiced at home. It’s important to look strong but not aggressive, mean, or scared.

The video’s final teen profile comes next: *“Defendant is accused of wearing ugly shoes.”* Andrew recalls the way that he was mocked for wearing strange-looking shoes. He was often the target of a bully who called him ugly and even physically intimidated him. Although he wanted to tell the bully to stop, he couldn’t find the courage. After talking to his parents and a guidance counselor, he was able to start ignoring the bully. Ultimately he was able to confront him and ask why he was being so mean. After he spoke up for himself and used assertive body language, he felt better. Gradually the bullying stopped. The hosts reiterate the benefits of “standing tall” and using assertive body language.

The video is paused again so that viewers can discuss the points that have been made.

TIP 6: FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT

Naomi Drew points out that trying to be assertive may make you nervous at first, but if you just persevere you will eventually become comfortable with it. The secret is to just keep trying.

The hosts return on-screen to summarize the six tips for being assertive:

1. Chill out.
2. Choose smart words.
3. Don't scream or start a shouting match.
4. Practice, practice, practice.
5. Stand tall and use proper body language.
6. Fake it till you make it.

As the program draws to a close, the hosts remind viewers, "You have the right and the responsibility to stand up for yourself."

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: _____

Pre/Post Test

Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. TRUE or FALSE: Being assertive is a sure way to make yourself unpopular. _____
2. TRUE or FALSE: Going along with your friends when you don't really want to shows a lack of assertiveness. _____
3. TRUE or FALSE: Trying to please everyone is a good way to make people like you. _____
4. TRUE or FALSE: People who insult you are just trying to gain your respect. _____
5. TRUE or FALSE: Assertiveness is something that can be learned. _____
6. TRUE or FALSE: Telling an adult that you are being bullied is a sign of weakness. _____
7. TRUE or FALSE: Shouting at someone is not a sign of assertiveness. _____
8. TRUE or FALSE: A passive person gives the impression that he has low self-esteem. _____
9. TRUE or FALSE: "Aggressive" and "assertive" mean the same thing. _____
10. TRUE or FALSE: If you don't feel comfortable standing up for yourself, you should keep trying until you do. _____

Answers to this test appear on the next page.

Name: _____

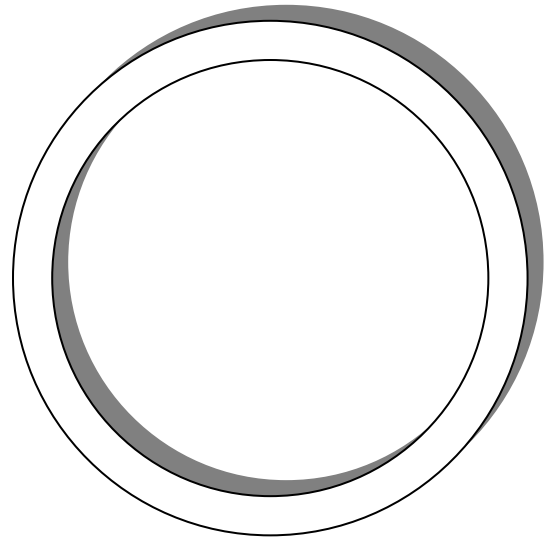
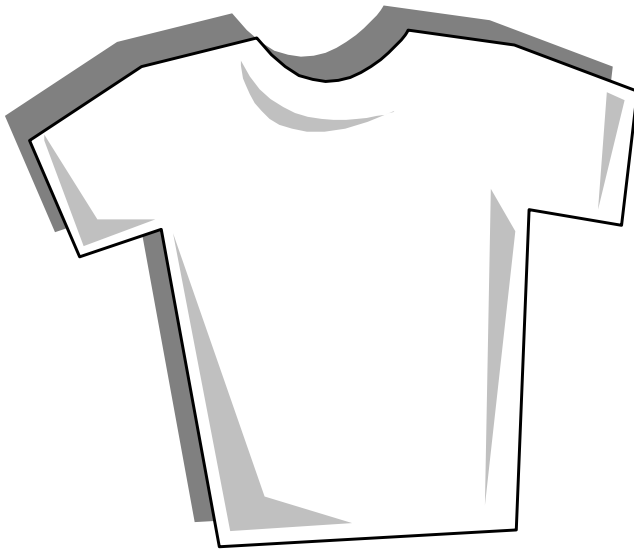
ANSWER KEY

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 1. | TRUE or FALSE: Being assertive is a sure way to make yourself unpopular. | FALSE |
| 2. | TRUE or FALSE: Going along with your friends when you don't really want to shows a lack of assertiveness. | TRUE |
| 3. | TRUE or FALSE: Trying to please everyone is a good way to make people like you. | FALSE |
| 4. | TRUE or FALSE: People who insult you are just trying to gain your respect. | FALSE |
| 5. | TRUE or FALSE: Assertiveness is something that can be learned. | TRUE |
| 6. | TRUE or FALSE: Telling an adult that you are being bullied is a sign of weakness. | FALSE |
| 7. | TRUE or FALSE: Shouting at someone is not a sign of assertiveness. | TRUE |
| 8. | TRUE or FALSE: A passive person gives the impression that he has low self-esteem. | TRUE |
| 9. | TRUE or FALSE: "Aggressive" and "assertive" mean the same thing. | FALSE |
| 10. | TRUE or FALSE: If you don't feel comfortable standing up for yourself, you should keep trying until you do. | TRUE |

Name: _____

Bumper stickers, tee shirts, buttons, posters—these are some of the things that people use to tell people how they feel about something. In the space below, design a tee shirt, a button, a bumper sticker or a poster that stresses the importance of being assertive. If you need more room, use the back of this page.

Use the graphics below to get you started. When you're satisfied with your design, you can create the final version on a real tee shirt, bumper sticker or button.



Name: _____

PART ONE: Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter writing an article about the importance of being assertive. Interview an older friend or family member about some problem they had in the past because they did not know how to stand up for themselves. Find out what they did to solve the problem. Think of five questions to ask the person, and write them in the boxes below. Use the space below each question to write the person's answer. If you need more space, use the back of this sheet.

Question 1:

Question 2:

Question 3:

Question 4:

Question 5:

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

Choose one of the writing assignments from the list below. Be sure that your written work shows what you have learned about standing up for yourself and being assertive.

1. Write a poem about someone who doesn't know how to stand up for himself/herself.
2. Think of an idea for a short story on assertiveness. Write a brief synopsis of the story plot. Then write the first and last paragraphs of your story.
3. Create a comic strip or cartoon about assertiveness. Draw a series of pictures that show an incident unfolding. Write what the characters in each drawing are saying.
4. Think about a friend, either real or imaginary, who doesn't seem to know the difference between being aggressive and being assertive. You'd like to talk to your friend about it, but you don't want to make her angry. Write a script of the conversation that you would like to have with your friend.
5. Write a page in your diary or journal about an incident in which your friends made a decision about prom night and did not ask you for your opinions or input. Your feelings were hurt but you went along with their plan, and felt resentful all night.

Name: _____

PART ONE: Using a dictionary, look up the definitions of the words ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE and PASSIVE. Write the definition of each word in the space below.

Assertive:

Aggressive:

Passive:

PART TWO: Now apply these definitions to people. Write a brief personality profile of each of the following people by listing adjectives to describe their likes and dislikes, thoughts and feelings, actions toward others, etc. If you wish, you may draw a picture of what you think each person looks like.

Gretchen (an assertive person)	Gordon (an aggressive person)	Gail (a passive person)

PART THREE: Imagine that Gretchen, Gordon and Gail are standing on a street corner in the rain, waiting for the light to change. A teenage driver screeches to a stop at the corner, hitting a puddle and drenching all three of them. Describe how each person probably reacted, based on their personality profile:

Gretchen:

Gordon:

Gail:

Name: _____

For each statement, indicate whether you agree or disagree by putting a check in the appropriate column. If you really don't know what to think, check the third column.

	I AGREE	I DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW
1. Assertive persons have more self-confidence and greater self-esteem.			
2. Being assertive means putting other people's needs ahead of your own.			
3. If someone deliberately trips you, you should assert yourself by fighting back.			
4. An assertive person respects others as much as he respects himself.			
5. People who are truly assertive will never ask another person for help in any situation.			
6. When two friends have a disagreement, the assertive one is the one who keeps quiet and lets the other talk.			
7. You can accept positive criticism and suggestions while still maintaining your assertiveness.			
8. An assertive person tries to solve a problem in a way that will benefit everyone involved.			
9. If a friend teases you because you don't smoke, the best way to assert yourself is to tell his parents.			
10. Being assertive has nothing to do with being happy.			

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: For each statement above, students with opposing viewpoints can debate the issue.

The Answer Key for this activity appears on the next page.

Name: _____

ANSWER KEY

Check your answers against this answer key. How many did you answer correctly? Think about any statements you did not answer correctly. What do your answers tell you about your own ability to stand tall?

	I AGREE	I DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW
1. Assertive persons have more self-confidence and greater self-esteem.	✓		
2. Being assertive means putting other people's needs ahead of your own.		✓	
3. If someone deliberately trips you, you should assert yourself by fighting back.		✓	
4. An assertive person respects others as much as he respects himself.	✓		
5. People who are truly assertive will never ask another person for help in any situation.		✓	
6. When two friends have a disagreement, the assertive one is the one who keeps quiet and lets the other talk.		✓	
7. You can accept positive criticism and suggestions while still maintaining your assertiveness.	✓		
8. An assertive person tries to solve a problem in a way that will benefit everyone involved.	✓		
9. If a friend teases you because you don't smoke, the best way to assert yourself is to tell his parents.		✓	
10. Being assertive has nothing to do with being happy.		✓	

Name: _____

ASSERTIVENESS DIARY

Every day of our lives, we interact with other people. They may be friends, family, strangers, schoolmates, neighbors, teachers or store owners—people are everywhere in our lives. We get along with others by respecting them, and by insisting that they respect us. Sometimes, in order to keep this balance in our lives, we have to assert ourselves when someone doesn't show respect for us.

In the diary below, record each act of assertiveness you perform in one week. Learn to pay attention to the small things that happen during your day, and how you respond to them. Try to think of at least one assertive thing you do each day. In the column for that day, describe the situation that called for assertiveness and tell how you responded to it, and how it made you feel. If you need more space, use the back of this sheet. (NOTE: You may also list times when you were not as assertive as you could be. Put a star next to these, and note how you might be able to do better next time.)

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7

At the end of the week, describe how you feel. Did it make you feel better to focus on asserting your own needs and wants? Did you accomplish this without hurting anyone else? Explain.

Name: _____

Choose one of the following three scenarios involving an imaginary friend who finds it hard to be assertive. On the back of this page, write a letter to your friend containing advice on how to handle the situation without being hurt or taken advantage of.

Scenario One—Your friend Kyle loves to play soccer and recently joined the neighborhood soccer team. None of the kids on the team seem to like Kyle and they are making his life miserable. They deliberately kick the ball out of his reach so it looks like he can't get to it. One day someone kicked the ball and hit Kyle with it. They won't talk to him, either on the field or off. Kyle doesn't understand why they're treating him this way, and he's very unhappy.

Scenario Two—Kelly's grandmother lives with her and her family. She's very old, doesn't remember things too well, and sometimes she gets very confused when people talk to her. Kelly takes her grandma for a walk every day, holding her hand and pointing out the things they see along the way. One day they met a classmate of Kelly's named Ralph. Kelly tried to introduce him to her grandma, but the woman didn't understand what she was trying to tell her. Ralph snickered and walked away. The next day in school, Kelly ran into Ralph. "Well, if it isn't the little nursemaid," he said. "Which one of you is the crazy one, anyway?" Kelly fought back the tears and walked away. Now Ralph teases her every time he sees her, and she hates to go to school.

Scenario Three—Dylan's dad has a very expensive computer in his home office. Dylan and his brothers know that they are not allowed to touch it. One day Dylan came home just as his brother Max and two friends were coming out of dad's office. "Keep your mouth shut," Max warned Dylan as the boys ran out. Dylan peeked in and saw the computer turned on. As he was trying to decide whether or not to turn the machine off, his father came in. He blamed Dylan for playing with the computer and grounded him for a week. Max thinks it's funny and won't admit to his father that he was the culprit. Dylan is really angry because the whole thing is so unfair.

Name: _____

ASSERTIVENESS SELF-TEST

Do you think you're assertive but you're not quite sure? Here's a simple test you can give yourself to find out where you stand when it comes to standing up for yourself. Answer each question by checking either YES or NO.

	YES	NO
1. Do you readily accept positive criticism and suggestion?		
2. Do you express your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a direct and honest way?		
3. Do you ask for assistance when you need it?		
4. Do you usually have confidence in your own judgment?		
5. If someone else has a different solution to a problem, do you accept it easily?		
6. Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests made by friends or schoolmates?		
7. When you differ with someone you respect, are you able to speak up and share your own viewpoint?		
8. Do you try to work out solutions that benefit all parties as much as possible?		
9. Would you speak up to an adult if you thought he/she was treating you unfairly?		
10. Do you try to treat everyone with respect, including people who hurt you or make you angry?		

How did you score?

Give yourself 10 points for every question you answered "yes." Then rate yourself as follows:

If your score is 90 or more, congratulate yourself for being an assertive person.

If your score is 70-80, you could use some improvement but things aren't that bad.

If your score is 50-60, it's likely that sometimes you let people walk all over you.

If your score is 30-40, you might as well wear a sign that says "Kick me."

If your score is less than 30, it's time to get some serious help.

Name: _____

Choose one or more of the following situations for role playing with another class member.

1. Your sister is always borrowing your clothes without asking. You don't want to seem selfish by asking her to stop, but you really think she should at least ask you first. Besides, she's very sloppy and never takes care of anything. One day you see her walking in the door wearing one of your good sweaters and there's mud all over one of the sleeves. You are really mad.
2. You and your friend get a job delivering flyers for the local supermarket. Your boss tells you he'll pay you according to the number of flyers you can deliver each day. When pay day comes you find out that the boss is paying your friend more than he is paying you for the same amount of work.
3. You and your family came to America from China and you are working hard to improve your English. Someone in school keeps writing mean jokes about your accent on your locker door, and this upsets you a lot. One day you come back from class early and catch the guy scribbling on your locker.
4. There's a movie in town that you want to see, and your friend says he wants to go with you. He has a reputation for being late all the time, so you tell him to make sure he gets to the theater by 2:45. He doesn't show up until 3 o'clock, the movie has started and all the seats are sold out.
5. Every time your class has a test, the guy sitting next to you tries to look over at your answers. Whenever you notice it you try to turn your paper so he can't see it. One day, after a math test, the teacher asks you both to stay. He tells you that he knows you were cheating together, that it wasn't the first time, and that if he catches you again he will fail both of you.

Name: _____

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE

For each situation described below, decide whether the main character was being passive, aggressive, or assertive. Place a check in the box next to your choice.

1. Frannie was watching a TV show as part of a social studies assignment. Her brother walked in, picked up the remote and changed the channel. “Hey, I was watching something!” Frannie said. “Forget it,” said her brother. “The World Series starts today.” Frannie was so angry that she grabbed the remote, turned off the TV, and flung the remote into the other room.

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE

2. Gene was a very good student and got high marks on every test. At the end of the term he got an award for having the highest average in the 7th grade. When he walked up to accept the award, a group of his friends booed loudly. Gene pretended to ignore them but his feelings were hurt. Afterward he walked over to them and said, “Listen, I didn’t deserve that. I got good marks because I work real hard in school. Maybe if you did the same thing you’d be getting an award instead of me.”

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE

3. Tina and Jackie had been friends for a long time and got along really well. One Friday, Tina saw Jackie in the cafeteria and started to sit down at her table. To her surprise, Jackie jumped up, grabbed her books and angrily stormed off. Tina was puzzled and hurt by this, and felt really upset all weekend.

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE

4. Luisa always dressed more conservatively than the other girls. Her pants were not as tight, her skirts were not as short, and her tops were not as revealing. One day her friend Connie said to her, “Wow, you really look like a freak! Where did you get that ridiculous outfit?” Luisa replied, “What’s wrong with it? I think I look pretty nice.” Connie said, “You look like your grandmother. Why do you always have to wear such frumpy clothes?” Luisa said, “Because I like them, and I certainly wouldn’t take your advice on clothes—all you want to do is look like everyone else.”

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE

5. Grady’s friend Al had one annoying fault—he was always trying to borrow money. Whenever Al had that “I’m broke” look on his face, Grady tried to avoid him. But one day Al cornered Grady in the hall and asked if he could borrow five dollars. Grady replied, “Sorry, man, but I’m saving to buy my sister a graduation present.” Al looked really upset. “C’mon,” he said. “I borrowed five dollars from my dad and promised I’d give it back today. If I don’t come up with the money I’ll be grounded for being irresponsible.” Grady felt sorry for Al and gave him the money.

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE

6. Phil went over to Greg’s house without calling beforehand. No one answered the doorbell so he went around to the back. Greg was in the yard, smoking a cigarette. “Are you crazy?” said Phil. “Your parents will kill you!” Greg looked embarrassed. “Aw, I just wanted to see what it was like. Here—want to try it?” Phil was furious. He shouted, “You’re an idiot, and I don’t hang around with idiots,” and stormed out of the yard.

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE

The Answer Key for this activity is provided on the next page.

Name: _____

ANSWER KEY

1. AGGRESSIVE
2. ASSERTIVE
3. PASSIVE
4. ASSERTIVE
5. PASSIVE
6. AGGRESSIVE

Name: _____

ARE YOU ASSERTIVE?

Assertiveness is the ability to express your wishes, beliefs, and rights in a positive way, without violating the rights of others. Too little assertiveness can allow people to step all over you. Too much assertiveness can make you come across as bossy, mean and aggressive.

PART ONE: Think of a time when you were “stepped on” by someone else.

What happened?	
What did you do?	
How did you feel afterward?	

Now, think of a better way to handle that situation. Write what you plan to do if the same thing happens in the future.

PART TWO: Think of a time when you were too bossy or disrespectful to someone.

What happened?	
What did you do?	
How did you feel afterward?	

Now, think of a better way to handle that situation. Write what you plan to do if the same thing happens in the future.

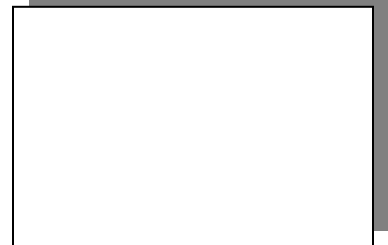
Name: _____

PART ONE: Body language can play a huge role in telling others how you feel about yourself and about what you are saying. Read the descriptions below and write what you think each person's body language means. Keep in mind that there might be more than one meaning. In the box next to each description, draw the character in each situation.

1. A person who slouches or keeps his head down while speaking is showing you that...



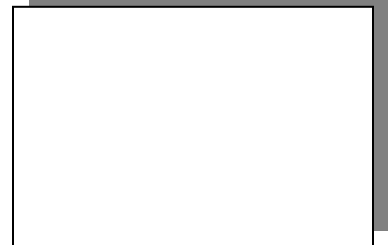
2. A person who shouts at you is showing you that...



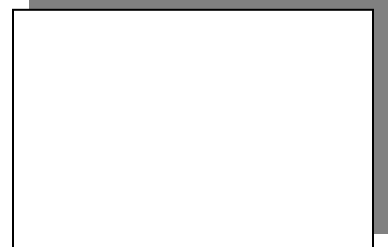
3. A person whose face is relaxed while speaking to you is showing you that...



4. A person who clenches his teeth while speaking to you is showing you that...



5. A person who is standing straight with his shoulders relaxed is showing you that...



This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

6. A person who won't look you in the eye when he speaks is you showing that...

7. A person who speaks to you in a normal tone is showing you that...

8. A person who has his hands on his hips while speaking to you is showing you that...

9. A person who points a finger at you while speaking is showing you that...

PART TWO: After you have finished, compare your answers and drawings with your classmates. Did you all have the same opinions about what the characters' body language meant? What does this tell you about how different people react to body language? What do you think your body language tells others about YOU?

FACT SHEETS

Assertiveness IS:

Expressing your thoughts and feelings in an honest, direct and appropriate way.

Keeping your angry feelings to yourself usually doesn't solve a problem; but there's a right and wrong way to tell someone how you feel.

Showing respect for others as well as for yourself.

Treating others the way you would like to be treated is always a safe way to go.

Working toward a "win-win" situation in which the needs of both parties are met.

Try to work things out in a way that satisfies the other person, too, and doesn't make him feel like he has been stepped on.

Assertiveness ISN'T:

Expressing thoughts and feelings in an inappropriate way that violates the rights of others.

Shouting, threatening, name-calling, and trying to intimidate someone are not appropriate ways to express your feelings.

Putting one's wants and needs above those of others.

The fact that you feel you deserve something doesn't mean that someone else is not deserving as well.

Allowing others to violate your rights.

This communicates the message that you feel inferior and believe that your own needs are not important.

Trying to get your way by not allowing others a choice.

Using physical force, or threatening someone with harm, is not assertive behavior and will not earn you anyone's respect.

Name: _____

There are many advantages to behaving assertively. Here are a few of them:

1.
You have a better chance of getting what you want.
2.
Nobody's feelings are hurt.
3.
Your self-confidence and feelings of self-worth are enhanced.
4.
You feel that you are in control of your own life.
5.
Your needs, wants and feelings are understood.
6.
Both parties feel respected and heard.
7.
Your relationships/friendships are strengthened.
8.
You experience fewer conflicts and arguments.
9.
Acting assertively will generally gain you the respect of your peers and friends.
10.
You gain a deeper understanding of human behavior and how to deal with different types of personalities.
11.
Your decision-making ability will improve.
12.
You will have a better chance of fulfilling your goals and getting what you want out of life.

Name: _____

Don't exaggerate

For example—

“I've told you the same thing 50 times.” (Aggressive)

“I've told you before that I don't like this.” (Assertive)

Use “I” statements, not “you” statements

For example—

“You're a liar and you know it.” (Aggressive)

“I really don't like it when you lie to me.” (Assertive)

Use facts, not judgments

For example—

“You're a real wimp.” (Aggressive)

“You never seem to stand up for yourself.” (Assertive)

Express your own thoughts, feelings and opinions in a way that reflects ownership

For example—

“He makes me angry when he shows off.” (Denies ownership of feelings)

“I get angry when he shows off” (Assertive and owns feelings)

If all else fails...

Tell the person you'll discuss the matter another time, and walk away.

Name: _____

You need to be assertive when...

Someone is teasing you

Do you speak with an accent or wear glasses? Are you very short or overweight? No one has the right to make fun of you for these things.

A bully is picking on you

Does that big kid on the soccer team think it's funny to trip you when nobody's watching? Are you actually afraid of him? Well, he's not going to stop unless you stand up for yourself.

You are being pressured to do something you don't want to do

Do you hate to go to parties because your friends keep trying to make you try cigarettes? It's time to get them off your back, once and for all.

Someone shows a lack of respect for you and for your feelings

How would you feel if someone you think of as a friend had a party and didn't invite you? Is there anything you can do about it?

You are being accused of something you didn't do

If someone in your class took money out of the teacher's drawer and said she saw you do it, would you sit back and take the blame?

You feel that you are being treated unfairly

What would you do if you babysat for some friends of your parents, and later found out that they paid you less than their regular babysitter? Does it take more nerve to be assertive with adults?

Name: _____

“Body language” is a way of describing how our bodies move or stand, and the impression that our movement gives to other people. It’s often seen as a way of talking without saying a word. Your body language can tell people a lot about what you are thinking and feeling.

ASSERTIVE BODY LANGUAGE

- Looking the person in the eye
- Holding your body upright
- Relaxing your shoulders
- Breathing normally
- Keeping your face relaxed
- Speaking in a normal tone—not yelling or whispering

AGGRESSIVE BODY LANGUAGE

- Shouting
- Taking a menacing stance, such as spreading your legs or clenching your fists
- Tensing your shoulders and the rest of your body
- Glaring at the person, narrowing your eyes, sneering
- Breathing deeply or gasping for breath
- Pointing your finger at the person

PASSIVE BODY LANGUAGE

- Avoiding eye contact
- Hanging your head or looking at the floor
- Speaking in a whisper or a very low tone
- Slouching; allowing your shoulders to slump
- Crying

Name: _____

Before you can be comfortable expressing your needs, you must believe that you have a right to have those needs. Keep in mind that you have the following rights.

- The right to your own values, beliefs, opinions, and emotions—and the right to respect yourself for them, regardless of what others think.
- The right to pursue your own goals and dreams and establish your own priorities.
- The right to tell others how you wish to be treated.
- The right to say “No,” “I don’t know,” “I don’t understand,” or “I don’t care.” You have the right to take the time you need to formulate your ideas before expressing them.
- The right to ask for information or help, without having negative feelings about your needs.
- The right to change your mind, to make mistakes, and to sometimes act illogically—and the willingness to accept the consequences.
- The right to like yourself even though you’re not perfect.
- The right to have positive relationships in which you feel comfortable, and the right to change or end relationships if they don’t meet your needs.

Name: _____

This is a profile of an assertive person:

The assertive person feels free to make choices, and is not afraid to say no.

The assertive person takes responsibility for getting his or her needs met, and will ask questions without being afraid of seeming ignorant or stupid.

The assertive person does not take responsibility for the behavior of others or for situations beyond his or her control.

The assertive person wants to have his opinions heard.

The assertive person does not allow himself/herself to be intimidated by status or age.

The assertive person works to get his or her needs met and does not let a situation grow into a crisis.

The assertive person projects a positive self-image by maintaining good posture and a calm, firm tone of voice.

Name: _____

It's not just what you say that counts, it's the way your message comes across to others. It helps to:

Be honest with yourself about your own feelings.

Keep calm and stick to the point.

Be clear, specific, and direct.

Ask, if you are unsure about something.

Use appropriate body language.

Keep repeating your message while also listening to the other's point of view. Try to offer alternative solutions if you can.

If the other person tries to create a diversion, point this out calmly and repeat your message.

Always respect the rights and point of view of the other person.

Name: _____

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Name: _____

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