

Gateway To Addiction

TEACHER'S GUIDE

What Teachers Need to Know:

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, by 12th grade:

- 46% of kids try marijuana
- 54% try cigarettes
- 77% try alcohol

Marijuana, cigarettes and alcohol are the “gateway drugs” of our society today. When young people experiment with cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana, it often opens doors or “gateways” to stronger, more dangerous drugs and to risky situations.

Statistics support this trend:

- Adolescent cigarette smokers are 100 times more likely to smoke marijuana and are more likely to use illicit drugs such as a cocaine and heroin in the future than young people who do not smoke cigarettes. -- *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*
- Nearly 90% of cocaine users had first smoked tobacco, drank alcohol or used marijuana. -- *Columbia University's Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse*

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

- a. Consider how peer pressure affects your choices, including your friendships.
- b. Define what makes a good friend.

Materials:

- Black/whiteboard; paper and writing implements

Project and Purpose:

Students will create an imaginary job application, “Apply to Be My Friend.” (For older students, you may want to call it, “Apply to Be In My Circle Of Friends.”) Students will then complete the application themselves -- can they meet their own requirements and standards?

1. With a partner, students will generate a list of requirements for a good friend. Students will use this list to develop a “Friendship Application.” **Show students an example of a job application.** The Friendship Application should include a variety of fill-in-the-blank questions and space for the prospective friend to write in answers. For example:
 - What characteristics should your friend have? (i.e. honesty, loyalty, kindness)
 - What activities should your friend like to do?
 - What would your friend do to help you out of a bad situation?
 - What new things would you try together?
 - What would a real friend **never** ask you to do? Why?
2. Have each student complete his/her own application. Would they meet their own requirements?
3. Explain to students that thinking about what kind of people you would like to have as friends – their character, their kindness, their behavior, their hobbies – is not about **excluding** people; but rather, it’s about choosing friends that you feel comfortable and safe with; people who support you and who you feel good about being with.
4. Ask students, *How can you learn whether or not someone would be a good friend?*

Class Discussion Questions

1. The video states, "If kids stay off drugs through their mid-20s...they'll probably never start." Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. What influence do peers have in getting each other into drugs? What influence do peers have in preventing each other from experimenting with drugs?
3. In what ways do people become physically addicted to drugs? In what ways do people become psychologically addicted to drugs?

Self-Reflection Questions

Students can answer the questions anonymously, writing their answers on a sheet of notebook paper or in a journal.

1. Have you ever had to end a friendship that wasn't good for you? What did the "friend" do that prompted you to end it? How did you feel afterwards?
2. Do you think doing drugs can lead someone to do other risky behaviors? If so, what are some examples?
3. What do you think would be the worst part about being addicted to drugs?

Evaluation:

- Did each student create an application for friendship?
- Did each student complete his/her own application?
- Did students participate in the class discussions?
- Did each student complete the questions?