

Unit E Why do people use drugs?

About the unit

In this unit, pupils consider the reasons why people choose to use drugs, alcohol and tobacco. They think of their use in terms of a risk-taking activity, and the outcomes of taking this risk. They explore a range of pressures and influences on people's decisions about using drugs, analysing the effects of advertising and social/cultural expectations. They consider pressures that could lead to problematic drug use, such as unemployment, bereavement. They practise skills to make decisions in the light of these and other influences. The unit encourages pupils to recognise and challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about drug use and misuse.

Aspects of this unit build on unit B 'Risk-taking and dealing with pressure'.

The activities in this unit could also be linked with work in English, science and RE. Some links are included in the 'Points to note' section.

The unit also links with activities in the key stage 3 scheme of work for citizenship.

Where the unit fits in

This unit addresses the following aspects of the key stage 3 non-statutory framework for PSHE and the key stage 3 programmes of study for citizenship and science:

PSHE

Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities

Pupils should be taught:

- 1b to respect the differences between people as they develop their own sense of identity

Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle

Pupils should be taught:

- 2b how to keep healthy and what influences health, including the media
- 2d basic facts and laws, including school rules, about alcohol and tobacco, illegal substances and the risks of misusing prescribed drugs
- 2f to recognise and manage risk and make safer choices about healthy lifestyles, different environments and travel
- 2g to recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and well-being, and to develop effective ways of resisting pressures, including knowing when and where to get help

Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people

Pupils should be taught:

- 3a about the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination and how to challenge them assertively
- 3b how to empathise with people different from themselves
- 3e the changing nature of, and pressure on, relationships with friends and family, and when and how to seek help

Breadth of opportunities

During the key stage, pupils should be taught the **Knowledge, skills and understanding** through opportunities to:

- 4d make real choices and decisions
- 4e meet and work with people
- 4g consider social and moral dilemmas

Citizenship

Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens

Pupils should be taught about:

- 1b the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
- 1f the work of community-based, national and international voluntary groups
- 1h the significance of the media in society

Developing skills of enquiry and communication

Pupils should be taught to:

- 2a think about topical political, spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events by analysing information and its sources, including ICT-based sources
- 2b justify orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events
- 2c contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates

Developing skills of participation and responsible action

Pupils should be taught to:

- 3a use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own

Science

Pupils should be taught:

Sc2 2m that the abuse of alcohol, solvents and other drugs affects health

Expectations

Expectations should be adapted according to the needs, age, stage and maturity of the pupils. It is expected that by the end of this unit most pupils will:

broadly understand the reasons why people use drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and appreciate that for some people the relief, pleasure or benefits they seek outweigh their perception/assessment of the risks involved. They carry out research into drug use and can present this information to others. They understand that some people become dependent on drugs, and know about the sort of help available to them. They identify and discuss influences and pressures on decision-making, such as the media, advertising, peer behaviour, culture, religion and difficult life situations. They know and can demonstrate some techniques for making decisions, resisting unhelpful pressure and seeking help. They reflect on what they have learnt and consider its application to their own lives.

Resources

Resources include:

- the DfES PSHE website – www.teachernet.gov.uk/PSHE (information on resources and links to other websites)

Many groups and organisations produce online resources that are relevant to drug, alcohol and tobacco education. QCA has not printed these website addresses as it recognises that they can and do change, often at short notice. So that we can monitor and maintain a reliable and useful resource, the website addresses of the following organisations can be accessed through www.qca.org.uk/pshe

- Mind, Body & Soul (provides information on why young people use or experiment with drugs, alcohol and tobacco)
- Lifebytes (on the Wired for Health website)
- DrugScope
- National Drugs Helpline
- Release
- Religious Education Exchange Service
- the RE site
- Drug Education and Prevention Information Service (DEPIS) (information about resources)

NB: care should be taken when encouraging pupils to access websites

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
Pupils learn:		Pupils:	
Weighing up the risks associated with drug-taking			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to evaluate their perceptions of drug, alcohol and tobacco use about the short- and long-term effects of drugs (including illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances and caffeine) about the importance of access to accurate information when making health-related choices, and how to evaluate different levels of risk how to use a range of sources to find information and to make decisions to summarise information and make a formal presentation of their research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish or review ground rules for discussing drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Assess the pupils' current attitudes towards the use of a range of drugs, and identify some of the assumptions or stereotypical views they hold. For example, you could ask the pupils to draw or describe someone who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> smokes cannabis is a chain-smoker drinks ten cups of coffee a day regularly uses tranquillisers frequently gets drunk abuses solvents or other volatile substances refuses to try drugs Alternatively, make a collage of a variety of faces from magazines and newspapers (avoid using a picture of anyone famous). Ask the pupils to identify which of the people in the collage might do the things listed above. Or give pupils a list of statements about various drugs and ask them to stand on a line between 'agree' and 'disagree' to show how they feel. Then ask pupils to justify their position. The pupils discuss their answers in small groups or as a whole class, and explore the assumptions they made about the people and the reasons why they might be using different drugs. With the group, negotiate a definition of 'drugs' that includes a range of substances, and work towards a definition of 'drug use' and 'drug misuse'. Explain that all drug use – whether illegal, legal or medicinal – involves risks, including risks to health. People have to make decisions about whether this risk is worth taking. The pupils independently research a particular drug, using ICT, leaflets, library resources or other sources of information. They record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the name(s) of the drug what it looks like how it is taken the short-term effects (on the body and/or on the things the user might do) the longer-term effects whether or not it is legal The pupils reflect on the information they have gathered and write a summary, which they present to the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> find information using a variety of sources, and present it in their own words describe the effects of a drug on a user understand the importance of making informed decisions about drug use identify appropriate sources of information about drugs identify some reasons why people take risks, and why someone might or might not take particular substances reflect on what they have learnt, and consider how it might influence their attitude towards risk-taking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground rules should be established and maintained before starting this activity. See page 20 of the <i>Teacher's booklet</i>. Pupils should be made aware at the start of each lesson that they are not expected to disclose details of their own behaviour. The activity exploring stereotypes can be used as a starting point to build understanding of what drug use is, and the different types of drug use, eg <i>occasional use, problematic use such as dependency</i>. The people in the collage should be from a range of ages and ethnic backgrounds. It should be made clear to the pupils that we do not really know which of these people, if any, uses drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Some pupils may object to being asked to make judgements about people. Teachers can use this to explore related issues: why can't we say who is most likely to do what, and why do some people in the class think they can? Do we get stereotypical views of drug users or young people from the media? Are these helpful? This issue is also addressed in the next section.

Learning objectives

Pupils learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**Weighing up the risks associated with drug-taking (continued)**

- Encourage the pupils to ask each other questions about the presentations, and discuss attitudes towards the outcomes of drug use.
- The pupils reflect individually on what they have learnt about drugs, and whether they think the risks associated with drug use are worth taking. They also consider whether their perceptions of drug use and misuse have changed.

- A good definition of 'drugs' might be 'substances that are taken to change the way we think or feel or behave, or the way our body works'. Encourage the pupils to discuss medicines, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, illicit substances and substances that are used illicitly, *eg prescription-only medicines*. It is useful to distinguish between different types of drug use, *eg one-off experimentation, regular recreational use, problematic use that might involve dependency*.
- The teacher's section on substance misuse on the Wired for Health website offers information on different types of drug use.
- Pupils are encouraged to weigh this up against the short- and long-term effects of drugs on the user's health, relationships, possible criminal record, etc.
- Useful websites for research include:
 - the LifeBytes website (offers a variety of other links and includes a quiz to assess pupils' knowledge about drugs)
 - the DrugScope website
 - the National Drugs Helpline website
 - the Release website

Learning objectives

Pupils learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**Weighing up the risks associated with drug-taking (continued)**

- Pupils should not be expected or encouraged to reveal their own habits. The reflection task at the end of this section could be done in writing, but pupils should be allowed to keep their answers confidential. Alternatively, use phrases such as 'Do you think someone should...?' to allow pupils to express their views without disclosing their personal behaviour.
- Link with Key Stage 3 National Strategy, Framework for teaching English:
 - year 7 S&L13, R2
 - year 8 S&L10, R2
 - year 9 S&L10, R2

Learning objectives

Pupils learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**Pressures and influences on us to use and misuse drugs**

- about the power of the media in influencing people's decisions about drug, alcohol and tobacco use
- how religious views, cultural attitudes and perceptions of normal behaviour can influence decisions
- to identify and reflect on situations that might put people under pressure to take drugs, including the perception that drug use is the norm
- that people can become dependent on some drugs, and what help is available for them
- Give the pupils real-life scenarios where people are faced with making a decision about whether or not to use drugs. Alternatively, use current TV soap or other drama programme storylines about young people and drugs. The pupils identify what influences or pressures there are on the people making the decisions. Collect all the ideas and summarise them using a spider diagram. Ask the pupils to categorise the different sources of pressure or influence they have identified. These could include:
 - people, *eg friends, family*
 - difficult life situations, *eg unemployment, poor housing, bereavement, stress*
 - cultural expectations, *eg thinking that certain behaviour is normal or expected*
 - beliefs and values, *eg religious beliefs*
- Discuss the particular pressures young people face to use drugs, and compare the pupils' perceptions of drug use and misuse amongst young people with up-to-date statistics.
- Consider the power of the media in shaping our views on drug use. Look at one particular aspect in more depth. For example, you could discuss the power of advertising by:
 - asking the pupils to recall advertisements for products other than drugs, tobacco and alcohol, *eg clothing, food, insurance*
 - discussing whether/how they think the advertisements will encourage people to buy the products
 - asking the pupils to collect examples from a range of sources of advertisements for alcohol, tobacco, caffeine products or over-the-counter medicines
- In pairs or small groups, the pupils discuss the alcohol/tobacco adverts in more depth, thinking about:
 - what the advert says about the particular brand
 - what kind of people might use the product
 - what the advert does not say about the product, *eg the risks involved in using it*
 - what the advertiser assumes about the viewer/reader/listener
 - whether they think the advert would persuade people to buy the product
 - what sort of people the advert would have the most/least influence on
- Pupils could explore the stereotypical image of a young person who uses drugs, including illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and volatile substances. They compare different representations of young people's behaviour in the media, considering whether or not they are realistic.
- identify a range of influences and pressures on our decisions about drug, alcohol and tobacco use
- identify and challenge some stereotypical images of drug users
- discuss critically the influence of advertising and other media on their decisions
- challenge the perception that all young people use illegal drugs
- understand what drug dependency is, and know its possible effects, both short- and long-term
- know how to access information, help and support for drug-related problems
- begin to be aware that the needs of individuals are different, and therefore so is the support that they require
- When considering different types of pressure and influence, explain to the pupils that pressure is not always obvious. Some young people do feel pressured into taking drugs by their peers, but more often than not there is no overt pressure. Our own perceptions of what is expected, or of normal behaviour, can be far more influential, *eg a young person believes that his friends all use drugs, so thinks it is something he should do too*. Use up-to-date statistics on young people's drug, alcohol and tobacco use to challenge pupils' assumptions (see the Department of Health website).
- Consider any differences experienced by boys and girls.
- For some pupils, the issue of 'peer belonging' has a major impact on their decision about whether or not to use, or to stop using, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Some young people find the idea of losing friends, because they choose to be different, very difficult.
- When showing clips from TV soaps, it is better to use up-to-date examples.
- Sensitivity is needed when using material with hard-hitting messages. Pupils and their parents should know in advance what kind of material pupils are going to see/hear/read, and be made aware that they may find it upsetting. See page 18 of the *Teacher's booklet* for guidance on the use of harder-hitting messages.

Learning objectives

Pupils learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**Pressures and influences on us to use and misuse drugs (continued)**

- Alternatively, consider the power of TV/film. Show the pupils an appropriate clip from a British soap opera or film. The pupils discuss, in small groups or as a whole class:
 - What sort of character is using the drugs?
 - What do they hope to gain from using drugs?
 - What will be the short- and long-term consequences of their drug use?
 - Is this representation realistic? Is it a stereotype? Contrast the way drug use is portrayed here with how it is portrayed in other films or programmes, or with real life
 - Will programmes/films like these influence other people when they are deciding whether or not to use drugs?
 - Explain that it is possible to become dependent on drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and that dependency can be both physical and psychological. Use literature, TV/film footage or a visiting speaker from a treatment agency to explore the nature of dependency and how people can be helped to overcome it.
 - Draw the pupils' attention to the local and national support available to people with drug-related problems.
 - Extension activity: show the pupils a recent government advertisement with an anti-drink, drugs or smoking message. Ask the pupils to identify the key message/facts. What kind of approach is being taken, *eg hard-hitting, factual, a young person's view*? Do the pupils think the advert is an effective deterrent? How could it be improved/better targeted at young people? The pupils could devise dramas to portray how they would change it.
- Pupils need to be aware that individuals who have problems with drugs, alcohol or tobacco are all different, and that the support they require is also different. Some groups in our community do not traditionally access mainstream treatment/support. The pupils could investigate the reasons for this, *eg because it goes against tradition, because of the stigma attached, because of language barriers*.
 - Link with RE: work on the beliefs and practices of faith communities can include attitudes to drugs and drug-taking.
 - Link with Key Stage 3 National Strategy, Framework for teaching English:
 - year 7 R10
 - year 8 R9
 - year 9 R8
 - When inviting people from outside agencies to contribute to lessons, it is important to follow guidance on the use of visitors. See page 24 of the *Teacher's booklet*.

Learning objectives

Pupils learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**Skills to deal with situations involving drugs**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ways to resist unhelpful pressure • to reflect on their own choices, identifying the influences and pressures on them • that they have the right to feel safe when faced with risky situations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the pupils to provide examples of real-life scenarios where people their age might be faced with a decision about using drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Alternatively, provide them with prepared scenarios. In small groups, the pupils discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the reasons the person/people in the scenario might want to use drugs – alternatives to using drugs, alcohol or tobacco in different situations, <i>eg how could the persons/people in the scenario enjoy themselves without using drugs, alcohol or tobacco? What could someone do to help them get through a difficult situation without using drugs, alcohol or tobacco?</i> – what someone who did not want to use drugs could do to resist the pressure being put on them • The pupils develop their ideas into short role-plays, where they practise ways to refuse or resist drugs. The role-plays are then developed into dramas, which are presented to the class. Other pupils analyse the ideas for refusing/resisting the drugs portrayed, thinking about their realism and workability. Discuss further ways in which the pupils might respond to pressure. • List the skills they think they would need in a situation involving drugs. Use this work, and the issues raised in the role-plays and dramas, to focus on meeting the specific needs of the pupils. For example, they may need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – more assertiveness training – help with developing refusal skills – more information about different substances – skills to access the support that is available, <i>eg from Connexions personal advisers, school nurses, local drug and alcohol advisory services</i> • Ask the pupils to reflect independently on what they have learnt, and to look back at the opinions on drug, alcohol or tobacco use they had at the start of the unit. They should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – whether their opinions have changed and, if so, why – what or who influences their opinions on issues related to drugs, alcohol and tobacco – whether they ever feel pressured to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco and, if so, by what/whom – things they can do to resist unhelpful pressure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate ways of resisting unhelpful pressure • offer reasons for their views on drug, alcohol and tobacco use • reflect on what they have learnt, and how it could influence their own decision-making about substance use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers may wish to focus on one particular substance here. The pressures to use alcohol may be different from the pressures to use tobacco or illegal substances. • Through the scenarios, explore a range of situations. These could draw on work in earlier activities, <i>eg someone wanting to use drugs as an 'escape' from a difficult situation, a group of friends who have used drugs before taking more risks with drugs.</i> Indirect drug-related situations could be included, <i>eg</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>being in the vicinity of people who are intoxicated</i> – <i>having to look after someone who is under the influence of drugs</i> Avoid letting the pupils focus on a stereotypical situation where one person is put under great pressure by their friends to take drugs. • Link with RE: many RE syllabuses include opportunities for pupils to consider social and moral dilemmas, including those relating to drug use and misuse. |
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Learning objectives

Pupils learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**Skills to deal with situations involving drugs (continued)**

- Skills for resisting unhelpful pressure should be built through work in PSHE. The activities suggested here would need to be supplemented by other sessions, *eg in sex and relationships education*.
- Link with Key Stage 3 National Strategy, Framework for teaching English:
 - year 7 S&L15
 - year 8 S&L15
 - year 9 S&L12