

Alcohol and the Developing Brain



Discovery
EDUCATION



GRADE
RANGE
5-7

DIGITAL EXPLORATION | CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

ASK, LISTEN, LEARN IN YOUR SCHOOL

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to determine what makes them an effective means of spreading a message.
- Create a PSA to educate peers and encourage them to say “NO” to underage drinking.
- Discuss the effectiveness of their PSA campaign.

Overview

In this activity, students collaborate to create a Public Service Announcement¹ (PSA) campaign in their school to educate their peers about the dangers and illegality of underage drinking and to promote healthy refusal strategies. They use resources and information from the [Ask, Listen, Learn: Alcohol and the Developing Brain Digital Exploration](#) and the [Ask, Listen, Learn website](#) to develop educational materials for kids in their school. Campaigns might include videos, PA announcements, informative brochures, songs, and posters.

Target Audience

Grades 5–7

Activity Duration

- Initial Activity: 45–60 minutes Review and Launch of Student PSAs: varies

Essential Questions

- How can we work together to make sure friends and peers to say “NO” to underage drinking?
- How can we use scientific facts about how underage drinking impacts the developing brain to encourage our peers to make healthy decisions?
- How can we communicate effectively to educate and persuade?

¹Some background information on PSAs can be found in this document [How to Write a PSA](#) by the Media Network.

Materials

- Computer with internet access and projection
- *Handout: PSA Brainstorming and Planning Sheet* (one per small group)
- *Handout: Story Board for Video or Audio PSAs* (one per small group)
- *Handout: Quick Rubric* (enough copies for each small group to evaluate each PSA presented)
- Paper
- Pens, pencils, markers
- Video camera or camera phones (if creating video PSAs)
- Other materials students may need to create their PSAs

Procedure

1. Have students briefly summarize why underage drinking is illegal and how it affects the developing brain. This is an important step to making healthy choices and saying “NO” to underage drinking. Explain to students that they are going to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for the student body at their school to help kids make the choice to say “NO” to underage drinking, because alcohol negatively affects their developing brains and underage drinking is against the law. Tell students you are going to share a few examples of PSAs with them. As students watch, advise them to think about the topic, the message being shared, and how the message is presented.
2. After each PSA, give students a moment to quickly record the following:
 - a. The intended audience of the PSA
 - b. Whether the PSA used a positive message to encourage change or a negative message to encourage avoidance
 - c. Whether they think the PSA is effective
 - d. Any other important details they noticed
3. Choose 1–2 videos, radio spots, and print examples to show your class. You will find excellent examples with these resources:
 - [Nathan Adrian encourages parents to talk to their kids about saying “NO” to underage drinking](#) (*Ask, Listen, Learn*)
 - [Empowering Girls in STEM](#) (Ad Council)
 - [WWF: Save Paper](#)
4. Divide students into groups of three or four. Give them 5–7 minutes to share their notes with each other and discuss their reactions to the PSAs they just viewed.
5. Use an attention-getting signal and ask students to discuss with the whole group their thoughts about what makes for an effective PSA. Record their ideas on the board.

6. Explain the activity to students: They will work together to create a PSA (video, radio broadcast, poster, or other approved format) that encourages students at their school to say “YES” to a healthy lifestyle and “NO” to underage drinking. Use the ideas you recorded on the board to establish suggestions and guidelines. Consider sharing the following, as well:
 - Who is your audience? What is the best way to communicate with them?
 - What information do you want to share about how alcohol affects the developing brain, body, and behavior? How will you share it?
 - What resources do you have to create your message?
 - Optional: Before groups begin designing, show them the [Making Healthy Choices](#) video to share some examples of healthy choices.
7. Distribute the **PSA Brainstorming and Planning Sheet** and **Story Board for Video or Audio PSA** handouts. Go over the handouts with students and answer questions they have about the directions.
8. Distribute a **Quick Rubric** to each student. Explain to students that they will not be graded on their PSA projects, but they can use the rubric to ensure they create an effective PSA.
9. Provide class time for students to work on their PSAs. Additional time may be needed, particularly for more complex projects.
10. When all groups have completed their PSAs, have them present their work to the whole group. Have seated groups work together to informally evaluate the PSAs using the **Quick Rubric**. Remind students the goal is to help each other create effective PSAs, not to criticize.
11. Encourage students to use their classmates’ feedback to improve and finalize their PSAs.
12. Discuss with school officials how the students’ PSAs can be shared with the student body at the school. Help students launch their PSA campaign.
13. Debrief the activity. (If possible, collect feedback from the student body and share it with your students at this time.) Ask questions such as the following to help students reflect on and share their learning. Encourage them to talk about this project at home.
 - Was our campaign effective? How do you know?
 - What do you think was the most important message you shared with your peers?
 - Why do you think it is important to include scientific facts (such as information about the function and development of the brain) in a Public Service Announcement?
 - Is it important for kids to hear positive messages from their peers? Why or why not?
 - If you could create your PSA again, what would you do differently? What would you do the same? Why?

Additional Resources

- [The Science Behind the Effects of Alcohol on Your Brain](#)
- [Healthy Decisions for the Whole Body](#)
- [Informed Students Make Better, Healthier Decisions](#)
- [Parents, You’re Not Done Yet Infographic](#)

National Standards

National Health Standards

Grades 3–5

- 1.5.3 Describe ways in which safe and healthy school and community environments can promote personal health.
- 2.5.4 Describe how the school and community can support personal health practices and behaviors.
- 2.5.5 Explain how media influences thoughts, feelings, and health behaviors.
- 7.5.1 Identify responsible personal health behaviors.
- 8.5.1 Express opinions and give accurate information about health issues.

National Health Standards

Grades 6–8

- 2.8.4 Analyze how the school and community can affect personal health practices and behaviors.
- 2.8.5 Analyze how messages from media influence health behaviors.
- 7.8.3 Demonstrate behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.
- 8.8.1 State a health-enhancing position on a topic and support it with accurate information.
- 8.8.3 Work cooperatively to advocate for healthy individuals, families, and schools.
- 8.8.4 Identify ways in which health messages and communication techniques can be altered for different audiences.

Common Core State Standards Grade 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5

Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Common Core State Standards Grade 7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.5

Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

PSA Brainstorming and Planning Sheet

Our Message	
Our Audience	
Information about the Effects of Alcohol on the Developing Brain	
How will we get the attention of our audience? Create a hook: visual effect, humor, song, surprise, emotional response, slogan, awesome fact, etc.	

Design Decisions

Colors	
Music	
Actions/Actors	
Images	
Script	
Font Type	
Other Considerations	

Storyboard for Video or Audio PSAs

1	2
IMAGE _____ TEXT _____ SOUND EFFECTS _____ MUSIC _____	IMAGE _____ TEXT _____ SOUND EFFECTS _____ MUSIC _____
3	4
IMAGE _____ TEXT _____ SOUND EFFECTS _____ MUSIC _____	IMAGE _____ TEXT _____ SOUND EFFECTS _____ MUSIC _____
5	6
IMAGE _____ TEXT _____ SOUND EFFECTS _____ MUSIC _____	IMAGE _____ TEXT _____ SOUND EFFECTS _____ MUSIC _____

<p style="text-align: center;">QUICK RUBRIC</p> <p>Your Name:</p> <p>PSA Name:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">1</td> <td style="width: 5%;">2</td> <td style="width: 5%;">3</td> <td style="width: 5%;">4</td> <td style="width: 80%;">Has a topic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Accurate information</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Includes information about the effects of alcohol on the developing brain</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Grabs attention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Provides solution or action</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Creates a mood</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Message carried throughout</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Overall score</td> </tr> </table> <p>Suggestions:</p>	1	2	3	4	Has a topic	1	2	3	4	Accurate information	1	2	3	4	Includes information about the effects of alcohol on the developing brain	1	2	3	4	Grabs attention	1	2	3	4	Provides solution or action	1	2	3	4	Creates a mood	1	2	3	4	Message carried throughout	1	2	3	4	Overall score	<p style="text-align: center;">QUICK RUBRIC</p> <p>Your Name:</p> <p>PSA Name:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">1</td> <td style="width: 5%;">2</td> <td style="width: 5%;">3</td> <td style="width: 5%;">4</td> <td style="width: 80%;">Has a topic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Accurate information</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Includes information about the effects of alcohol on the developing brain</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Grabs attention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Provides solution or action</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Creates a mood</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Message carried throughout</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Overall score</td> </tr> </table> <p>Suggestions:</p>	1	2	3	4	Has a topic	1	2	3	4	Accurate information	1	2	3	4	Includes information about the effects of alcohol on the developing brain	1	2	3	4	Grabs attention	1	2	3	4	Provides solution or action	1	2	3	4	Creates a mood	1	2	3	4	Message carried throughout	1	2	3	4	Overall score
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