

Say “YES” to a Healthy Lifestyle



Discovery
EDUCATION



GRADE
RANGE
5–7

RISKY BEHAVIOR | CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

ASK, LISTEN, LEARN MARIJUANA: HOW AND WHY TO SAY “NO”

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- **Explain** the goal of refusal and exit strategies.
- **Research** the short-term and long-term effects of cannabis on the developing brain.
- **Synthesize** what they learn in order to develop refusal and exit strategies that incorporate these effects.
- **Create** a slide video that introduces these strategies to their peers.

Overview

Ask, Listen, Learn in partnership with Discovery Education teaches kids what the brain does, what alcohol does to it, and what that does to YOU! But underage drinking is not the only risky behavior that presents itself to kids; they also come across peer pressure in terms of cannabis use as well. It's important to address the dangers of underage cannabis use with kids, especially as it becomes legal in some states across the country. In this activity, students will research the short-term and long-term effects of cannabis on the developing brain. They will collaborate to develop refusal and exit strategies rooted in their research, and they will ultimately create an original slide video that shares these strategies with their peers.

Target Audience

Grades 5–7

Activity Duration

60 minutes

Materials

- Device with the ability to project, one for the teacher
- Devices with Internet access, enough for half the class
- National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teen [website](#), to project
- How Marijuana Affects the Developing Brain [Endocannabinoid System](#) video, to project
- [10 Ways to Say NO infographic](#), to project
- Video Prep handout (2 pages), one per student

- Video Criteria handout (1/2 page), one per student
- Blank paper or recycled printer paper (about 80–100 sheets)
- Markers or crayons
- Devices that can record video, as many as are available

Note: If video-recording devices are not available, a work-around is suggested.

Procedure

1. **Warm-Up:** Begin with a Stand Up—Hand Up—Pair Up Share* around the following questions:
 - You have a huge math test tomorrow and your older brother is trying to convince you to stay up late. What could you say or do to tell him no?
 - Your friend wants you both to steal candy from the store. What could you do or say to tell her no?
 - Your friend is asking to copy your homework. What could you say or do to tell him no?

**Note:* To participate in a Stand Up—Hand Up—Pair Up Share, first share the question to be discussed. Then instruct the class to Stand Up and walk around the classroom quietly as they think about their answer. When you say *Hand Up, Pair Up*, they should put their hand in the air, high-five the person closest to them, and then sit down and discuss their answer with this peer. You may call on a few pairs to share their responses before asking the next question and completing the Stand Up—Hand Up—Pair Up process again.

If facilitating instruction in a remote learning environment, assign pairs in advance for students to pair up and review the questions together. They can use the chat window to discuss their responses or use a shared open-access document to capture their ideas.

2. Once you have discussed all three scenarios, explain that the types of responses that the students developed are called refusal strategies or exit strategies. A refusal strategy is a way to refuse or say no to something, and an exit strategy is a way to exit or leave a situation. There are many different kinds of exit and refusal strategies and they can be tailored to help you deal with all sorts of peer pressure. For instance, you could use your parents as an excuse for why you need to say no in some situations, be blunt and just say “no way” in other situations, or even try divert the person’s attention to something else.
3. Explain to students that they are about to develop refusal and exit strategies that work specifically for marijuana. Project the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teen [website](#) and read through the “What is marijuana?” and “How is marijuana used?” sections together.
4. Tell the class that in order to develop strong refusal and exit strategies for this substance, they will first research the effects of marijuana on the developing brain. They will then create a paper slide video* that shares the strategies they developed with their peers.

**If students have not heard of paper slide videos, it may be helpful to briefly show a couple of examples from [YouTube](#).*

5. Pass out the *Video Prep* handout and read through the Step 1 directions together. Then divide students into groups of three or four, and give groups about 15 minutes to perform their research.
6. Next, read through Steps 2 and 3 and give groups about 10 minutes to complete these sections.

Finally, read Step 4 aloud and pass out the *Video Criteria* handout to each group. Be sure students know where to find the paper and art supplies for the slides, as well as what they will be using to record their videos. [Note: If devices are not available, groups may instead present their paper slide videos to each other.] Then encourage groups to begin.

If facilitating instruction in a remote learning environment, groups can work in breakout rooms to collaborate. They can also use open-access platforms to develop their slides together. Instead of video recording paper-slides, students can complete digital slides and narrate their slides using a voice recorder app. Students can also present synchronously to their entire classroom or be paired with another group to present to using a breakout room.

7. **Wrap-Up:** When the class session is complete, determine if groups have been able to finish their videos. It may be necessary for some to wrap up at the beginning of next class period. Regardless, try to arrange time in an upcoming class session for students to share their completed videos with each other.

Then, end the session by asking each group to share one of their most powerful exit or refusal strategies. Encourage students to listen closely so they are equipped with a variety of strategies to pull from as they progress through middle school and high school.

National Standards

Next Generation Science Standards

Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

- Disciplinary Core Ideas:
 - In multicellular organisms, the body is a system of multiple interacting subsystems. These subsystems are groups of cells that work together to form tissues and organs that are specialized for particular body functions. (MS-LS1-3)

National Health Standards

Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

- 1.8.9: Examine the potential seriousness of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

- 4.5.2: Demonstrate refusal skills that avoid or reduce health risks.
- 4.8.2: Demonstrate refusal and negotiation skills that avoid or reduce health risks

Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

- 5.5.6: Describe the outcomes of a health-related decision.
- 5.8.7: Analyze the outcomes of a health-related decision.

National Core Art Standards

- Art Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

Common Core English Language Arts Standards

Reading

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Video Prep

Step 1: Did you know your brain is still developing, and that could affect your ability to make good decisions? Also, no matter what the legal status of marijuana is in your state, it is illegal for anyone under 21 to use it. Because of this, you need to learn about how marijuana affects the developing brain and why you should say "NO."

Use any of the following websites to learn how using marijuana can affect your brain today, as you continue to grow up, and long into the future. As you do, take notes in the chart below.

Credible Websites:

- www.AskListenLearn.org
- youcanwa.org/health-effects
- kidshealth.org/en/teens/marijuana.html
- abovetheinfluence.com/drugs/marijuana/#facts
- samhsa.gov/know-risks-marijuana
- drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana

Short-Term Effects: How can using marijuana affect my developing brain now and as I grow up?	Long-Term Effects: How can using marijuana affect my brain long into the future?

Step 2: Place a star next to the effects in your chart that are mostly likely to convince your peers *not* to use marijuana.

Think about all the different peers you have (for instance: those who like to play sports, do theater, play instruments, etc.) as you think about what could convince them not to use this substance.

Step 3: Now imagine that someone is offering marijuana to you or your peers. Based on the effects you starred above, how could you say no or give a reason to walk away?

Brainstorm at least five different responses below and try to keep each response to a sentence or less. These exit and/or refusal strategies may be funny, serious, or even a little shocking. You could even blame your parents, if you want!

For each response, include a reason from your research that explains *why* you are saying no or walking away.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Step 4: Prepare your paper slide video according to the instructions below:

1. Read through the Video Criteria handout.
2. Write your script: It should include everything that will be said in your video.
3. Draw your slides. Be creative!
4. Decide who will film, speak, and move the slides. All group members must have a role.
5. Practice at least twice.
6. Record!

Video Criteria:

Your paper slide video must contain

- A brief introduction that tells viewers (i.e. your peers) what your video will be about
- At least 5 refusal or exit strategies for marijuana that your peers could use
 - Each one must be supported by a detail(s) about how marijuana affects your brain
- A brief conclusion that wraps up the video
- At least 7 total slides
 - An intro slide
 - One slide for each strategy
 - A final slide
- A voice that explains each slide



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