

# Say “YES” to a Healthy Lifestyle



Discovery  
EDUCATION



GRADE  
RANGE  
5–8

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING | CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# ASK, LISTEN, LEARN: DEFINING RESPONSIBILITY

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- **Define** *responsibility*
- **Analyze** the impact of responsibility on their daily lives and consider their accountability for the consequences of their actions
- **Create** a campaign that motivates their peers to make responsible choices

### Overview

In this activity, students will explore the concept of responsibility. After brainstorming what they associate with being responsible, the class will collaborate to develop a working definition of *responsibility*. They will consider whether their responsibilities change with age, and they will brainstorm their personal responsibilities. They will then be guided through exploring the relationship between choice and responsibility, and they will consider the consequences that may occur if they choose to make irresponsible decisions. Students will ultimately develop a campaign that creatively highlights the dos and don'ts for being a responsible 5<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grader, with the goal of encouraging their peers to make smart and healthy choices.

### Timing

60 minutes

### Materials

- Device with the ability to project video, one for the teacher
- White board or chart paper with markers for students to share
- Scrap paper, one per student
- *Making Healthy Choices* [video](#), to project
- *The Responsibility Project* handout, one per student
- Devices, for students to share
- Art supplies (paper, markers, crayons, etc.), for students to share

## Procedure

Educator Prep: Before the session begins, write the word "RESPONSIBLE" in large letters in the middle of your white board or a piece of chart paper.

1. **Warm-Up Activity:** Draw students' attention to the large "RESPONSIBLE" text, and then begin with a class graffiti wall. Call students up to the board in small groups and have them record words and images around this word that they associate with being responsible.
2. Once the class has written their thoughts, review them together. Read aloud common words, images, or phrases.
3. Then challenge the class to use these ideas to develop a working definition for the word "responsibility." Spend a few minutes developing and refining it as a class, and record the final definition on the board.

**Tip:** *If needed, guide students toward ideas such as responsibility meaning doing the things you are supposed to do, taking accountability for your actions, and making good choices.*

4. Discuss: Do our responsibilities change with age? Why or why not?  
  
Ask students to share their thoughts. Then talk through examples of responsibilities that people may have during different points of their lives.
5. Next, instruct students to use a piece of scrap paper and jot the responsibilities they currently have. Challenge them to think about responsibilities they have at home, at school, in their community, to the world, and to themselves.

**Optional:** *It may be helpful to kick off the brainstorming with this Responsibility #StartswithMe [video](#).*

6. As students brainstorm independently, draw a three-column t-chart on the board or chart paper. Label the first column "Responsibility," the second column "Impact," and the third column "Consequence for not being responsible."
7. Then encourage students to share the following as you record their thoughts in the t-chart:
  - A responsibility that they brainstormed
  - The impact of this responsibility/why it is important (e.g., Does this responsibility help them work toward their goals? Care for others? Give back?)
  - The effects or consequences that may occur if they don't fulfill their responsibility

Optional: It may be helpful to walk through an example or two together first, such as:

**Responsibility:** Feed my dog

**Impact/Importance:** Dog is cared for and healthy

**Consequence(s) for not being responsible:** Dog is hungry, unhappy, and/or may misbehave

**Responsibility:** Say no to alcohol

**Impact/Importance:** I stay healthy and safe; underage drinking is against the law

**Consequence(s) for not being responsible:** I risk my health, safety, and brain development; I risk losing the trust and respect of others; I could be removed from a sports team or club

8. As you gesture to the importance of the students' responsibilities as well as the list of consequences that may occur if their responsibilities are not fulfilled, ask: “Whose job is it to make sure that we meet and fulfill our responsibilities?” Ask a few students to share their thoughts.
9. Then ask students to continue thinking about this question as they watch the *Making Healthy Choices* [video](#). When the video is complete, ask the question again and encourage more students to share their responses.
10. Continue the discussion with a second question: “What is the relationship between choice and responsibility?” In other words, how are choice and responsibility connected?

Have students share their thoughts and/or react to those who share before them.

At the end of the discussion, be sure students understand that each and every person must make their own choice to be responsible. A responsible person also takes responsibility for the consequences that occur if they ever make a poor choice and are irresponsible.

11. Now that students have thought through what it means to be responsible, explain that it's time for them to share these ideas with their peers. Divide students into groups of three, and pass out one *The Responsibility Project* handout to each group.
12. Review the directions provided and answer questions as needed. Tell students to divide the work among their group members so they can finish at least a rough draft during this class session.
13. **Wrap-Up:** When there are about five to seven minutes left in the class session, bring the class back together and encourage each group to briefly share their campaign as well as why they think their campaign will inspire responsible behavior.

Ask groups who have not finished to divide the work that remains and complete it for homework. Then try to set aside time in the future for students to implement their campaign!

## National School Standards

### [CASEL SEL Framework](#)

- Self-awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across context.
- Responsible decision-making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

### [National Health Education Standards](#)

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

### [Common Core ELA Standards](#)

- W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

## The Responsibility Project

**Overview:** “Be responsible.” “Make the right decision.” You have heard adults say these phrases to you again and again. But what do they mean? Now that *you* have an answer, it’s time to share what you have learned with your peers.

**Your job:** Create a campaign that creatively explains the dos and don’ts for being a responsible \_\_\_th grader. The goal of your campaign is to encourage your peers to make smart and healthy choices. The style of your campaign (such as social posts, fliers, posters, etc.) is up to you. Be sure to think about what will make your peers pay attention.

### Requirements:

Your campaign must:

- Consist of at least three different pieces that work together to share a central message (3 different social posts, 3 different fliers, etc.)
- Highlight 3 or more dos for being responsible
- Highlight 3 or more don’ts for being responsible
- Encourage your peers to make smart and healthy choices
- Catch your audience’s attention