

# Say “YES” to a Healthy Lifestyle



Discovery  
EDUCATION



GRADE  
RANGE  
5–7

KEEPING KIDS SUBSTANCE-FREE | CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## ASK, LISTEN, LEARN: OUR BRAINS & BODIES

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- **Research** and **explain** marijuana’s effects on the endocannabinoid system.
- **Research** and **explain** alcohol’s impact on neurotransmission and brain function.
- **Create** a video that educates their peers about how marijuana and alcohol affect developing brains and bodies.

### 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 THEM! But underage drinking is not the only risky behavior that presents itself to kids; they may come across peer pressure in terms of underage cannabis use as well. It’s important to address the risks of underage cannabis use with kids, especially as it becomes legal in some states across the country. In this activity, students will explore why and how marijuana and alcohol are more harmful for adolescents than for adults. They will then apply what they learn as they create a series of short and engaging video clips that explain the science behind these substances to teach their peers about why they are harmful for young people.

### Target Audience

Grades 5–7

### Activity Duration

60–75 minutes

### Materials

- Device with the ability to play/project video, one for the educator
- Handout 1: Six-Word Stories, one copy per student
- [How Alcohol Effects Your Developing Brain](#) video, to project
- [How Marijuana Affects Your Developing Brain](#) video, to project
- Handout 2: Research Questions, one copy per student
- Handout 3: Video Criteria, one copy per student
- Devices with video recording abilities (either students' smartphones, school devices, etc.), enough for one-quarter of the class

## Procedure

### 1. Warm-Up Activity:

- Begin by distributing one copy of *Handout 1: Six-Word Stories* to each student.
  - Explain that you are about to show two different videos that explain how alcohol and marijuana affect the developing brain and body. The videos contain a lot of information, and it will be the students' job to narrow down the content into short, six-word stories!
  - Play the [How Alcohol Affects Your Developing Brain](#) video first, and encourage students to jot notes on their handouts as they watch. It may be helpful to pause the video at a couple points to allow time for students to write.
  - Then, work as a class to create the first six-word story about the effects of alcohol on the developing brain and body. The story may either summarize the entire clip or focus on a key point, such as: “Alcohol slows down brain activity” or “Alcohol + Cerebellum = Poor Balance!”  
**\*Note:** Be sure students understand that while six words is the goal, five words or seven words are fine too.
  - Next, encourage every pair of students to work together to create a second story.
  - Then play the [How Marijuana Affects Your Developing Brain](#) video and repeat the steps above.
  - As a final challenge, have pairs create a six-word story that summarizes how both substances affect the developing brain and body.
  - Wrap up by encouraging students to share their final summaries with the class.
2. Explain that students are about to research in more detail the how and why alcohol and marijuana affect the developing brains of kids their age and for teenagers more than for adults. They will then use what they learn to create their own video clips that explain to their peers *why* these substances are harmful and illegal for young people.
3. Prepare students for the activity by performing the following:
- Place students in groups of four or five, and pass out one copy of *Handout 2: Research Questions* to each student.
  - Review the handout directions and list of questions. Be sure students understand that they should use the research websites provided to find their answers.
  - Encourage groups to split up the questions among themselves. They will then have time to reconvene and share their answers with each other.
4. Once students understand the directions, encourage them to begin! Give the class about 15 minutes to complete their research. After this time, they should rejoin their group members and share what they learned with each other.

5. Then regroup as a class and remind students of their challenge: To create short videos for their peers that explain why alcohol and marijuana are harmful and illegal for young people.

Encourage students to think about video clips they have seen recently—whether they were on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram Reel, or another source.

Then ask: How do videos connect to their viewers? How can you create videos that are interesting to your peers and share important information?

6. Pass out one copy of *Handout 3: Video Criteria* to each student, and walk students through the following in order to prepare them for this final activity:
  - Read through the directions provided.
  - Be sure students know how/on what device they should film their videos.
  - Deduct 10 minutes from the amount of time left in class and explain that students will have this much time to create their clips.
  - Then encourage groups to begin, and explain that the final ten minutes of class will be used for video sharing!

#### 7. Wrap-Up:

- After providing a five-minute warning, reassemble students for the last 10 minutes of the class session.
- Project and share their video clips.
- As students watch their peers' videos, encourage them to listen for ideas to help them answer the question: “Why are alcohol and marijuana harmful and illegal for young people?” with a six-word response.
- Challenge students to share their response as a verbal exit ticket before leaving class.

## Optional Extensions

- Students may watch all seven of the Alcohol and the Developing Brain videos, if they haven't already. They can then test their knowledge with this [Brain Trivia](#) game!
- Encourage students to play [Memory Flip](#). Then challenge them to consider: Based on what you have learned, how could you update this game so that it also focuses on marijuana? What would you change? What new facts would you include?

## 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.
  - 1.8.8: Examine the likelihood of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.
  - 1.8.9: Examine the potential seriousness of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.
- Standard 8: Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.
  - 8.5.1: Express opinions and give accurate information about health issues.
  - 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 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.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.1

#### Writing

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

#### Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

## Six-Word Stories

**Directions:** As you watch the two videos, jot notes on how alcohol and marijuana affect the developing brain and body in the chart below. You will then use these notes to write several six-word stories!

Alcohol's Effects on the Developing Brain and Body	Marijuana's Effects on the Developing Brain and Body
Notes:	Notes:

Story 1: Alcohol

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Story 2: Alcohol

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Story 3: Marijuana

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Story 4: Marijuana

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**Challenge** Story 5: Alcohol *and* Marijuana

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## Research Questions

**Directions:** Divide the research questions below among your group members. Then use the websites and videos provided to perform your research. Take notes on your findings so you can share your responses with your group members.

**1. When people say that the brains of tweens and teens are still developing, what do they mean?**

Suggested Websites

National Institute of Mental Health: [tinyurl.com/3nmzj2df](https://tinyurl.com/3nmzj2df)

Get Smart about Drugs: [tinyurl.com/bc98xvnt](https://tinyurl.com/bc98xvnt)

**2. Scientifically speaking, what does drinking alcohol do to neurotransmission in the developing brain?**

Suggested Research

Rewatch: [youtu.be/7x6HUNTnXUw](https://youtu.be/7x6HUNTnXUw)

**3. In what ways does alcohol affect a developing brain and body?**

Suggested Website

Explore the 7 videos from Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix—

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGT-VCgldcdY6jWfzmEyzuV3hzhfaSjTH>

**4. Scientifically speaking, what does using marijuana do to the developing brain's endocannabinoid system?**

Suggested Research

Rewatch: [youtu.be/1Luw2tiMuLk](https://youtu.be/1Luw2tiMuLk)

**5. In what ways does marijuana affect a developing brain and body?**

Suggested Website

CDC: [tinyurl.com/yuztcaz2](https://tinyurl.com/yuztcaz2) Video Criteria

## Video Criteria

**Your Job:** Create a series of short videos (up to four clips at 15 seconds each) that answer the question: Why are alcohol and marijuana harmful and illegal for young people?

**Your video(s) must:**

- Explain what it means to have a developing brain
- Explain how alcohol affects young people
- Explain how marijuana affects young people
- Help your peers understand why these two substances are risky and illegal for tweens and teens

**Prepare:** Use the squares below to plan what each clip will include before you film.

<p><b>Clip #1</b></p> <p>Seconds 1–5:</p> <p>Seconds 5–10:</p> <p>Seconds 10–15:</p>	<p><b>Clip #2</b></p> <p>Seconds 1–5:</p> <p>Seconds 5–10:</p> <p>Seconds 10–15:</p>
<p><b>Clip #3</b></p> <p>Seconds 1–5:</p> <p>Seconds 5–10:</p> <p>Seconds 10–15:</p>	<p><b>Clip #4</b></p> <p>Seconds 1–5:</p> <p>Seconds 5–10:</p> <p>Seconds 10–15:</p>