

GoodCharacter.com Monthly Newsletter

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Theme of the Month: Drugs and Alcohol

There are many anti-drug programs designed to stop students from using dangerous illegal drugs such as marijuana, heroin and cocaine. However, these aren't the only drugs that pose a danger to students. Students often see prescription drugs as a legal, sometimes "safe" way of getting high, but these drugs have dangerous consequences, too. Smoking and alcohol use is also legal for adults, but these drugs pose serious risks to young people. It is imperative that we remind our students of all ages about the risks posed by alcohol, tobacco, and drugs of all sorts.

"Dope never helped anybody sing better or play music better or do anything better. All dope can do for you is kill you - and kill you the long, slow, hard way."
- Billie Holiday

Daily Dilemma

When Jay asks his mother how she would react if he tried drugs, he gets a stern warning. Then he discovers that she's been smoking pot.

What should Jay do? [Here's](#) a hypothetical dilemma to discuss with your class.



"I don't use drugs, my dreams are frightening enough."
- M.C. Escher

Lesson Plans and Activities

Elementary School

Here at GoodCharacter.com we have a [lesson plan on how to say no](#) and still be cool, with writing assignments and discussion questions.

Have kids [create a timeline](#) so they know their goals, and can understand how drugs and alcohol will mess up those plans.

[This lesson plan](#) has younger elementary students look at how smoking affects the heart and other body parts, while the version for [older elementary students](#) has them analyze media advertisements to find out how provocative ads make smoking look fun, when it really isn't as cool as it looks. (PDF)

Middle School

Through research and songs, [this interdisciplinary lesson](#) has students encourage each other to create their own anti-drug message.

For Middle School students, [GoodCharacter.com has a guide](#) on saying no to alcohol and other drugs.

Using a chapter from [the novel "Tom Sawyer"](#), this lesson plan has students think and discuss the usage of drugs and friendships, and how to say no. "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" can be found online at [Project Gutenberg](#), or at your local library.

High School

This lesson plan is an excellent way for groups of students to teach each other about the [dangers of various drugs](#). The optional video can be found at your local library.

Students learn [how drugs affect certain aspects of the brain](#). Student groups then choose a drug and present to the class the long term and short term effects of those drugs.

Not all drugs are the kind that are used to get high. This project has students discuss what they know about steroids, and who uses them. Then, students [research steroid use](#) and the nasty effects it can have.

"If we can get them to understand that saying "no" to drugs is rebelling against their parents and the generations of the past, we'd make it an enormous success."
- John Van de Kamp

Tips and Resources

This website is filled with comics, games and [information for elementary students](#) on why and how drugs are dangerous, and what to do when confronted with having to say no.

Geared towards [stopping teens from starting](#) to use drugs, this website has information, as well as quizzes and downloadable content. There's also a question and answer section with a doctor, and suggestions on how to keep others from starting drugs, or smoking.

[The Partnership at Drugfree.org](#) helps prevent drug use, has information on how to intervene if you think drug use is going on, how to get treatment and recover from drug abuse.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving has information to help teens understand [why alcohol and cars can be a deadly mix](#).

In this lesson plan, students role play a week in the life of either a responsible adult or as a drug addict. Students learn that drugs cost money, which could go to more fun and important things. Although the website asks for registration in order to obtain the full lesson plan, [you can still get most of the lesson plan here](#).

"Drugs? Everyone has a choice and I choose not to do drugs."
- Leonardo DiCaprio

In the News

While caffeinated alcohol drinks, such as "Four Loko" and "Moonshot" have been banned by the FDA, this article also shows that some students will still mix energy drinks with alcohol. That mixture can still be hazardous. [Discuss with older students](#) why caffeinated alcohol drinks are dangerous.

In coordination with "Youth Above the Influence", these students go out to liquor stores, and with permission, put stickers on alcohol packaging. [Use this article to inspire students](#) to find their own creative way of saying no to drugs.

"I love drugs, but I hate hangovers, and the hatred of the hangover wins by a landslide every time."
- Margaret Cho

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