

7th GRADE: SUBSTANCE USE

LESSON 2 OVERVIEW

Say No to Drugs and Alcohol & Yes to Your Dreams

**Lesson Time:**

30 Minutes

Materials Provided:

- Video: [What is Fentanyl?](#) (1:23)
- Lesson Slides [Download](#)
- My Future Dreams Handout

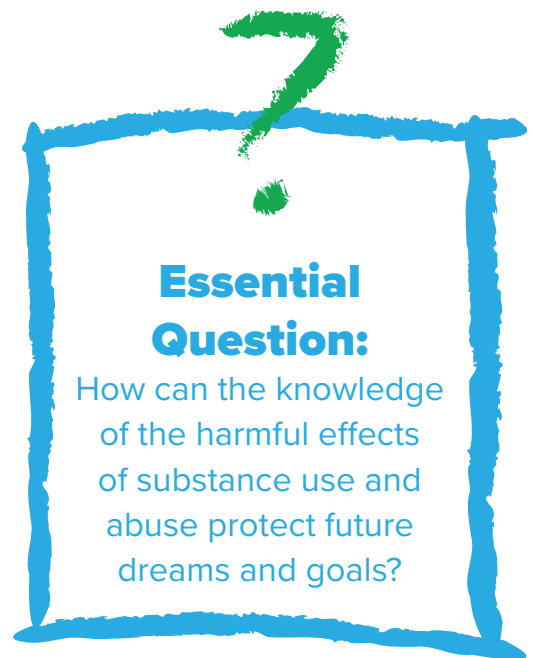
Materials Needed:

- Projector with Video/Audio Capability
- Pencil
- Writing Utensil

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. Explore different types of addictive substances.
2. Recognize the health, social, and legal consequences of substance use and abuse.
3. Gain knowledge to help them make the best choices for a brighter future.



Say No to Drugs and Alcohol & Yes to Your Dreams

Introduction: (2 minutes)

In our last lesson, we talked about peer pressure and learned refusal techniques to help when we feel pressured to do something we know is wrong. Would one of you like to share one of the refusal skills you liked best? (*Allow students to respond. Some examples may include: saying no quickly, using a firm voice, making direct eye contact, telling people you are substance-free, leaning on a support system, and avoiding areas of temptation. You may fill in examples that students fail to mention.*) Good answers, students. The key is to have a solid plan, so you will be ready if your peers pressure you to try substances.

Slide/Handout



Lesson Script/Talking Points

Slide 1: Lesson Introduction

Now that you are armed with good skills for refusing peer pressure, we will look at the different types of substances and the negative consequences of each one. I know all of you have big dreams for your future. Would any of you like to share your future dreams with the class? Thank you so much for sharing. I love to hear about your future goals and dreams. Today as we learn about the different types of substances, I want you to think about how using substances can impact your dreams for the future. I want you to learn to say "NO" to Drugs and "Yes" to your dreams.



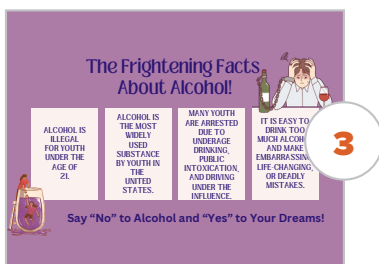
Core Lesson: (18 minutes)

Slide 2: Nicotine and E-cigarettes

The first substance we will explore today is nicotine.

- Most e-cigarettes and vapes contain nicotine, and nicotine is highly addictive. People can become addicted even before regular use.
- Nicotine is even more dangerous for youth like you because your brains are still developing. Teens who use nicotine products can harm parts of their brain that control learning, mood, attention, and impulse control.
- Feeling anxious or depressed are the most common reasons middle school students give for experimenting with nicotine products. However, nicotine addiction or withdrawal can make anxiety and depression even worse.
- Due to nicotine's harmful effects, it is against the law for anyone under the age of 21 to purchase or use nicotine products.
- Aerosol from e-cigarettes can contain cancer-causing chemicals and tiny particles that can be inhaled into the lungs. (CDC, 2024)
- Nearly half of all youth who have tried e-cigarettes report current use. (CDC, 2023) That is an alarming number. It's hard to imagine that almost half continue to vape after only one use. This is a real concern and problem for youth today.

The best choice is never to try vaping, not even once. If you think you may be addicted to nicotine, get help now. The earlier you get help, the easier it will be to stop. Say "No" to vapes and "Yes" to your dreams!



Slide 3: Alcohol

The next substance we will learn about today is alcohol.

- Alcohol is a depressant drug that is illegal for youth under the age of 21. Underage drinking is a significant public health issue in the United States.
- Alcohol is the most widely used substance among America's youth and

Slide/Handout

Lesson Script/Talking Points

- can cause them enormous health and safety risks. (NIAAA, 2024)
- Many youth who choose to experiment with alcohol find themselves in legal trouble due to underage drinking, public intoxication, and driving under the influence. The consequences of underage drinking can impact everyone, regardless of age or whether they drink.
- It is easy to drink too much alcohol and make embarrassing, life-changing, or deadly mistakes.

Directly or indirectly, we all experience the effects of aggressive behavior, property damage, injuries, violence, and deaths stemming from underage drinking. This issue is not confined to certain families; it is a nationwide concern. (NIAAA, 2024)

Make the smart choice to avoid underage drinking to protect your future goals and dreams. Say “No” to alcohol and “Yes” to your dreams!

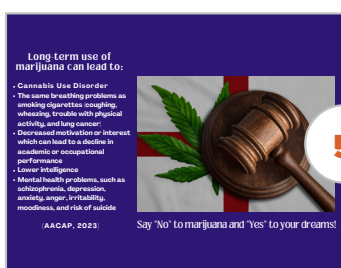
Marijuana

According to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (2023), marijuana use by teens is the highest it has been in 30 years. Recreational marijuana use is illegal in every state for children and teens. Today’s marijuana plants contain 2-3 times more THC, the ingredient that makes people high. The ingredient CBD that is considered to have medical benefits remains about the same at 1%. Many teenagers are under the assumption that marijuana is natural and safer than other drugs. This is not true. Marijuana has serious effects on teens’ academics, physical health, and emotional health.



Slide 4: Short-term Use of Marijuana

- School difficulties
- Problems with memory and concentration
- Increased aggression
- Car accidents
- Use of other drugs or alcohol
- Risky sexual behaviors
- Worsening of underlying mental health conditions including mood changes and suicidal thinking
- Increased risk of psychosis
- Interference with prescribed medication (AACAP, 2023)



Slide 5: Long-term Use of Marijuana

- Cannabis Use Disorder
- The same breathing problems as smoking cigarettes (coughing, wheezing, trouble with physical activity, and lung cancer)
- Decreased motivation or interest which can lead to a decline in academic or occupational performance
- Lower intelligence
- Mental health problems, such as schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, anger, irritability, moodiness, and risk of suicide (AACAP, 2023)

Core Lesson (cont)

Slide/Handout



Lesson Script/Talking Points

Many teens believe that marijuana use isn't serious, but it is illegal and the health consequences of use are long-term. You are too smart to allow marijuana to dumb you and numb you. Say "No" to marijuana and "Yes" to your dreams!

Slide 6: Prescription Drugs

Prescription medicines are safe for people only when taken as prescribed by a medical professional and purchased from a licensed pharmacy.

- It is illegal and it can be deadly to take prescription medicines that aren't prescribed to you and that aren't purchased from a licensed pharmacy.
- Criminals are producing high volumes of fake pills and falsely advertising them as legitimate prescription pills. These fake pills are easy to find and are often laced with fentanyl. (DEA, n.d.)
- A person may purchase a pill they believe is Adderall or Xanax and accidentally overdose on one counterfeit pill.
- Prescription drugs are the leading cause of overdose deaths. (SAMHSA, 2024)

Let's take a look at a video to help you better understand the terrifying effects of fentanyl.

[What is Fentanyl?](#) (1:23)

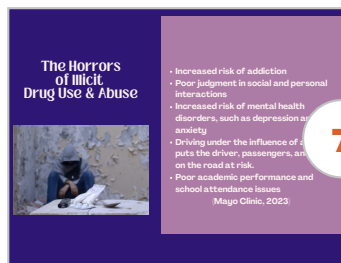
Hopefully, this brief video will help you to see just how dangerous fake prescription pills can be. Don't let one pill kill your dreams. Say "No" to illegal prescription medicines and "Yes" to your dreams!

Slide 7: Illicit Drugs

Our last topic today is illicit drugs. An illicit drug is one that is forbidden by law such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin. Prescription drugs that are used for non-medical purposes are also considered illicit. There are absolutely no benefits to using illicit drugs. However, there are many negative consequences of illicit drug use and abuse.

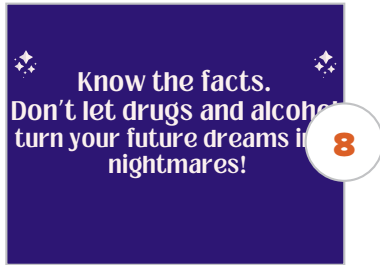
Negative consequences of teen drug abuse might include:

- Increased risk of addiction
- Poor judgment in social and personal interactions
- Increased risk of mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety
- Driving under the influence of any drug puts the driver, passengers, and others on the road at risk.
- Poor academic performance and school attendance issues (Mayo Clinic, 2023)



Core Lesson (cont)

Slide/Handout



Lesson Script/Talking Points

Slide 8: Know the Facts

Sometimes it is hard for youth to see the link between their actions today and the consequences for tomorrow. Young people tend to feel indestructible and immune to the risks of substance use. Sadly, the grip of these substances is so powerful that they can take control of a young person quickly. Many never feel the grip of addiction coming until it has such a strong hold on them that they are willing to do almost anything to get their hands on their drug of choice. Many families and many lives have been destroyed due to drug addiction. I don't want this to happen to any of you. I want you to know the facts. Don't let drugs and alcohol turn your dreams into nightmares!

We are always told to say no to drugs, but how often are we told to say yes to our dreams? When you say "No" to drugs, **you are** saying "Yes" to your dreams.

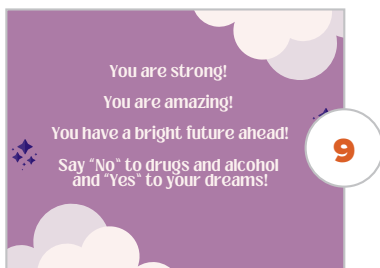
How many of you have heard the statement, "Keep your eyes on the prize?" You need to keep your eyes on your dreams for the future. Be determined not to take any risks that can steal your dreams. When you keep your goals in mind, it makes it easier for you to say no to the pressures to experiment with substances. You were created for more than a life filled with substance use and addiction. Make good choices and choose friends who encourage you and bring out your best qualities.

Closing Activity: My Future Dreams (8 minutes)



How do you think drugs can affect your dreams for the future? (*Allow students to respond.*) Thanks for sharing, students. I can't wait to see all the wonderful and amazing things you will achieve in your life.

I am going to give each of you a handout. On the handout, I want you to list three dreams you have for the future, and in each box, I want you to list several things you will do to accomplish each dream. Not only is it important to focus on your dreams, but it is also important to have a good plan for how you will achieve them. (*Distribute the handouts. If time permits, allow students to share their future dreams.*) Students, please keep this handout as a reminder to yourself.



Slide 9: Lesson Closing

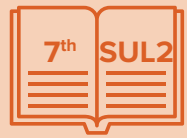
Don't forget your dreams whenever you feel pressured to try drugs or alcohol. You are strong, you are amazing, and you have a bright future ahead. Say "No" to drugs and alcohol and "Yes" to your dreams!

Closing: Essential Question (2 minutes)

How can the knowledge of the harmful effects of substance use and abuse protect future dreams and goals? (*Allow for responses.*)

Knowing the harmful effects of substances and staying focused on future dreams and goals will help teens make better choices for a brighter future.

Core Lesson (cont)



References:

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2024, February). *Get the facts about underage drinking*. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/underage-drinking>

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MY FUTURE *Dreams*

**Say "Yes" to your dreams and
"No" to drugs and alcohol!**

Write a dream you have for your future in each small rectangle. Underneath each dream write how you plan to achieve that dream inside the larger rectangle.

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