Vaping: Know the truth

Discussion and Activity Guide

Course Description

Vaping: Know the truth is a new national youth vaping prevention curriculum created by Truth Initiative and Kaiser Permanente, in collaboration with the American Heart Association, to educate students about the health dangers of e-cigarette use. This free digital learning experience is being developed as part of Truth Initiative's nationally recognized truth campaign and Kaiser Permanente's Thriving Schools initiative. In addition to encouraging students to live vape-free lives, this self-led interactive curriculum offers resources to help young people who are currently using e-cigarettes to quit, through truth's first-of-its-kind text message youth quit vaping program. This is Quitting is already helping over 200,000 youth and young adults on their journeys to quit.

Second Post-Course Survey

To get a true measure of the impact of this course on student attitudes and behaviors, we would like students to take a brief survey approximately 30 days after finishing the Vaping: Know the truth course. Students will not be marked COMPLETE in the teacher’s gradebook until they have submitted this survey, but the teacher will be able to still see the scores and completion of quizzes for each module. We appreciate your support in helping encourage students to take the survey as it will help us achieve the goal of improving student health through vaping prevention.

How to Use the Discussion and Activity Guide

Each online lesson is designed to take approximately 10 minutes for students to complete. This guide provides discussion questions for both before and after the online experience. These questions are designed to activate prior knowledge and to deepen student comprehension of the concepts covered in the course.

Each of the following pages includes the questions and possible answers for the four lessons. They can be used one at a time, in any order, or as stand alone content. Questions marked with an asterisk are aligned with content questions that the students will be, or will have already been, exposed to in the course experience.

Note: While we encourage students to have healthy, engaging conversations about these topics, we recommend that in-classroom discussions be moderated by instructors. Nicotine use and addiction are serious issues, requiring a facilitator who can effectively engage students in active, collaborative, respectful, and thoughtful dialogue.

Lesson 1: Know

Lesson Overview

This lesson introduces learners to the topic of vaping, invites them to reflect on their awareness and knowledge of the topic, covers a brief history of tobacco and nicotine use, and covers the ingredients present in common vaping devices.

Learning Objectives

• Recognize that regardless of delivery mechanism, nicotine is addictive in all forms
• Recognize the health risks associated with using e-cigarettes due to their chemical ingredients and delivery mechanism
• Recognize that you are empowered to make healthy and informed choices
Activating Prior Knowledge | Before the online experience

- How important to you is the ability to make your own choices?
  » **Tip:** consider framing discussion around autonomy, individuality, self-expression
- How important is it to have all of the facts about a topic before you make your choice?
  » **Tip:** ask students to give compare/contrast examples. What’s something they think it is important to have the facts about? What’s something less important?
- What have you seen, learned, or been exposed to about vaping?*
  » **Tip:** students may be reluctant to share their experiences. Emphasize that this setting is a safe space where they can openly discuss these topics.

Deepening Understanding | After the online experience

- What connections do you think exist between vaping nicotine and smoking cigarettes?
  » **Tip:** many teens today have received misinformation that distances vaping from smoking, and many believe that vape juice ingredients don’t contain nicotine. Emphasize that vaping is just a different form of consuming nicotine.
- Why do you think people have been using nicotine and tobacco (smoking, chewing, vaping) for so long?
  » **Tip:** in the third lesson, students will explore the dangers of becoming addicted to nicotine, but this is a good time to start to discuss that the addictive properties of the drug may be one reason for its long history of use.
- How do you make choices about what goes into your body? What are your criteria for making those choices?
  » **Tip:** throughout each lesson, the importance of choice, and making the right choices, is emphasized. This is a good time to start a broader discussion about the products students use, the things they eat, put on or into their bodies, and to begin to make the connection that nicotine use is another such choice. Students will have just reviewed many secondary ingredients contained in vape juice that have harmful effects on the body.

Lesson 2: Uncover

Lesson Overview

This lesson confronts learners with the hard facts about e-cigarette companies' marketing and advertising schemes, and debunks the myth that vaping is a safe activity or a safer option than smoking.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize that e-cigarettes can deliver as much or more nicotine than cigarettes.
- Recognize the health risks associated with using e-cigarettes due to their chemical ingredients and delivery mechanism.
- Describe the strategies used by e-cigarette manufacturers to appeal to their current and prospective users.
- Recognize that you are empowered to make healthy and informed choices.

Activating Prior Knowledge | Before the online experience

- Should companies disclose the ingredients in their products?*
  » **Tip:** consider giving a few examples of other products -- food, beauty, etc. -- that have been found to have harmful ingredients with dangerous side-effects. This will help frame the question and allow for students to make better connections.
- Should companies always be truthful with their customers, even if the truth isn’t appealing or pleasant?
  » **Tip:** we all respond well to companies with strong ethos and credibility, who tell the truth even when it hurts. Consider framing the question with an example of a company that did not disclose something to
the public, and the loss of trust that followed (e.g. the VW Emissions cheating scandal). Emphasize the loss of ability to make an informed decision when one doesn’t have all of the facts.

**Deepening Understanding | After the online experience**

- Why is it problematic for a company to admit that their business model relies on keeping users addicted?
  - **Tip:** all companies rely on returning customers, but when companies rely on chemical addiction to keep customers coming back, that’s a problem. According to a congressional report, JUUL admitted to relying on keeping users addicted to nicotine. They also presented their product as a way to quit smoking (and by implication, using nicotine). Consider teasing out some of these contradictions with your students, and asking them how that changes their perception of choice and the ability to choose.

- Do you think it’s right for companies to market addictive products to underage users?
  - **Tip:** in the case of JUUL, multiple court filings and investigative findings exposed the fact that they used techniques to market their products to youth that had worked for Big Tobacco. Both vaping companies and Big Tobacco also saw vaping nicotine as a way to replace the customer base they were losing as smoking declined in the U.S.

- What’s wrong with the idea that just because something is different--or used differently--that that makes it safe?
  - **Tip:** vaping nicotine has been described and marketed by the industry as the "safe" alternative to smoking. This is faulty logic, especially since there’s still a lot we don’t know about the effect vaping has on the body. Consider raising the topic of logical fallacies with your students, and explaining that just because two things seem similar, that doesn’t always make them comparable.

### Lesson 3: Overcome

**Lesson Overview**

This lesson challenges learners to consider the dangers of nicotine addiction, reinforces addiction as a primary danger of vaping, and lays the framework for quitting.

**Learning Objectives**

- Recognize the physiological and psychological properties of nicotine.
- Recognize that e-cigarettes can deliver as much or more nicotine than cigarettes.
- Recognize the physical effects associated with nicotine use.
- Recognize that regardless of delivery mechanism, nicotine is addictive in all forms.
- Recognize that nicotine addiction may require meaningful and substantive lifestyle changes to overcome.
- Recognize that you are empowered to make healthy and informed choices.

**Activating Prior Knowledge | Before the online experience**

- What do you know about the topic of addiction?
  - **Tip:** some students may be especially sensitive to the content of this lesson, especially if they know or live with someone who struggles with substance use. Emphasize to your students that there are a whole range of addictions, including substance-related, digital, etc., and that the important thing is realizing the problem, and knowing you need help.

- Is addiction a disease or is it a choice? Do you think there are stigmas associated with being addicted? Why or why not?
  - **Tip:** stigma is the greatest single barrier to help-seeking, not only for issues surrounding substance use, but also mental health, and even physical health. Encourage your students to open lines of dialogue around asking for help, whether they are the ones in need of help, or others. Sometimes merely presenting yourself as someone willing to listen can be the opening another person needs to confide in you that they are struggling.
Deepening Understanding | After the online experience

- Why is drug memory an important thing to know about when talking about addiction to nicotine or other drugs?
  » **Tip:** recent research shows that the brain creates what are called drug memories -- the brain will continue to remember that it used to like that drug and will continue to want it back. This makes overcoming addiction especially difficult, as the dependence is not merely physiological -- instead, it’s very much tied to brain chemistry. For both vapers and non-vapers alike, this is potent information that can help contextualize how powerful addiction to nicotine can be.

- What are signs of addiction? How do you know someone is addicted or becoming addicted to a substance?
  » **Tip:** this lesson presents students with a self-check checklist of questions to ask to evaluate whether or not they are becoming addicted to nicotine (if they use it). It’s also a useful way to reflect on other kinds of addictive behaviors, so consider using it or something similar if you have a more wide-ranging discussion about substance use and addiction. Teens have reported that the “aha!” moments, as in, “Aha! This is something I didn’t use to do...I may be becoming addicted” are especially powerful in helping them to realize they have a problem.

- Does nicotine rob us of our ability to choose?
  » **Tip:** because nicotine hijacks our brain and changes its chemistry, our ability to make unimpaired decisions diminishes. Explore the topic of addictive substances with your students, and emphasize to them that using them negates autonomy in decision-making.

Lesson 4: Change

Lesson Overview

This lesson looks to end the curriculum on an empowering note, and fuel the positive social norms that sit opposite of vaping, self-care and quitting. It acknowledges the challenges of being young but looks to refocus our audience’s energy on better, alternative behaviors while still delivering the relevant truth about vaping.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize that nicotine addiction may require meaningful and substantive lifestyle changes to overcome
- Recognize that you are empowered to make healthy and informed choices.
- Demonstrate how to seek out, recommend, and utilize the support services and resources that are available in school, local community, or nationally, to help you or someone else quit using.
- Access a free, first-of-its-kind text message quit vaping program called This is Quitting if they are a current e-cigarette user looking to quit.

Activating Prior Knowledge | Before the online experience

- What does self-care mean to you?
  » **Tip:** in this lesson, students will read real quotes from their peers on what self-care means to them. Consider teeing off this lesson with a discussion about the importance of self-care, but emphasize that self-care looks a little bit different to everybody.

Deepening Understanding | After the online experience

- What does beauty mean to you?
  » **Tip:** students will have explored self-care tips around beauty in this lesson. Consider asking your students to individually explain what beauty means to them, and emphasize that beauty is not merely superficial, and looks different to everybody.
• What do physical activity and mobility mean to you?
  » **Tip:** students will have explored self-care tips around fitness and mobility in this lesson. Consider asking your students to individually explain what fitness and mobility mean to them, and emphasize that across all different levels of ability, we can all find a self-care regimen that works for us.

• What does wellness mean to you?
  » **Tip:** students will have explored self-care tips around wellness in this lesson. Consider asking your students to individually explain what wellness means to them. Mental wellness is especially important in the context of isolation and remote settings.

This is Quitting

• This new national youth vaping prevention curriculum is created with Truth Initiative, in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente and the American Heart Association. This free digital learning experience is being developed as part of Truth Initiative’s nationally recognized truth campaign and offers a first-of-its-kind text message youth quit vaping program called This is Quitting as a resource. truth's This is Quitting program is already helping more than 200,000 youth and young adults on their journeys to quit. More information about the program can be found at: [www.truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting](http://www.truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting)

• Consider reviewing this and other resources included in the course with your students to better equip them with where to go for help, either for themself or someone else.

• Young people interested in signing up for the program can text KNOWTIQ to 88709. Once enrolled, they will receive ~1 message per day for up to 12 weeks after enrolling to help them build skills to cope with cravings, build self-efficacy and encourage them on their journey to quit.

Activities

Activities Overview

The objective of these exploratory activities is to encourage students to both practice and build on the knowledge they are gaining on vaping and its effect on the body. Several of the activities are designed to be paired with the discussion questions above. You can mix and match, apply one of the four activities to each lesson, or write and use your own questions, or assign students to draft questions of their choosing. Note that most of these activities are written for face-to-face classroom settings, but can easily be adapted to distance learning using digital tools like virtual whiteboards, online discussion forums, video conferencing, collaborative document platforms, etc.

Capstone Activities

**Design an Addictive Product**

• Suggested materials or media: poster board, video file, audio podcast file, social media post, Adobe Sketch file or similar.

• Instructions: Assign individual students or student teams to develop and design an idea for a product that they know may cause harm to their customers (with an emphasis on addiction) based on the knowledge they've gained about the marketing and advertising tactics of the tobacco and vaping industries after taking the course.

• Criteria:
  » Students should identify a target customer base for their product. Is it their peers? Is it young adults? Older adults? Pre-teens?
  » Students should accompany their product idea with a clear written description in paragraph format of what risks are involved in using their product.

• Prompts:
  » How would they market this product?
» What media would they buy?
» Would they use social media?
» Would they put it in every convenience store near schools?
» What flavors would you have available?
» Would they add something to it to reduce immediate negative consequences? (e.g., menthol suppresses the coughing reflex)
» Would they make it small enough to be concealed?
» Would they make it look like another device so it is not detected?
» Would they sell it online?
» Would they use youthful models or make the packaging look more like other brands that are already on the market?

• Analysis:
  » Once students submit their product ideas, consider holding a peer review activity where each student or team of students analyzes their peer’s ideas based on some or all of the above criteria, and explains why they think the product idea is or isn’t justified based on its risks. If students want to critique a peer’s idea, encourage them to cite the criteria or facts that the idea is based on to stay away from subjective judgements.

• Assessment
  » If you choose to make this a graded activity, use the same criteria as with the peer review activity.

**Design A Vaping Awareness Advertisement**

• Suggested materials or media: poster board, video file, audio podcast file, social media post, Adobe Sketch file or similar.

• Instructions: Assign individual students or student teams to generate a vaping awareness advertisement based on knowledge about the topic they’ve gained from taking the course.

• Criteria:
  » Students should include within or base their advertisement on at least three facts from Vaping: Know the truth.
  » Students should identify a target audience for their advertisement. Is it their peers? Is it young adults? Older adults? Pre-teens?
  » Students should accompany their advertisement with a clear written description in paragraph format of what their intended message is. Is it to warn people about the health dangers of vaping? Is it designed to warn smokers that vaping isn’t a good way to quit using nicotine?

• Analysis:
  » Once students submit their advertisements, consider holding a peer review activity where each student or team of students analyzes their peer’s ads based on some or all of the above criteria, and explains why they think the advertisement is or isn’t effective. If students want to critique a peer’s ad, encourage them to cite the criteria or facts that the ad is based on to stay away from subjective judgements.

• Assessment
  » If you choose to make this a graded activity, use the same criteria as with the peer review activity.

**Advertising Attention**

• Suggested materials or media: paper and pens or collaborative document

• Instructions: Have your students keep a tally of all the advertisements they see over the space of a week or two, including billboards on the road, signs at the grocery store, TV ads, YouTube ads, etc. Then, learners can categorize the advertisements they’ve seen. Are there differences based on where they live? What did they watch or see? Break into groups to compare and contrast what ads are seen by each learner, and how that may impact their ability to recognize different products.
Tip: Explain that where we live and what we look like (age, race, gender identity) impact which ads are targeted to us. For example, a 2013 study found that Black children between the ages of 11 and 15 were 3x more likely to recognize Newport packaging than their peers, and significantly less likely to identify Marlboro packaging. The tobacco industry has a well-documented history of developing and marketing menthol brands to racial and ethnic minorities and youth. When given the opportunity to market their products differently, JUUL turned to the same playbook to market to youth.

Optional Activities

- Graffiti Wall
  - Materials needed: Butcher paper & markers.
  - Instructions: Learners break into small groups for each question. They use the provided materials to write down their thoughts and graffiti their responses to their assigned question. Wrap up with a share-out and whole group discussion for each question.

- Fishbowl
  - Materials needed: Articles on e-cigarettes (what we know now & how it affects teen populations).
  - Instructions: Divide students into small groups. Have each small group read an article, summarize & generate questions. Have each small group present, then go through the discussion questions.

- Gallery Walk
  - Materials needed: posters & markers.
  - Instructions: Posters are set up around the classroom with one question written on each. Students rotate in small groups to each poster, discuss the question, and write down their group response. They will continue to rotate around the room until they have responded to each question. Wrap up this activity with a review of each poster.

- Think-Pair-Share
  - Instructions: Select some discussion questions from the section above. For each question, give students time to think about it. Then, have students turn to a partner to discuss their initial ideas. Finally, have pairs share with the whole group what they discussed for each question.