

ELEMENTARY  
AND MIDDLE  
SCHOOL

# TOPIC SERIES ACTIVITY

Depressants



# ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



## Depressants

### Overview

During this activity, students will learn more about the impact of depressants on the brain and the body by participating in a literacy strategy called “whittle it down”. This strategy provides scaffolding to help students with summarizing complex text. Students will watch the Operation Prevention Topic Series video on depressants and then whittle down large chunks of information as a whole group, small group, and then independently, generating a list of important words from the text. Students then use their final words to create a summary of the impact of depressants on the body and the brain.

### Modifications

Please note that all activities can be adjusted to accommodate both a face to face and a virtual learning experience.

### Grade Level

Grades 3–8

### Activity Duration

30–45 minutes

### Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze sources and synthesize information on depressants' impact on the brain and the body.
- Create a summary paragraph to explain the impact of depressants on the brain and the body.

### Materials

- Operation Prevention Topic Series Depressants Video
- *True/False Signs*
- *Five Word Capture* Handout
- *Depressants Summary* Handout

# HEALTH STANDARDS

## National Health Standards:

- 1.8.1 Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.
- 5.5.6 Describe the outcomes of a health-related decision.
- 8.5.1 Express opinions and give accurate information about health issues.

## ELA Common Core State Standards

- W.5.2.D Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

# ENGAGE

- To begin the class, explain to students that they are about to participate in a quick activity to reveal information on a drug classification known as depressants.
- Next, post the *True* and *False* signs on opposite sides of your classroom.
- Explain to students that you are about to read a couple of statements aloud and, as you read each statement, students should consider what they think they know about the topic. Then students should then walk quietly to the side of the classroom that reflects their thoughts on the statement being either *True* or *False*. Remind students that they may not be certain about their opinion, and it's okay to make an educated guess.
- First, share the following statement: *Drugs known as depressants can take many forms.*
- Give students a moment to think about whether they think the statement is *True* or *False* before they move.
- Once each student has moved to a corner of the classroom, encourage them to share their reasoning with their like-minded peers. Then, ask one or two students from each group to briefly summarize their group's rationale.
- Complete the same process with the second statement: *Taking someone else's medication can be okay, even if it is not prescribed for you.*
- To close the activity, ask students to show you with their fingers—on a scale of 0 (not at all sure) to 10 (very sure)—how confident they feel about these opinions.

# INVESTIGATE AND VIEW

- Distribute the *Five Words Capture* handout (two per page). Explain that students will now watch a video and determine five words that are significant to understanding drugs known as depressants.
- Next, play the Operation Prevention Topic Series video on depressants, pausing two to three times to allow time for students to take notes.
- After the video, ask students to write their list of five words relating to or essential to explaining depressants.  
**NOTE:** for younger students, it may be useful to play the video a second time to help capture keywords.
- Next, move students into small groups of 2-3 and provide each group with chart paper and markers.
- Have group members take turns sharing their words and the reason why they chose the word while one team member records them on the butcher paper.
- Next, ask the group to whittle down their list to the three most important words, circling their selections on their paper. As students whittle down their words, ask them to share their reasons why certain words may be more important or relevant than others.
- When groups have finished, have each group share their final three words with the class. As students share, keep a list on the board of the words most important to the class. Before moving on, take a moment to ensure that each student has an understanding of the words and address lingering questions from students.

# APPLY

- Now that the class has a full list of words, instruct students that they are now going to use the words to create a summary of what depressants are and how they impact the body. It may be useful to determine a set number of words that a student must use to complete the summary.
- Finally, provide students with a chance to share their summary with the class. After a few students have shared, open the class up for discussion on what was learned about prescription depressants.

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# FIVE WORD CAPTURE



## Five Important Words Handout

Word #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #5: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

## Five Important Words Handout

Word #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Word #5: \_\_\_\_\_

Why?



# DEPRESSANTS SUMMARY SHEET

**Directions:** Using a number of words determined by your teacher, create a summary of how depressants impact the adolescent brain and the body.



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