

Peer Pressure Survey

Directions Surveys are conducted to collect data by asking a group of people to answer the same set of questions. The results are only as good as the questions asked. Follow the steps below to design and conduct a survey on peer pressure.

- 1 Choose a focus for your survey.** Peer pressure is a topic that is too broad to cover thoroughly in one survey. Focusing on a specific aspect of peer pressure will be more effective. Decide what you would like to know, and write that as a question. Here are some topics related to peer pressure that you might want to explore:
 - Which behaviors and attitudes are peers most likely to influence?
 - What factors tend to make teens more or less vulnerable to peer pressure?
 - How does the influence of peers compare to other influences on teens?
 - Is peer pressure more common at certain ages?
 - Is most peer pressure positive, negative, or mixed?
 - How do teens manage peer pressure?
- 2 Write possible questions.** What could you ask people in order to get the information you are seeking? What group of people do you want to interview? For example, if you want to give your survey to young children, make sure the questions are appropriate and can be understood by children in this age group.
- 3 Choose the best questions.** Narrow down your list of questions to those that are likely to give the most accurate results. Organize the questions into a list, deciding on the order for arranging them and what format to use. You may find it easier to process the results if you ask multiple-choice questions, but you might get more useful answers if you ask open-ended questions that people put in their own words.
- 4 Distribute your survey.** Make arrangements for a group of people to take the survey. You will probably get the best results if you allow them to take the survey anonymously. They may be more willing to share certain information if their names are not attached to the answers.
- 5 Compile the results.** Count how many people in your survey group answered each question in a particular way. This is your survey data. Make a graph that shows the data.
- 6 Interpret the data.** Analyze the results in writing. What conclusions can you draw from the answers people gave you?

When the Pressure is On

Directions Peer pressure is easier to handle when you recognize and understand it. Read the information below and answer the questions that follow. Then follow up with one or more of the Discovery activities.

Sometimes people talk about peer pressure as though it were a matter of one teen handing another a cigarette and then refusing to take no for an answer. The reality of peer pressure can be a lot more complicated than that. For example, if you spend a lot of time around people who smoke, you may start to feel that this is normal behavior and that you should smoke too—even if no one ever actually offers you a cigarette.

Children and teens often do things to fit in with their friends without even thinking about it. They dress and talk in certain ways, study or do not study, and pick up certain attitudes and beliefs about people and activities. If you asked them, however, they probably would not think they had been pressured in these areas. For this reason, some researchers have started talking in terms of “peer influence” rather than pressure.

Peer influences are not always harmful. In some cases, they are actually helpful. A teen who spends time with a group of teens who

respect others and are involved in their community will probably pick up these positive attitudes and behaviors. In other cases, peer influence is not really harmful or helpful. In matters such as musical taste, for instance, there is no real right or wrong.

The kind of peer pressure that worries everyone is the kind that leads children and teens into activities that are destructive to them or to others. Warding off this kind of pressure takes more than just saying no. It means recognizing the influence that peers have on you—and being able to recognize when that influence is harmful. The best protection against negative peer pressure is to have friends who will be a positive, rather than a negative, influence on you. Teens benefit by cultivating friendships with a variety of people. In this way, your attitudes will not all be influenced by the same group. It also helps to do things that build self-confidence. This gives you the strength to do what you believe in—not what all your friends are doing.

1. Is peer pressure always destructive? Explain. _____

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CHAPTER 8 You and Your Peers (Continued)

Focus on Leadership

2. Would you say that you have experienced peer pressure? If so, how did you respond?

3. Which kind of peer pressure do you believe is most common? Explain why you think so.

4. What do you think is the best way to deal with peer pressure? _____

Discovery

- A. Peer Pressure Song** Write a song about peer pressure. You can choose any musical style, from rap to country, and approach the subject from any angle you choose. You might have your song tell a story about a case of peer pressure, or you might talk about the subject in general terms. Try to give a realistic view of the subject and how to deal with it.
- B. Original Story** Write a story about someone being pressured or influenced by peers. The influence may be positive or negative. In either case, you should show how the person responds to the influence and what effect it has on his or her life.
- C. Panel Discussion** Have you seen panel discussions in which several experts discuss a topic and answer questions from the audience? With a team of classmates, hold a panel discussion on the subject of peer pressure. Prepare a series of questions to help move the discussion along, such as “What are some of the ways that peers influence each other?” If possible, arrange to hold your discussion before an audience of adults and have them ask you—the experts—questions about what it is really like to face peer pressure as a teen today.
- D. Skit** With a team of classmates, write and perform a skit that teaches young children about peer pressure. You may use puppets or wear costumes as part of your skit. Your skit can focus on people of any age, but the subject matter should be appropriate for young children to watch. If possible, arrange to perform your skit for a class at a local preschool or elementary school.

Picture of Friendship

Directions Read the quotations below on the subject of friendship. Then follow the steps to create an original artwork that expresses your view of what friendship means.

Aristotle: “What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies.”

Ben Jonson: “True friendship consists not in the multitude of friends, but in their worth and value.”

Kahlil Gibran: “Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson: “The only way to have a friend is to be one.”

Henry David Thoreau: “True friendship can afford true knowledge. It does not depend on darkness and ignorance.”

Henry Ward Beecher: “It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend his faults.”

George Eliot: “Perhaps the most delightful friendships are those in which there is much agreement, much disputation, and yet more personal liking.”

Anais Nin: “Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.”

- 1 Think about friendship.** The quotations above present several views of friendship. Think about what best sums up the idea of friendship for you. Could you summarize it in a phrase, an image, a memory of an event? Perhaps for you friendship can not be summed up in one idea or image, but a collection of words and images might do. Think about all the ways that a work of art could show what friendship means to you.
- 2 Search for photos and words.** Look through old magazines and newspapers, and clip out pictures and words that capture your idea of friendship. You may use these words and images in your artwork or simply refer to them for inspiration.
- 3 Write phrases that express your ideas about friendship.** These might be quotations from well-known authors, like those listed earlier, or lyrics from songs. They could also be your own thoughts expressed in words. Each phrase might be as short as a few words or as long as an entire poem. Add these written phrases to your materials.

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CHAPTER 8 You and Your Peers (Continued)**Focus on *Artistry***

- 4 Think about formats.** Look through the materials you have gathered. How could you use them as the basis for an original work of art? Here are a few suggestions:
- Assemble the words and images you clipped, along with some of those you wrote down, on a large sheet of paper to make a collage.
 - Use one of the images that you clipped as the basis for a drawing or painting.
 - Draw a picture that translates a quotation into a visual interpretation.
 - Make an ornamented display of a friendship quotation by copying it out in your best handwriting and decorating the letters with pictures and designs.
 - Draw a series of sketches or a cartoon that tells a story about friendship.
- 5 Choose a format for your artwork.** Keep your abilities in mind, as well as the materials and the time available. If you do not like to paint, you could make a collage instead. If you can not draw, but you are good at making designs on the computer, maybe you could create computer art. Consider different media as well. Drawings can be done in pencil, ink, chalk, or crayon. Paintings can use several different types of paint and brushes. Collages can use pictures cut from newspapers and magazines, but they can also include scraps of fabric or items gathered from nature, such as leaves and flowers. As long as you have the materials you need, no art form is off limits.
- 6 Make a rough sketch.** Draw a sketch of your work of art before doing the final version. No matter what type of artwork you create, it will help to sketch it out and get some idea of how you want everything to fit together. You may even go through several drafts of the sketch before you are ready to begin the final version.
- 7 Create your work of art.** Take your time as you work and remember to step back and look at the piece periodically. Do not worry if it seems to be a little different from your original plan. If it does not look the way you want, then go ahead and adjust it, but if your ideas about how it should look seem to be changing as you work, that is okay—just go with the flow.
- 8 Present your finished work to the class.** Explain what inspired the piece, what materials you used, and what you were hoping to express. Consider displaying your work in the classroom or in your home. You could also give it to one of your friends as a way of showing what the friendship means to you.