

## Lesson Plan: Project Based Learning on Marijuana

58-65 minutes

<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain the various effects of marijuana on school, sports, short term, and long term mental/physical</li><li>• Define and understand what a gateway drug is and its dangers</li><li>• Make a real-world connection by constructing a public service announcement (PSA) about marijuana for their peers</li></ul>
<b>Materials needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copies of EverFi's "Marijuana Quick Facts" sheet</li><li>• Blank Sheet of Paper (1/student)</li><li>• Markers/Colored Pencils</li></ul>

**Overview:** After completing AlcoholEdu for High School, students will have learned about the dangers and effects of underage drinking. In this extension lesson plan, students will review how marijuana can pose dangers similar to drinking. Students will be asked to make a real-world connection by creating a public service announcement (PSA) to be included in the school newspaper or website to make their peers aware of the dangers of marijuana.

### Background Knowledge Required:

Students must complete the five AlcoholEdu for High School modules.

### Provided Student & Teacher Materials:

- EverFi's Marijuana Quick Facts worksheet
  - *Students will use this handout to review the definitions and effects of marijuana*

Lesson Plan:

Opening	<p><i>Duration: 10 minutes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students that they completed the AlcoholEdu for High School course.</li> <li>• Break students into groups to perform Think-Pair-Share to recall one thing they learned about substance abuse.</li> <li>• After each group has shared, ask students to think about what key facts they want to share in a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about alcohol.</li> <li>• If necessary define what a PSA is and give a few examples</li> <li>• Now we're going to shift focus on another commonly abused substance, marijuana.</li> </ul>
Introduction to New Material	<p><i>Duration: 10 minutes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute copies of the EverFi Marijuana Quick Facts sheet (1/student).</li> <li>• Ask students to read each section aloud to the class</li> <li>• Pause after each section and lead a discussion on those particular facts.</li> <li>• Ask students what other effects they know about. How would you feel if these happened to you or a friend?</li> </ul>
Activity/Practice	<p><i>Duration: 30 minutes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guided Practice:</b> Break students into groups of 2 to brainstorm which implications (addiction, gateway drug, effects, etc) they feel students need more awareness of. Direct students to the example PSAs at the back of the handout.</li> <li>• <b>Independent Practice:</b> Students will create a PSA poster that will appear in the school newspaper or website educating their peers on one of these areas of marijuana use</li> <li>• When finished, ask students to share their PSAs with the class aloud and explain why they chose what they did.</li> </ul>
Closing	<p><i>Duration: 8 minutes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students which PSAs were most effective.</li> <li>• What's one thing about marijuana they didn't know before this lesson that they do now?</li> </ul>

# EverFi Marijuana Quick Facts

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## General Facts

- Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug in the United States
- There is growing scientific evidence that heavy, regular use of marijuana that begins during the teen years may lower a person's IQ and interfere with other aspects of functioning and well-being
- After years of lessened use of marijuana, since the 1990s, marijuana use has started increasing again since 2010 - this is due to teens' misconception that marijuana is not harmful.

Drug	Time Period	8th Graders	10th Graders	12th Graders
<b>Marijuana/ Hashish</b>	Lifetime	15.50%	31.10%	44.70%
	Past Year	11.80%	25.40%	34.90%
	Past Month	6.50%	14.80%	21.30%
	Daily	1.10%	3.00%	6.00%

- Not everyone is smoking marijuana
  - According to a 2006 study, about four out of five 12- to 17-year-old youths had never even tried marijuana
- Rise in marijuana-related emergency room visits in recent years
  - In 2008, there were 374,000 of these visits

## Laws

- Some state legislation being passed to legalize marijuana, but that does not mean you can use it freely.
  - You still must be 21 in all (legal) states to smoke marijuana.
  - Amounts are regulated, so even if you are of age in a legal state, you can be charged, jailed, and fined.
  - Regardless of whether you are in a legal state, if the land you are smoking on is federal land, you will be severely charged.
- Laws on marijuana vary greatly by state, thus it is important that you know and understand your state's regulations and consequences.

## Health Effects

- Marijuana affects brain cell receptors that are critical to the growth and development of the brain and its many functions, causing many mental and physical side effects
- School effects:
  - Difficulty to process and store new information
  - Impairs ability to pay attention and complete complex tasks that require focus and concentration
  - *These effects can last even after the high is long gone, especially for frequent users of marijuana, and that can make it harder for them to do well in school*

- Sports effects:
  - Ability to control timing
  - Impacts movement
  - Weakens eye-hand coordination
- Short-term effects (typically last 2-3 hours, but can go up to 6 hours):
  - Sense distortion
  - Altered sense of time
  - Uncontrollable changes in mood
  - Impaired body movement
  - Difficulty with thinking and problem-solving
  - Impaired memory
  - Lowered reaction time
  - Anxiety and panic
  - Disinterest in activities or other things he or she used to enjoy
- Long-term mental effects:
  - Reduced cognitive ability
  - Slower thinking
  - Permanent memory loss
  - Decreased ability to learn and process information
  - Loss of IQ
    - Studies show that teens who started smoking heavily in their teenage years lost an average of 8 IQ points between ages 13 and 38
  - Temporary hallucinations and paranoia
  - Lack of motivation and constant drowsiness
- Long-term physical effects:
  - Breathing problems
  - Increased heart rate
  - Problems with child development after birth
  - Suppression of the immune system (reduced resistance to common illnesses)
  - Destruction of lung fibers and lung irritation
  - Respiratory problems (excessive cough and chest pain)

## Addiction

- There is a common misconception that marijuana is not addictive - this is not true
  - In 2013, around 4.2 million people 12 and older had a marijuana abuse or addiction problem
- About 1 in 6 of all marijuana users, that begin smoking in their teens, will develop some degree of problem use, like dependence and addiction
  - People who are in their teens when they begin use, are 4-7 times more likely than adults to develop an addiction
- Long-term marijuana users trying to quit use report the following withdrawal symptoms:
  - Grouchiness and sleeplessness
  - Decreased appetite
  - Anxiety
  - Cravings

## Gateway Drug

- Marijuana can lead users to consume stronger drugs to achieve the same or more intense high, because a tolerance builds up as they smoke more and more

- There is ample evidence that early initiation of marijuana use primes the brain for enhanced later responses to other drugs
- Not everyone who uses marijuana will transition to using heroin or other drugs, but it is true that people who use marijuana also consume more, not less, legal and illegal drugs than do people who do not use marijuana
  - People who use marijuana are 3 times more likely to be addicted to cocaine
  - Marijuana use is positively correlated with alcohol use and cigarette use, as well as illegal drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine
  - The vast majority of cocaine users (99.9%) began by first using a “gateway drug” like marijuana, cigarettes or alcohol
  - One study found that youth (12 to 17 years old) who use marijuana are 85 times more likely to use cocaine than kids who do not use pot
- PCP, a powerful hallucinogen, is also sometimes combined with marijuana to enhance its effects, or intensify the high
  - PCP is a dangerous drug and can lead to violent behavior, severe seizures from hallucination, and even death

### Driving

- Marijuana is the illicit drug most frequently found in the blood of drivers who have been involved in accidents, including fatal ones
- Studies have found a direct relationship between blood THC concentration and impaired driving ability
- The risk of being involved in a car accident nearly double after marijuana use
- Marijuana significantly impairs judgment, motor coordination, and reaction time

### Other Dangers

- The risk of marijuana being laced is very scary, as it can cause serious health complications, including death
- Dealers will often lace blunts with cocaine, crack, PCP, or even embalming fluid - it is hard to know for sure that the marijuana you are using is relatively safe and won't harm you
- Laced marijuana can cause psychological dangers like hallucinations, euphoria, panic, and rage

### Sources

- National Institute on Drug Abuse
  - [Facts for Teens](#)
  - [Facts for Parents](#)
  - [Extensive Research and Report](#)
- Drug-Free World
  - [Effects of Marijuana](#)
  - [Road to Addiction](#)
- Scholastic
  - [Breaking the Myths](#)
- NY Times
  - [Gateway Drug Article](#)
- Family Council
  - [Marijuana Kills](#)

Examples of Marijuana Public Service Announcements:

They said  
weed wouldn't lead  
to harder drugs.

**THEY LIED.**

Read *The Truth About Marijuana.*

**MARIJUANA**

[drugfreeworld.org/marijuana](http://drugfreeworld.org/marijuana)

# Marijuana is addictive

More teens are in  
treatment with a primary  
diagnosis of marijuana  
dependence than for  
all other illegal drugs  
combined



[DrugFreeDivide.org](http://DrugFreeDivide.org)