



Grade 8 Engagement and Assessment Ideas

Body Systems

- Complete worksheet linking brain structure and their functions.
- List activities or experiences when you've relied on particular brain structures.
- Ask students to describe people with damage to particular brain areas.
- Research a problem that can affect the nervous system. Write a brief report about the disease or disorder.
- Make a poster that shows teens ways to be good to their brains. You can focus on things like eating healthy foods, exercising, wearing a helmet when riding bikes or playing certain sports, or staying away from drugs and alcohol.
- Brainstorm strategies to promote brain health.
- Present case studies of simulated outbreaks of mysterious diseases and ask group to identify the disease agent responsible for the outbreak.
- Outline a strategy to prevent future outbreaks of the disease.
- Participate in an infectious disease simulation activity- trace a disease back to the first infected person.
- Assign a short writing activity- describe how disease spreads.
- Students compile a list of health risks caused by food contaminants.
- Students research recent popularized instances of food contamination (e.g. national chain restaurants).

Community/Environmental Health

- Have students research and present on the relationship between the environment and human health.
- Ask each student or group to present a news story (newspaper, audio clip, etc.) discussing a recent example of environmental pollution or disruption affecting human's health.
- Compile a list of pollutants found in water, soil, and air. Ask students to describe how they become pollutants (enter the water, soil, air) and how they impact the body.
- Watch a documentary or movie about chemical exposures.
- Hold a design competition to challenge students to pitch design ideas for solutions to problems in their social environment or physical environment that will promote physical and psychological health. Have them upload their pitches to YouTube or present them live in class and ask their classmates to evaluate them using an assessment rubric.

- Present students with examples of social/physical environmental design changes that improved physical or psychological health. Ask them to assess whether such solutions would be effective in their own lives/ communities.

Substance Abuse Prevention

- Compare and contrast the effects of alcohol and tobacco on the body.
- Use a worksheet to identify the body systems affected by tobacco and alcohol use.
- Summarize the mental and social consequences of tobacco and alcohol abuse.
- Students calculate and evaluate the financial costs of tobacco or alcohol use over time (calculator <https://smokefree.gov/how-much-will-you-save>).
- Research the short- and long-term health issues related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, including inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, stimulants, methamphetamines, opiates, steroids, and performance-enhancing drugs.
- Research the signs, symptoms, and causes of addiction.
- Students pick a drug and make a presentation about how a specific drug affects the brain.
- Interview family members and analyze how family and peer pressure influences tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use.
- List reasons why teenagers don't use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Design a campaign to discourage underage drinking.

Safety/Injury Prevention

- Invite a health care professional to explain injury prevention measures and ask students to prepare questions and write a reflection on what they've learned.
- Students create a brochure to promote injury prevention measures in school.
- Discuss the relationship between feelings of immortality and invincibility and risks.
- Role-play situations in which teens choose to avoid high-risk situations.
- In small groups, write an ad urging other teens to avoid high-risk behaviors.
- Research the leading injury prevention methods (e.g. CDC Injury Center website and NHTSA website).
- Create a poster to promote a prevention method at school.
- Examine and chart data about safety hazards and unsafe situations.
- Read a selection of stories about injuries in the news and ask students to write recommendations for injury prevention based on what they have learned.

Mental Wellness/Social Emotional Skills

- Discuss the differences between constructive and unconstructive criticism, and have students role-play responses to positive and negative criticism.
- List put-downs and explain why they are inappropriate and make other people angry.
- Discuss and practice the factors that contribute to group success.
- Role-play situations where students are teased and laughed at and how to be a helpful bystander.
- Incorporate activities that encourage kindness into every class.

- Have students work together to create a class social media or Instagram account with pictures and captions that reflect their positive traits.
- Stress Management - Discuss stress management strategies and have students exercise a strategy of their choosing for a time period of 2-5 minutes in the class (i.e., physical or creative expression, talking, breathing).
- Help students practice mindfulness.