



Grade 9 Sample Lesson Plan: Unit 7 Resisting Gangs

SOLs

- 9.1 k) Examine how the consequences associated with gang involvement could affect self, family, and community.
- 9.3 h) Create a message about the importance of avoiding gang involvement.

Objectives/Goals

- Students will understand how the consequences associated with gang involvement could affect self, family and community.
- Students will create an advocacy message about the importance of avoiding gang involvement

Materials

- Reading: *10 Things You Didn't Know About Gangs*
- Lecture: *Understanding Gangs Slides*
 - Kahoot.it review
<https://create.kahoot.it/share/understanding-gangs/6ce2acb7-be28-4b21-917b-ea2fb7131710>
- *CDC Violence Prevention: Risk and Protective Factors-Handout*
- *Advocacy Skill Steps Slides*
- *Resisting Gangs Rubric*

Rationale:

In this unit students will learn why some people are more vulnerable to gang involvement than others. They will have a brief overview of the Virginia State Law “Criminal Street Gang” codes. Students will understand individual, family and community consequences of gang affiliation. Students will learn positive strategies to resist membership. Students will learn the skill steps for advocacy. They will create an advocacy message about the importance of avoiding gang involvement.

Procedure**Step 1 Quick Write (5 mins)****Essential Question:**

Why do some young people join gangs?

1. Students will reflect in a journal or they can pair share their thoughts on why some young people join gangs.

Step 2 Class Reading (5-10 minutes)

1. Students will read article, *10 Things You Didn't Know About Gangs*
2. After reading the article students will reflect on the following questions.
 - a. Did anything in this article surprise you about gangs that you didn't know?
 - b. Who is vulnerable to joining gangs?
 - c. What can schools do for students who are more vulnerable to joining gangs?

Step 3 Class Lecture (25 mins)*Understanding Gangs Slides*

1. Slide #2 Essential Question: Why do some young people join gangs? What is the appeal? What are the consequences of gang affiliation?
2. Slide #3 Class Reading: *10 Things You Didn't Know About Gangs* (Students already read in Step 2)
3. Slide #4 Defines Virginia State Law “Criminal Street Gang” Code 18.2-46.1
4. Slide #5 Video that discusses why some people join gangs.
5. Slide #6-8 Why Do Some People Join Gangs?
 - a. Identity or Recognition
 - b. Protection

- c. Fellowship and Brotherhood
- d. Intimidation
- e. Criminal Activity
6. Slide #9 Consequences-Many youth who join gangs don't understand the full dangers of gang involvement. Many parents/guardians are not aware of their child's gang activity until it's too late.
7. Slide #10 Consequences (Individual)
8. Slide #11 Consequences (Family)
9. Slide #12 Impact on Communities and Schools
10. Slide #13 Resisting Gangs
 - a. Avoid areas/place where gangs hang out
 - b. Focus on your education
 - c. Ask for help
 - d. Find and seek advice from a mentor
 - e. Get involved in activities
 - f. Be "too busy"
 - g. Talk out your problems
 - h. Change your environment: Change your route home from school, move classes, schools and the neighborhood in which you live if possible
11. Slide #14 YouTube Video: A Homeboy Guide To Healing Former L.A. Gang Members (2:08 mins)
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Losnunng2og>

Step 4 Formative Assessment Kahoot.it Game (10 mins)

- <https://create.kahoot.it/share/understanding-gangs/6ce2acb7-be28-4b21-917b-ea2fb7131710>

Step 5 Class Reading (10 mins)

1. Students will read and take notes, *Violence Prevention: Risk and Protective Factors-Handout*

Step 6 Advocacy I-Care Skill Steps (10 mins)

Credit to using the advocacy skill steps from Benes, S., & Alperin, H. (2016). The essentials of teaching health education: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Advocacy Skill Steps Slides

1. Teacher will introduce the importance of advocacy and go over the advocacy skill steps slides.

Need help teaching the advocacy skill steps?

Check out: Rmc.org Health Skills Advocacy-

<https://www.rmc.org/health-education-skills-models/health-skills-advocacy-2/>

Step 7 Resisting Gangs-Advocacy Message (30-60 mins)

1. Students will create a poster or infographic on why students should avoid gangs.

Poster Materials:

- Markers
 - Colored Pencils
 - Magazines
 - Glue Sticks
 - Scissors
2. Students will create an advocacy message using the advocacy skill steps about the importance of avoiding gang membership using the *Resisting Gangs Rubric*.
 3. Option for the students to present their work with the class, in the school newspaper, school website and/or parent newsletter.

Technology Option:

- Students can create a poster on Google Drawing.
- Students can create a poster or infographic on canva.com

Resisting Gangs Rubric			
	Meets the Criteria	Does Not Meet the Criteria	Points
Definition of a Virginia Gang	Thoroughly defines Virginia law of a gang	Does not define Virginia law of a gang	
Why Do Some People Join Gangs?	Describes 5 reasons why some people join gangs?	Does not describe 5 reasons why some people join gangs	
Risk Factors	Describes 5 risk factors that makes a person more vulnerable to joining gangs	Does not include 5 risk factors that makes a person more vulnerable to joining gangs	
Protective Factors	Describes 5 protective factors that keeps kids off the streets and from joining gangs	Does not include 5 protective factors that keeps kids off the streets and from joining gangs	
Consequences	Explains 5 consequences of gang membership of either self, family and/or community	Does not include 5 consequences of gang membership of either self, family and/or community	
Healthy Alternatives to Gang Membership	Describes 5 healthy alternatives to joining a gang	Does not include 5 healthy alternatives to joining a gang.	
Comments: Areas For Improvement:			Total:

Assessment Idea

- Understanding Gangs-Kahoot.it Game
- Advocacy poster or infographic on resisting gangs (See rubric)
 - See Other Ideas for performance assessments
 - https://www.canva.com/design/DADXyclQO8s/rw2fOOifGyIMK4sozOxKfw/view?utm_content=DADXyclQO8s&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton

References

- Benes, S., & Alperin, H. (2016). The essentials of teaching health education: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- [CDC Violence Prevention: Risk and Protective Factors](#)
- [LAPD Information on Gangs](#)
- [Mapping the School to Prison Pipeline](#)
 - Understanding how policies and systems play a role in youth incarceration
- [Rmc.org Health Skills Advocacy](#)
- [Virginia Law Portal](#)

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10 things you didn't know about gangs

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A new paper takes a holistic view to illuminate why vulnerable, high-risk youth may find refuge in gangs.

What is a gang member? The question sounds simple enough, yet comes with no easy answer. In fact, the difficulty of answering this question is one reason why our understanding of gangs and the youth who join them is still limited, according to a new study published in *The Wiley Handbook on Violence in Education*.

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Titled “Socio-Ecological Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Gang Involvement,” this study examines gang involvement by looking not just at the individual gang members but the communities that surround them, from the schools they attend to the communities they live in.

“We need to demystify perceptions of gangs and gang members, taking a more complex view,” explained **Adrian Huerta** (<https://pullias.usc.edu/people/adrian-huerta/>), Pullias Center Provost Postdoctoral Scholar and a co-author of the study, along with Joey Nuñez Estrada, Jr. (Associate Professor, Department of Counseling and School Psychology at San Diego State University), Edwin Hernandez (Ph.D. candidate, University of California, Los Angeles), Robert A. Hernandez (Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Social Work at USC), and Steve W. Kim (co-founder, Project Kinship).

Here are 10 lesser-known facts about gangs, gang members, and gang-related research revealed in the study.

1. There is no universally accepted definition of a gang or gang member. There are, however, widely-used definitions that focus almost exclusively on illegal and criminal gang activity that have been used “to target, over-police, and prosecute communities of color,” according to the researchers.

2. At-risk youth may seek out gangs to find basic support and security. “Through the process of gang involvement, the influence of peers is powerful as they fulfill the sense of belonging youth may not receive from their family, community, and school.”

3. Challenging home environments can make youth more vulnerable to gangs. The researchers explain that “some studies have found youth who are at greater risk of gang involvement come from single-parent households, homes struggling with issues of marital discord, homes where there is a prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse, homes with issues of physical and/or sexual abuse, and/or homes that have family members who are gang involved.”

4. Racism and racial discrimination in schools can influence students of color to seek acceptance and validation through gang membership when other familial or community resources are unavailable.

5. Poverty can make gang membership appear more attractive. “Being lower class in an economic and social system that disregards the needs of youth in the community produces emotional frustration, forcing youth to satisfy their unmet basic human needs outside of conventional institutions,” explain the researchers.

6. It's unclear if gangs increase school violence. Gangs are often blamed for violence on school grounds, but “empirical studies examining the nexus between gangs and school violence on school grounds is scarce,” according to the researchers.

7. Students associated with gangs are given fewer opportunities in schools. Schools have been known to “restrict high quality academic curricula, electives, and instructors” — and even access to college and career information — from gang members, leading them to disengage from academic aspirations and drop out of school at a higher rate.

8. Gang-involved youth are often punished instead of cared for. “Most often, schools depend on the efforts of local police departments or school resource officers who focus on punitive outcomes and the overuse of zero tolerance policies.”

9. A more supportive school environment can make gangs less attractive for students. “Schools can either take a punitive approach that criminalizes gang involved youth, or they can work to improve safety, enhance student connectedness, and increase support from teachers and school personnel so that fewer students will feel the need to resort to gangs and violence.”

10. Much more research about students and gang involvement remains to be conducted. Areas of needed study range from evaluations of intervention programs to studies of the effects of trauma and marginalization. “Educational researchers need to take a holistic socioecological approach when investigating the complex phenomena of youth street gangs,” according to the study’s authors.

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Read the full study:

Estrada, J. N., **Huerta, A. H.**, Hernandez, E. , Hernandez, R. A. & Kim, S. W. (2018). Socio-Ecological Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Gang Involvement. In *The Wiley Handbook on Violence in Education*, H. Shapiro (Ed.).

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118966709.ch9>

(<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118966709.ch9>)

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(<https://pullias.usc.edu/blog/colleges-change-understanding-leading-enacting-change/>)

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Violence Prevention

Risk Factors for Perpetration

Risk factors are characteristics linked with youth violence, but they are not direct causes of youth violence. A combination of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of youth violence. Research on youth violence has increased our understanding of factors that make some populations more vulnerable to victimization and perpetration.

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Risk Factors

Protective Factors

Individual Risk Factors

- History of violent victimization
- Attention deficits, hyperactivity, or learning disorders
- History of early aggressive behavior
- Involvement with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
- Low IQ
- Poor behavioral control
- Deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities
- High emotional distress
- History of treatment for emotional problems
- Antisocial beliefs and attitudes
- Exposure to violence and conflict in the family

Family Risk Factors

- Authoritarian childrearing attitudes
- Harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices
- Low parental involvement
- Low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers
- Low parental education and income
- Parental substance abuse or criminality
- Poor family functioning
- Poor monitoring and supervision of children

Peer and Social Risk Factors

- Association with delinquent peers
- Involvement in gangs
- Social rejection by peers
- Lack of involvement in conventional activities
- Poor academic performance
- Low commitment to school and school failure

Community Risk Factors

- Diminished economic opportunities
- High concentrations of poor residents
- High level of transiency
- High level of family disruption
- Low levels of community participation
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods

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Protective Factors for Perpetration

Protective factors may lessen the likelihood of youth violence victimization or perpetration. Identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as researching risk factors.

Individual Protective Factors

- Intolerant attitude toward deviance
- High IQ
- High grade point average (as an indicator of high academic achievement)
- High educational aspirations
- Positive social orientation
- Popularity acknowledged by peers
- Highly developed social skills/competencies
- Highly developed skills for realistic planning
- Religious beliefs

Family Protective Factors

- Connectedness to family or adults outside the family
- Ability to discuss problems with parents
- Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high
- Frequent shared activities with parents
- Consistent presence of parent during at least one of the following: when awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime, or when going to bed
- Involvement in social activities
- Parental/family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping)

Peer and Social Protective Factors

- Possession of affective relationships with those at school that are strong, close, and prosocially oriented
- Commitment to school (an investment in school and in doing well at school)
- Close relationships with non-deviant peers
- Membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behavior
- Involvement in prosocial activities
- Exposure to school climates with the following characteristics:
 - Intensive supervision
 - Clear behavior rules
 - Consistent negative reinforcement of aggression
 - Engagement of parents and teachers

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See Youth Violence Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/resources.html>) for articles and publications about risk and protective factors for youth violence.