



## Dear Teacher:

In the final article of this year's *Heads Up* series, students will learn about impulsivity and brain development, and the power of self-control in shaping their futures. Long-term scientific studies show that young people who develop self-control are more likely to avoid problems with drugs, health, poverty, and crime.

The accompanying work sheet provides students with an opportunity to think through how they might react in problematic situations, as well as formulate plans in advance.

We believe your students will find these materials compelling and useful as they discover just how much control they have over their futures.

Sincerely,

Nora D. Volkow, M.D.  
Director,  
National Institute  
on Drug Abuse



## In This Installment:

- **Student article:** Students will learn about the teen brain's decision-making process, developing impulse control, and scientific research showing that low self-control correlates with drug addiction and other problems.
- **Student work sheet:** Students will analyze scenarios and answer critical-thinking questions to highlight how careful consideration can help them become better decision makers with more successful lives.

# PUSHING PAUSE

## Lesson and Work Sheet:

Students will understand the importance of pausing to think through consequences by analyzing scenarios that highlight when pausing can make a big difference.

### Additional Tools:

Visit [scholastic.com/headsup/tools](http://scholastic.com/headsup/tools) for additional tiered tools to support and enrich the lesson below, including:

- Answer key
- Academic and domain-specific vocabulary lists
- Writing prompts
- Paired-text reading suggestions
- Grades 6–12 standards chart (CCSS & NGSS)

### Before-Reading Questions:

#### Grades 6–8:

- Would you prefer to get a small reward right away, or are you the kind of person who can wait a little while for a bigger one?
- Identify a strategy you use when you need to put off getting what you want.

#### Grades 9–10:

- Think of a time when you did something you wish you could undo. What could you have done in that moment to stop yourself?
- How can an action affect someone's life years later? Give an example.

#### Grades 11–12:

- Identify a strategy you use to delay getting what you want when there's an advantage to doing so.
- How can childhood actions affect adulthood? Give an example.

**After-Reading Questions** (have students use **text evidence** to respond):

#### Grades 6–8:

- Which parts of the brain are involved in decision making, and how does each part contribute?
- Teens can feel an intense emotional drive to act impulsively. What are the pros and cons of this drive?
- What do scientific studies reveal about how self-control in decision making can affect a person's life?

### Resources:

- For more teaching resources and information on drugs, visit [teens.drugabuse.gov](http://teens.drugabuse.gov) or [scholastic.com/headsup](http://scholastic.com/headsup).
- For immediate help with a crisis, call **1-800-273-TALK**.
- To locate a treatment center, call **1-800-662-HELP** or visit [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov).

- Identify strategies for pausing before making a decision. How can a person improve his or her ability to pause?

#### Grades 9–10:

- Identify three factors that influence decision making, and explain how these factors affect the process.
- Using what you've learned about brain development, explain why the decision-making process is different for teens than for adults, and what this can result in.
- Teens, more than adults, can feel an intense emotional drive to act impulsively. What is an advantage of this drive? What is a disadvantage? Give an example of each.
- What long-term benefits are associated with self-control? Use evidence demonstrated by scientific studies.
- How can a person improve his or her ability to pause?

#### Grades 11–12:

- Identify three factors that influence decision making, and analyze how these factors are interrelated.
- Using what you've learned about brain development, explain why the decision-making process is different for teens than for adults. What is an advantage of this difference? What is a disadvantage? Give an example of each.
- According to scientific studies, what long-term benefits are correlated with self-control, and how can self-control be improved?

### Student Work Sheet:

Have each student use the work sheet individually. Evaluate students on their ability to follow instructions and to integrate text evidence from the student article and work sheet into their responses. See Additional Tools for possible answers.

**Drugs + Your Body:**  
**Web Interactive**  
[scholastic.com/  
drugsandyourbody\\_web](http://scholastic.com/drugsandyourbody_web)

# The Power of Pausing

## What Would You Do?

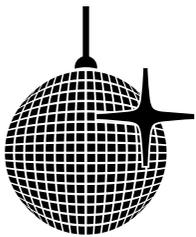
Scientific studies show that people who exhibit self-control in making decisions enjoy greater success in life, as well as minimize negative outcomes. Studies also show that **practicing** pausing is a way to improve your chances of success. In this work sheet, you'll find exercises that help you think about pausing in various situations to consider outcomes or consequences.

*Directions: Apply the following three questions to the scenarios further down. For each of the scenarios (A, B, and C), record your answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper.*

**Question 1)** What do you think you would do?

**Question 2)** What is one way that you could pause in this situation?

**Question 3)** What is a negative outcome that could happen if you don't pause?



### Scenario A:

As you drive some friends home from school, there is a lot of gossip in the car about who's taking who to the prom, and you're waiting to hear if the person you like is still available. Your phone buzzes with an update. You want desperately to see what it says.

### Scenario B:

You're at a concert with friends. The person next to you offers you alcohol. It feels like everyone is looking at you.

### Scenario C:

You get home from what must have been the craziest night of your life. Your friends made some really bad decisions, and you captured it all on your phone. You want to show your friend who was sick and stayed home. The easiest way is to post it online.



### Now Try This:

*Refer to the article "Pushing Pause" to answer these questions. Use a separate sheet of paper.*

1. Identify a situation in which you find it difficult to pause.
2. Which brain areas are at work in the decision-making process, and what are their roles in making it difficult for you to pause in the situation you identified above?
3. What are three things you could practice doing to help you pause in this situation?
4. What are two positive things that could result from pausing in this situation?