



Subjects

- Science Literacy
- English Language Arts
- Health/Life Skills

Common Core State Standards

- RST.6-8.1 / RST.9-10.1
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts
- W.6-8.1 / W.9-10.1
- Write arguments to support claims, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

Next Generation Science Standards

- MS-PS.1.A / HS-PS1.A
- Structure and Properties of Matter
- MS-LS.3.B / HS-LS3.B
- Information Processing

National Science Education Standards

- Properties and Changes of Properties in Matter/ Structure and Properties of Matter
- Personal Health

National Council for the Social Studies

- 4. Individual Development and Identity
- 8. Science, Technology, and Society

Not Fit for Human Bodies

In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of health emergencies and overdoses related to drugs that are made illegally in laboratories. Synthetic, or man-made, drugs are created in these labs to mimic the effects of other, more commonly known substances, such as marijuana and prescription pain medications. But these unregulated drugs can be even more dangerous than their counterparts. In “Not Fit for Human Bodies,” students will learn what fake synthetic drugs are and why they are dangerous. You can help students stay safe by sharing the article and paired worksheet (see reverse side) and teaching the lesson below.



Critical-Thinking Questions

- 1) Why might a counterfeit, or fake, synthetic drug cause more health problems than a similar drug? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. *(Answers may include: Counterfeit synthetic drugs are made in illegal laboratories and are not tested for safety. Although they may be labeled that they will act like another drug, they may have different chemicals that make them more powerful or even deadly.)*
- 2) Officials try to reduce the misuse of drugs by making them illegal. Why is this approach difficult with counterfeit synthetic drugs? *(Answers may include that the makers of counterfeit synthetic drugs can add misleading labels to products, such as “Not Fit for Human Consumption,” to make selling them easier.)*
- 3) Why is it important to use only prescription medications that have been prescribed by a doctor for you and were bought from a pharmacy? *(Answers may include that medications such as pills bought on the street or online may be counterfeit. The effects of these medications can be unpredictable and may be deadly because they may contain hidden chemicals such as fentanyl. Prescriptions intended for other people could also have harmful effects on your body.)*

Writing Prompts

- **Grades 6–8:** Explain what a counterfeit synthetic drug is. Tell how it is different from the drug it is made to act like.
- **Grades 9–10:** The article explains that counterfeit synthetic drugs can cause dangerous health problems. Use evidence from the text to support this statement.
- **Grades 11–12:** The U.S. is currently experiencing an opioid overdose crisis. How might counterfeit synthetic drugs play a role in this crisis? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Student Worksheet

The worksheet on the reverse side includes fill-in-the-blank questions to reinforce comprehension of the article. It also includes a prompt for students to use the information they have learned to create a poster warning teens about the dangers of synthetic drugs.

Answers—Part 1:

1. Counterfeit; laboratories.
2. powerful; deadly.
3. Spice; K2; cannabinoids.
4. THC.
5. cathinones; stimulants.
6. Fentanyl; prescription.
7. misleading.
8. addiction; overdose.

Part 2: Each student poster, flyer, or meme should include elements that grab the reader’s attention, such as startling facts or statistics or eye-catching visuals. It should include facts about why synthetic drugs are dangerous and advice about how to stay safe.

Tiered Vocabulary Tools

Visit scholastic.com/headsup/not_fit_for_human_consumption for a vocabulary list to support this article.

Paired Reading

- “Drug Facts: Spice” (<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/spice>)
- **Writing Prompt:** Explain the dangers of the synthetic drug Spice. Include why it may affect a person’s body differently than marijuana. Use text evidence from “Not Fit for Human Bodies” and “Drug Facts: Spice” to support your answer.

Additional Teaching Resources

- headsup.scholastic.com/teachers
- teens.drugabuse.gov

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SYNTHETIC DRUGS?



Part 1: Use information from the article “Not Fit for Human Bodies” to answer the questions about synthetic drugs and their effects.

THC	cannabinoids	misleading	stimulants	counterfeit	prescription
K2	addiction	deadly	overdose	cathinones	powerful
Spice	laboratories	natural	“bath salts”	fentanyl	reduce

- _____, or fake, synthetic drugs are made in illegal _____.
- Fake synthetic drugs are dangerous. They often have added chemicals that make them more _____ or even _____.
- _____ and _____ are drugs made of dried plant leaves sprayed with synthetic _____. These drugs can cause health problems, including seizures and heart attacks.
- _____ is the main active ingredient in marijuana.
- “Bath salts” contain chemicals called _____ and are similar to _____. They can cause unusual behaviors, and can also increase heart rate.
- _____ is a powerful synthetic opioid that doctors prescribe for severe pain. The counterfeit version is often mixed with other drugs or hidden in fake _____ medications.
- The makers of illegal synthetic drugs sometimes package the drugs with _____ labels.
- Misusing both legal and illegal synthetic drugs can put you at risk for _____ and _____.

Part 2: Use the information in the article and your own Internet research from reliable sources to create a poster, flyer, or meme that warns other teens about the dangers of synthetic drugs.

Points to consider: What images can you use to grab the reader’s attention? What facts are important to share? What advice would you give teens about synthetic drugs?