

VOCABULARY LIST: GRADES 6-12

Dear Teacher,

The vocabulary list on the following pages is drawn from the “Drugs and the Teen Brain” student article and the “What Do You Know About the Teen Brain and Drugs?” worksheet.

It can be previewed with students prior to reading or reinforced with students afterward. Encourage students to incorporate these words into their discussions and writing about the student article and worksheet.

The list integrates vocabulary words that would be used across several content areas, such as *consequence*, *independent*, and *transmit*, as well as domain-specific words, such as *limbic system*, *neuron*, and *synapse*.

Some suggestions for students to help their understanding include:

- organizing concept maps that include word parts, synonyms, antonyms, and examples;
- composing memory aids that explain the words or use them in a meaningful context;
- employing the words to create newspaper articles, stories, or poems.

Sources: Unless otherwise noted, definitions below are sourced or adapted from:

Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary

Scholastic Children's Dictionary

HEADS UP REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY

Drugs and the Teen Brain

Adolescence is a critical time in brain development. That means teens are at greater risk of experiencing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol.

Taking chances isn't always best— it's part of growing up. But not thinking through consequences can be dangerous when it comes to decisions about drugs and alcohol.

Under Construction
The brain keeps growing until well into young adulthood. The prefrontal cortex is the area of the brain that is still under construction. It's the part of the brain that helps you make decisions, solve problems, and control your emotions. It's also the part of the brain that is most affected by drugs and alcohol. Because the prefrontal cortex is still under construction, teens are more likely to take risks and make poor decisions. This is why it's important for teens to think carefully about the consequences of their actions.

Addiction Risk
The brain's reward system is a part of the brain that helps you feel good. It's the part of the brain that releases dopamine, a chemical that makes you feel happy. Drugs and alcohol can hijack this system, making you feel good even when you're not. This can lead to addiction, a condition where you feel you need a drug or alcohol to feel normal.

Brain Changes
As you grow up, your brain changes. It becomes more efficient and more powerful. But drugs and alcohol can interfere with this process. They can damage the brain's cells and disrupt the way the brain works. This can lead to long-term problems, such as memory loss, mood swings, and difficulty learning.

prefrontal cortex
The part of the brain that is still under construction. It's the part of the brain that helps you make decisions, solve problems, and control your emotions. It's also the part of the brain that is most affected by drugs and alcohol.

GET MORE
For additional facts about drugs and alcohol, visit scholastic.com/headsup.

Supplement for: “Drugs and the Teen Brain”

- Student Article: scholastic.com/headsup/drugsandtheteenbrain
- Teacher's Guide (includes work sheet): scholastic.com/headsup/teachers/drugsandtheteenbrain

Continue to vocabulary sheet on next page.

addiction (*noun*): a brain disorder or illness associated with compulsive (uncontrollable) behavior, such as drug use, despite negative consequences

adolescence (*noun*): the period of life when a person develops from a child into an adult

automatic (*adjective*): working mostly or completely by itself

binge (*noun*): the act of doing something in an excessive or uncontrolled manner

chemical (*noun*): a substance, such as an element or a mix of elements (compound), that is made by a chemical process

consequence (*noun*): a result or outcome

consume (*verb*): to eat, drink, or use up something

crave (*verb*): to have a strong desire for something

critical (*adjective*): important or necessary

develop (*verb*): to grow or cause something to grow larger or more advanced

development (*noun*): the act or process of growing or causing something to become larger or more advanced

dopamine (*noun*): a neurotransmitter chemical that helps transmit signals in the brain and is associated with feelings of pleasure

expose (*verb*): to make something accessible (open) to the action or influence of something else

function (*verb*): to carry out an action

gratification (*noun*): a reward or the feeling of pleasure or being rewarded

impact (*noun*): a significant or powerful effect

independent (*adjective*): not relying on or needing others for support or care

intense (*adjective*): having a very strong or extreme degree of something

key (*adjective*): extremely important

limbic system (*noun*): a set of five different brain structures that together are involved in emotions and feelings, as well as learning and memory

linked (*adjective*): connected

network (*noun*): a group of things that are connected or related to each other

neuron (*noun*): a nerve cell that carries messages between the brain and other parts of the body

outcome (*noun*): a result

prefrontal cortex (*noun*): the front part of the frontal lobe area of the brain that is involved in complex decision making and thinking

process (*verb*): to go through a series of actions to lead a certain result

release (*verb*): to allow out; to set free

risk (*noun*): the possibility of loss or injury; danger

seek (*verb*): to look for or to go in search for

sensitive (*adjective*): to be highly responsive or able to be affected by something

session (*noun*): a period of time set aside for a certain activity

substance (*noun*): a material with a specific chemical makeup

surge (*noun*): a sudden increase to a high level

synapse (*noun*): the structure between neurons (nerve cells) that allows a signal to be transmitted between the neurons

tackle (*verb*): to deal with or handle a situation

transmit (*verb*): to send from one person, place, or thing to another

underdeveloped (*adjective*): not normally or fully developed

vulnerable (*adjective*): able to be hurt or damaged

weigh (*verb*): to think about something carefully in order to make a decision