



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2001 Volume I: Medicine, Ethics, and Law

Making Choices About Tobacco Use

Guide for Curriculum Unit 01.01.05
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In this unit, designed for grades 8-10, we explore the dangers of using cigarettes, the nature of addiction, the role of the media in helping us make decisions, and what all of this means for our children. This unit is designed as the beginning of a comprehensive anti-smoking education course, with concentration on the dangers of smoking, smoking statistics, and the manner in which most children gain knowledge of smoking, through films. We will focus on the questions that arise from placing dangerous products in an easily accessible public art form with wide distribution. Particularly, we will focus on the history of cigarettes in movies, issues of governmental regulations concerning drug placement in movies, artists' responsibilities to the public and public health, artistic considerations in using these products, and examination of public behavior in reaction to film. These questions will be considered through the lens being conscious of what we watch and what we can do to solve the questions and problems we generate as a result of the unit work.

Throughout the work of the unit, we will focus on four unit questions:

- If we understand the dangers of smoking, why do we (as a government/society) allow people the option of smoking if they wish?
- How does the portrayal of smoking in films affect the choices that we make? Should art reflect our "best" interests or should it have license to portray anything?
- Should we regulate the use of tobacco? How?
- What is the most effective way to keep kids from smoking?

(Recommended for Social Studies, English, Health, and Civics, grades 8-10.)

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