



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1984 Volume V: American Adolescents in the Public Eye

---

## **Identity: A Path to Self-Esteem**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 84.05.06  
by Gwendolyn Hampton

The process of self-evaluation begins in early childhood and becomes paramount during adolescence. As the individual makes the transition from childhood to adulthood, his body changes shape; sexual and aggressive energies crystallize; and new relationships are formed. At the same time, he examines values and expectations in an effort to determine how he is to behave, and he establishes an independence from his family. In light of these changes, the adolescent searches for that personality factor which makes him unique.

The recognition and acceptance of what he is is a pre-requisite for a well-defined sense of self. Parents, peers, and school are all powerful influences on the opinions adolescents have of themselves. When parents are well-adjusted, trusting, and accepting of the child as he is, they contribute to the child's self-esteem. Peer groups provide the adolescent with a sense of belonging. Schools also contribute to the development of self-esteem by providing experiences that enhance students' feelings of self-worth.

The goal of this unit is to raise self-esteem in students. It is divided into three sections. The first section includes an overview of the adolescent's search for identity and its relationship to self-esteem.

The second section includes a discussion of selected readings with lesson plans and activities. The readings present relevant and contemporary situations adolescents can relate to. The related activities were developed to extend students' thinking on various topics.

The final section includes additional activities teachers can use.

(Recommended for grades 6 and 7 Reading and Language Arts classes, and grade 6 Social Studies (Social Skills) classes)

### **Key Words**

*Personality American Adolescent*

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>