Pathways
To A Drug Free Life
ome day, you will have to make a choice about drugs. It might be tomorrow or it might be next year, but the day will come. And when it does, you need to be prepared to make the right choice.

That's what this special supplement is all about: helping you choose a drug-free life. The first half of the supplement deals with the cold, hard facts about drugs: why people use them, what happens when they become addicted, and the harmful effects of drug abuse. It's the stuff you NEED to know to make informed decisions.

The second half gets personal! The information and activities included will help you get to know yourself better and learn how to make responsible decisions. After all, when it comes to deciding whether to use drugs, the decision is yours and yours alone.

When used in conjunction with your newspaper, this supplement provides you with a real-world look at a topic that you can’t afford to ignore. So pack your bags and get ready for the journey of a lifetime; the journey toward a happy, healthy life WITHOUT DRUGS. It’s the right choice! ✰
Drugs: What You Need to Know

Rarely a day goes by that drugs don’t make headlines. Too often it’s a report on drug-related crime or a wrenching account of drug addiction.

At the same time, however, we are just as likely to read about a new drug that could save thousands of lives or one that will cure a common ailment. Confused? No wonder! There are drugs that can help us and drugs that can hurt us.

Make no mistake, though: All drugs have the potential for abuse. And when drugs are abused, it’s always bad news!

Clearing up the confusion — The word “drug” can actually mean several things. Some drugs, called medicines, are used to treat and cure illnesses. These include over-the-counter drugs, which can be bought by anyone, and prescription drugs, which require a doctor’s written orders. When taken as directed, both are usually safe.

Another type of drug is the illegal, or “street,” drug, such as marijuana, cocaine, or heroine. They are NOT safe to use. Besides the harm these drugs can do, anyone caught using or selling them risks being sent to jail.

We often forget about a third group of drugs because they are so commonly used — and misused. They are alcohol (beer, wine, wine coolers), nicotine (cigarettes, chewing tobacco), and caffeine (coffee, tea). Only adults can legally buy alcohol and nicotine because of the potential health hazards. Many parents allow their children only moderate amounts of caffeine, usually in soft drinks.

Why do people use drugs? Perhaps the more important question to ask is, “Why do people abuse drugs?” Drug abuse is the harmful, non-medical use of drugs.

There is no easy answer to this complex question. However, many young drug abusers often point to such things as boredom and stress as reasons why they started abusing drugs. Some try drugs simply out of curiosity or because it looks like fun. Often, they want to find out more about drugs after hearing their friends talk about them.

Other people try drugs to go along with the crowd or to impress their friends. They think drugs make them “cool.”

Some people start abusing drugs to make themselves feel good. The brief “high,” or euphoria, often associated with drugs gives them a false sense of well-being. At the same time, the drugs might give them the feeling that they can run away from their problems.

Rebellion against parents and other adults is also a reason young people sometimes turn to drugs. Most often, it’s an attempt just to get someone’s attention.

See, WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW, pg.4

Boredom is one reason many young people turn to drugs. Look through your newspaper and make note of activities and events available to young people in your community. List all the things a young person could do the next time he or she thinks, “I’m bored.” Discuss your list with the class.

Discuss other reasons young people abuse drugs. (Can you think of others not mentioned in this section?) Now, assume the role of a newspaper advice columnist, such as Ann Landers or Dear Abby. Pretend that a young person has written you a letter saying he or she is tempted to abuse drugs. The person cites one or more of the reasons you discussed with your classmates. Write a letter offering your advice on how to resist the temptation. Volunteers can share their letters with the class.

By 8th grade, 52 percent of adolescents have consumed alcohol, 20 percent have used marijuana, and 41 percent have smoked cigarettes.
Regardless of why people start abusing drugs, they often end up with a problem they never dreamed they would have: a serious drug dependence.

When drugs become dangerous — All drugs can be dangerous when not used properly, especially for young people whose bodies are still growing and developing. The most dangerous, however, are those that work on the brain, changing the way a person thinks, acts, and feels. These are called psychoactive drugs. Some are illegal, such as cocaine and heroin. Others, including alcohol and nicotine, are legal only for adults.

Continual use of these mind-changing drugs affects the brain so much that it thinks it needs the drugs to survive. At the same time, the body builds up a tolerance to the drugs and requires increasing amounts to get the same effect.

People whose bodies and minds become dependent on drugs are called drug dependent, or addicted. Their drug abuse becomes a chronic, relapsing illness that will not go away without treatment.

Drug addicts don’t intend to become that way. Often, they think they won’t become dependent or that occasional drug use won’t do any harm. But because drugs change the thinking process, drug addicts become unable to control their bodies’ response to drugs. Many don’t even recognize they have a problem. Before they know it, occasional use becomes routine use, and soon they are so dependent that drugs are the most important things in their lives.

Finding drugs becomes a drug addict’s No. 1 goal. Since many drugs are illegal, they have to be bought from drug dealers who charge high prices. Some people commit crimes to come up with the money needed to pay those prices.

As with any illness, special help is needed to combat drug dependence. Many treatment centers, hospitals, and clinics are available to those who are willing to admit there is a problem and seek the help they need.

Effects of drug abuse — Drug abuse is a problem that affects everyone in society, not just drug abusers. Each year, thousands of people are killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents caused by people who drive under the influence of drugs. Still others die from overdoses or from the mixing of drugs.

Each year, drug abuse costs this country more than $245 billion*. This includes costs for treatment, damage to property, lost work time, and drug-related crime. One study reported that nearly half of those costs were left up to the government to pay, while drug abusers and their families were responsible for the rest.

Relationships suffer with drug abuse, too. The breakdown of families and the loss of friendships are all too common when a drug-abuse problem is present. Many people say it is these personal “costs” that are the most destructive. ✪

* From a study prepared by The Lewin Group for the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The estimate includes alcohol, illicit drugs, and other drugs taken for non-medical purposes. It does not include nicotine.
The Critical Years

Did you know that most drug use begins during the childhood years, usually between the ages of 12 and 20? Other people try drugs to go along with the crowd or to impress their friends. They think drugs make them “cool.”

That means that if a young person can survive these critical eight years without using alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or inhalants, the likelihood that he or she will use other drugs is greatly reduced. Staying drug-free now will go a long way in helping you stay drug-free forever!

Something else you need to know: Most young people do not initially seek out drugs. Rather, they simply respond to the temptation to use drugs, most often to “fit in” among their peers. What’s more, many young people who eventually try drugs turn them down the first few times they are offered to them. If you can say “no” the first time, you can say “no” the next, and the next, and the next...

* From “Getting Tough on Gateway Drugs,” by Robert L. DuPont Jr., M.D., and http://www.pride.org

The Drug Dependence Syndrome

The first step toward drug dependence, or addiction, begins the first time a person uses a mind-altering drug.

In his book, “Getting Tough on Gateway Drugs,” Robert L. DuPont Jr., M.D., identifies four downward steps to what is called the drug dependence syndrome. They are: experimentation, occasional use, regular use, and, finally, dependence.

(Adapted from “Getting Tough on Gateway Drugs.”)

Drugs and AIDS: A Deadly Combination

Here’s a scary fact: The behaviors associated with drug abuse make up the single largest factor contributing to the spread of HIV, the deadly virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, better known as AIDS.

Because HIV can be transmitted by blood, using or sharing unsterile needles for injecting heroin, cocaine, or other drugs puts people at great risk of becoming infected. In addition, the impaired judgment associated with drug abuse can lead to unprotected sexual contact, another way the AIDS virus is spread.

AIDS is a serious condition that affects a person’s ability to fight diseases, and those who suffer from it are at risk for severe illnesses. Many people who have AIDS or are infected with HIV may live for many years with treatment, but there is still no known cure or vaccine. Half of all new infections today occur among those who inject illicit drugs.

If you think: “It won’t happen to me,” think again.

Everyone should take the threat of HIV and AIDS seriously—especially if they engage in risky activities, many of which are associated with drug abuse. Such behavior increases your chances of becoming infected.
Understanding Drugs and Their Effects

Following are the most commonly abused drugs in America and the effects they have on people:

**Alcohol**—Alcohol, a chemical compound found in such beverages as beer, wine, and whiskey, slows down the brain and interferes with a person’s judgment, vision, and coordination. Alcohol may also impair higher mental functions, such as the ability to learn and remember things, and may increase aggressive behavior. Continued use of alcohol can lead to dependence. Withdrawal symptoms may result when a person suddenly stops drinking.

**Anabolic steroids**—Anabolic steroids, the chemical compounds used by some athletes and others to become stronger, interfere with a body’s normal growth process. But they also affect the way the brain works, causing some people to be moody and easily upset. Signs of steroid use include trembling, swelling feet and legs, and persistent breath odor.

**Cocaine**—Cocaine, a stimulant, is a dangerous and addictive drug that increases activity in the brain and the rest of the central nervous system. Immediate effects include dilated pupils and increased blood pressure and heart rates. It can cause sudden heart changes, heart attacks, convulsions, and strokes. Crack, a pellet form of cocaine, is particularly dangerous. Its use can lead to cardiac arrest or respiratory failure. Depression and mental breakdown may result with long-term use.

**Depressants**—Depressants slow down brain activity, causing such things as slurred speech, staggering, and altered perception. Regular use can lead to behavioral problems and dependence. Large doses may cause respiratory problems, coma, and death. Depressants include tranquilizers, methaqualone, and barbiturates. (Alcohol is also a depressant.)

**Hallucinogens**—The group of drugs known as hallucinogens (LSD, PCP, angel dust, acid) is very powerful and unpredictable. They temporarily change the brain’s chemistry, affecting the senses, emotions, reasoning, and control of muscles and certain body functions. Hallucinogens distort a person’s image of himself and his surroundings. Trips, as the effects are sometimes called, may last an hour or several days. Sometimes they reappear months later in a flashback. Chronic use may lead to paranoia and violent behavior.

**Inhalants**—Inhalants are chemicals that people breathe to get “high.” Most are household items that are readily available. They include metallic spray paint, airplane glue, aerosol sprays or cleaning fluids, nitrous oxide, amyl nitrite, and butyl nitrite. Most inhalants slow down the brain’s functions. They can cause lack of coordination and impaired judgment, among other things. In high doses, inhalants can lead to unconsciousness or death. Long-term use of these substances can result in permanent damage to the nervous system.

**Marijuana**—Marijuana is a drug made from the dried leaves and flowering tops of the hemp plant. It is usually smoked in cigarettes or pipes, producing more than 2,000 chemicals that enter the body, including the mind-altering chemical called THC. Marijuana slows down the brain’s activity, impairing a person’s judgment and coordination. It can also harm memory, comprehension, and motivation.

**Narcotics**—Narcotic substances, including heroin, codeine, morphine, and opium, have a depressant effect on the brain and other parts of the nervous system. They are extremely valuable as medicinal drugs but can have dangerous results, including drug dependence and habituation, when misused. An overdose may cause convulsions, coma, and death. Narcotics are often injected, so users risk contracting such diseases as AIDS and hepatitis.
What You Need to Know, from pg.6

Nicotine—Nicotine, the substance found in cigarettes and other tobacco products, speeds up the brain and increases blood pressure and heart rate. It is highly addictive and reinforces a person’s desire to smoke. Thus, many smokers find it difficult to stop. (See “Will Your Life Go Up In Smoke?” below.)

Other stimulants—Stimulants, the drugs that speed up the brain and the rest of the nervous system, include caffeine as well as a dangerous group of drugs called amphetamines (speed, uppers, black beauties). Increased heart and respiratory rates, elevated blood pressure, and dilated pupils are the immediate effects.

Will Your Life Go Up In Smoke?

Every day, 3,000 kids just like you start smoking cigarettes. That’s despite the fact that there are serious health risks associated with cigarette smoking — even for kids!

So, what’s the deal?

Maybe kids aren’t getting the facts. Or maybe the information you are getting — much of it from tobacco companies that try to make their products look appealing — is not the information you need.

In the Surgeon General’s Report for Kids, found on the Internet at http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr4kids/, all kids are urged to “cut through the smoke” and get to the real deal about tobacco and the harm it can do. Here’s some of what the Surgeon General and other experts have to say:

• Most people know that smoking can cause cancer and heart disease (400,000-plus people die from smoking-related maladies each year). But many kids don’t worry about these long-term consequences because they don’t seem “real.” They are real. It’s also real that the first time you smoke a cigarette you can experience shortness of breath, coughing, nausea, dizziness, and phlegm production. Ughh!

• Tobacco use doesn’t always lead to other drug use, but it can. The Surgeon General says that, compared with non-smokers, kids who smoke are three times more likely to use alcohol and eight times more likely to smoke marijuana. They’re 22 times more likely to use cocaine. Smoking is also associated with other risky behaviors.

• Although most young people who smoke WANT to quit, they often CAN’T. That’s because they are addicted to nicotine, the substance found in cigarettes. And when they do try to quit, they experience the same nasty withdrawal symptoms that adults do.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that most smokers — 90 percent of them — started their nasty habit as kids, some time before they finish high school. That means that if you stay smoke-free in school, you will probably remain smoke-free for life!

Need Help? It’s O.K. to Ask!

If you or someone you know has a drug-abuse problem, the following organizations might be able to help. In addition, check your newspaper and telephone directory for local resources that are available. Remember, it’s O.K. to ask for help!

• The National Institute on Drug Abuse can give you the number for support groups and treatment centers near you. Call 1-800-622-HELP (4357). Check out NIDA’s Web site at http://www.nida.nih.gov/.

• The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information has more than 700 free publications. Call 1-800-729-6686. Or go online at http://www.health.org.

• The National Council on Alcoholism’s Hope Line is 1-800-NCA-CALL (622-2255).

• Students Against Destructive Decisions provides educational ideas for students helping students. Call 1-800-787-5777. The group’s Web site is http://www.saddonline.com.

• The Cocaine Hotline provides information on cocaine and a variety of other drugs, as well as points you to help in your area. Call 1-800-COCAINÉ (262-2463).

• The National Cocaine Abuse and Prevention Foundation’s Hope Line is 1-800-722-3452 (operator handles all calls). Check out http://www.saddonline.org.

• Alateen for teens with family or friends who abuse alcohol can be reached at 1-888-4AL-ANON (for meeting information).

Activities

The Surgeon General’s Report for Kids on Smoking reports that the typical smoker spends about $700 a year on cigarettes. Think of what you could do with that much money! Here are a few things the report suggests:

— Play 2,800 video-arcade games
— Have the world’s biggest slumber party
— Talk on the phone to your friend in another state for 126 hours and 22 minutes
— Make a donation to your favorite charity.
— Put it in a savings account, earning 5-percent interest, and make $25,003.47 after 20 years.

Now, think of some things on your own. Look through the newspaper for fun and helpful ways to spend the $700 you WON’T spend on cigarettes.
Most young people know that abusing drugs is risky business, but few understand why. That’s because the most dangerous drugs affect the part of the body that is the most complex and mysterious: the brain.

Command central: Nestled inside the hard, thick bones of your head, lies a mass of nerve cells that make up your brain. Though small — it weighs only 3 pounds — the brain is a master control center that tells you what to do, feel, and think.

It tells you to breathe and to talk. It makes you feel happy and sad. And it gives you the ability to imagine, solve problems, and make choices.

But how does it work? Every minute of every day, your brain is on the job, sending and receiving messages — billions and billions of them. These messages, which are really electrical signals produced by chemicals in the brain, travel along a cable of nerve cells called neurons.

In all, there are probably 10 to 100 billion neurons in your brain. Each has three basic parts that speed information along from one neuron to another. They are the dendrites, the cell body, and the axon.

Dendrites, short fibers that look like tree branches, receive the information from other neurons. The cell body decides what to do with the information. And the axon, a longer tube-like branch, sends the information to other neurons.

In between each neuron is a tiny gap called a synapse. When a message reaches the end of the axon, certain chemicals called neurotransmitters take the message across the gap and attach it to receptors on the dendrite of another neuron.

When this complicated process works right, information travels quickly from one neuron to another. The brain continuously receives information, analyzes it, and tells the body how to react.

How do drugs interfere with this process? Quite simply, when mind-changing drugs enter the picture, the process does not work properly. These drugs interrupt the flow of information by interfering with the chemical activity of the brain.

Some drugs slow down the information network or stop it altogether. That means important information might not get from the brain to other parts of the body. When someone drinks alcohol, for example, the brain slows down so much that it might not be able to tell the person how to walk or talk correctly. That’s why a person who is drunk might slur his speech or fall down.

Other drugs speed up the brain, causing it to receive and send information too fast. So fast, in fact, that the brain doesn’t know what to do with the information, and nothing makes sense.

Still other drugs just make you feel sleepy, excited, or calm.

Using drugs that change the way the brain works is not always bad. When used for medicinal purposes, such as to block pain, drugs are useful. But they are useful ONLY under a doctor’s supervision.
What about drugs and the brain's pleasure center? There are drugs that create a false sense of well-being, or a "high." They turn on a part of the brain known as the pleasure center, which makes you feel good when you get the things you need, such as food, water, and rest.

The trouble is, drugs are not a natural way to turn on the pleasure center. They can turn it on too easily and too quickly. Eventually, the brain gets more pleasure from drugs than anything else, even the things a person needs to survive.

Look through your newspaper for things that naturally turn on your brain's pleasure center — food when you're hungry, a warm blanket when you're cold. Remember: These are things you need to survive. Cut out examples and make a collage.

For any drug to reach the brain, it must first enter a person's bloodstream. Drugs can get into the bloodstream in several ways:

**MOUTH**
Swallowing a drug sends it through the stomach and intestines and into the bloodstream.

**INJECTION**
Using a hypodermic needle puts a drug directly into the bloodstream.

**TRANSDERMAL PATCH**
Applying a drug to the skin allows it to be absorbed into the bloodstream.

**INHALING**
Breathing in a drug sends it through the lungs, into the bloodstream.

Brain – A Breakdown

The brain is divided into three parts: the cerebrum, the cerebellum, and the brain stem. Each up of neurons (the information transmitters) and supporting cells called glia.

THE CEREBRUM
The cerebrum is responsible for all higher order skills, such as thinking, speaking, and remembering.

THE CEREBELLUM
The cerebellum controls balance and coordination.

THE BRAIN STEM
The brain stem connects the cerebrum to the spinal cord and helps regulate the brain's awareness level.

THE BRAIN
The brain is protected by the cranium, or skull, and protective membranes called meninges.

Now look through your newspaper for stories about and pictures of things that make you feel good about yourself and create a sense of well-being — that give you a natural “high.” Again, cut out examples and make a collage.

Look through the newspaper for examples of activities that would be dangerous for a person who abuses drugs, especially the drugs that affect the way a person thinks, acts, and feels. For each example, make a list of other people in the situation who might be affected by a person's drug abuse. Talk it over with your classmates.
All about me:
Using your newspaper, find words that you think your parents or teachers would use to describe you. Cut and paste the words in the spaces below. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, write a few paragraphs using some of the words you selected to explain what you like most about yourself.

You’ve learned about drugs and their effects, but your journey to a drug-free life is only half complete. Along the way, you also need to find out more about a subject you’re already familiar with: YOU!

That’s right. Half the battle against drugs involves knowing yourself and what makes you valuable. It also involves learning to draw on those qualities to make positive choices. Once you master that, you can confront drugs head-on and come out a winner.

Who Am I? You’re probably thinking that you know yourself pretty well. But there are always new things to discover about yourself, no matter how young or old you might be.

The information and activities that follow are aimed at just that - helping you find out more about YOU and the values and attitudes, strengths and weaknesses that make you who you are. Because the more you know about yourself, the more self-confident you will be. And the more self-confident you are, the less likely you will be to abuse drugs.

Drugs Don’t Discriminate:
In 1998, 13.6 million Americans of all ages, sexes, and racial and ethnic groups, were illicit drug users.
It’s Up to You, from pg.10

Just for fun:
At your age, you probably spend your spare time in a variety of ways. Cut out newspaper pictures or graphics illustrating the things you like to do best. Paste them on a piece of construction paper. Next, make a pie chart illustrating the percentage of time you spend on each activity.

Staying Fit
The Journal of Drug Education reports that a fitness program can affect drug-abuse patterns among teenagers. In one study involving 74 adolescents, those who were categorized as “improvers” during an eight- or nine-week fitness class reported lower alcohol and other drug-abuse patterns. Additionally, the improvers showed a significant increase in positive self-esteem and a decrease in anxiety and depression.

Activities

Happiness counts:
Do you know what really makes you feel worthwhile? Is it being with friends or volunteering at the animal shelter? Look through your newspaper for things that bring you happiness. Make a list below.

Now, find a picture in your newspaper of someone who is smiling. Read the cutline — the copy underneath a picture that describes what is going on — or the accompanying story to find out why the person is smiling. Would the same situation make you happy? Explain your thoughts below.
Activities

Featured attraction:
Team up with a classmate (preferably someone you don't know very well) and take turns interviewing each other for a mock newspaper feature story. Before you get started, make a list of reporter's questions to ask your classmate. Remember, never ask "yes" or "no" questions, such as "Do you think drugs are a problem at school?" Ask questions that get the person talking and help you get to know him or her better.

In search of values:
To fully understand yourself, you need to understand your values — the things you believe in or that seem right. Most often, you learn your values from your family and others who are important to you. Examples of values might include:

- Believing that family is important
- Believing in the freedom to make your own decisions
- Believing in taking care of your body

What are your values? On a separate sheet of paper, make a list. Do others in your family share the same values? Interview members of your family to find out if they share similar values.

The qualities of life:
Throughout your young life, parents, teachers, and others have tried to encourage the development of positive qualities. Such qualities, or assets, which have been proven to help young people stay away from drugs, might include:

- Helpfulness
- Confidence
- Responsibility
- Ambition
- Self-reliance
- Friendliness
- Diligence
- Cooperation
- Sense of humor
- Independence
- Kindness
- Enthusiasm
- Optimism
- Dependability

In small groups, write a definition for each of these qualities and discuss how they can help young people stay away from drugs. Then search your newspaper's comics for characters who exhibit one or more of these qualities. Cut them out and make a "Desirable Characters" collage.

Positive qualities, or assets, help young people make wise decisions, choose positive paths, and grow up competent, caring, and responsible.
The Decision Is Yours! Every day you are faced with decisions — some your parents make for you, others you make for yourself. As you get older, you will have to make even more decisions, some that could affect you the rest of your life.

Whether to use drugs will likely be one of those decisions. That’s why it’s important NOW to learn how to make good decisions. With a little time and practice, and a whole lot of thought, you will be able to make the important decisions in your life with confidence and skill.

Before you get started, consider these characteristics of a good decision as written by Carolyn Wesson in her book, “Teen Troubles”:

- It fulfills your needs or wants, not someone else’s.
- It won’t hurt anyone emotionally or physically.
- It is realistic and based on fact rather than hope, assumption, or wishful thinking.
- It has acceptable short- and long-term consequences.

Reputations are gained and lost by choices — and for young people, those choices often center on fun.

 activités

What would you do?

A new rule in your house says you can watch only one hour of television a week. Using your newspaper's television section, choose your one hour of programming.

This week I will watch:

I chose this program(s) because:

A long-lost relative has died, leaving you $1,000. Go shopping through the newspaper for ways to spend the money. List your choices below. After you’ve finished, re-evaluate how you would spend the money. Do you think you made good choices? Be prepared to explain your thoughts.

You have been rewarded with a special night out — compliments of your parents. Choose someone featured in the newspaper to take along, then look for activities and events that the two of you could attend. (Make sure your parents would approve!) Describe your plans below.
The ability to plan ahead and make decisions is a quality, or asset, everyone should strive for.

**Activities**

- **The good and the bad:**
  The newspaper is full of stories about people who make decisions, both good ones and bad ones. With a partner, find a newspaper story about someone who made a good decision and one about a person who made a bad decision. What were the outcomes in each situation? Explain in the space provided.

  **Good:**
  
  **Bad:**

- **Now, identify other people who might have been affected by the decisions you described above. As a class, discuss why it's important to consider others when making decisions. If you decided to use drugs, who might be affected?**

- **On your own: Name one decision you think you are ready to make for yourself. List below the reasons why your parents should agree. What could you do to demonstrate you are ready to make the decision?**

- **Back to the future:**
  Make a list below of important decisions that you think you will be faced with in the next 10 years. Pick one and think about things you can do now to make sure you make a good choice when the time comes.

- **Now, as a class, find out the 10 most common future decisions mentioned. Illustrate your findings on a chart or graph.**

- **Influencing your decisions:**
  How much does advertising influence your decisions? Think back to the decisions you've made in the previous activities. Were any of them influenced by advertisements in the newspaper? Advertisements you have seen on television or heard on the radio? Discuss your thoughts with the class.

  Next, talk about the techniques advertisers use to attract your attention. For example, many ads use the bandwagon approach. They are designed to convince you to join the crowd. Some ads use a famous person to make a pitch. This is called a testimonial. Others use images to associate a product with certain people, places, and activities.

  Now, work in small groups to design an anti-drug ad using one or more of these techniques. Your message is aimed at selling an idea: Drugs are bad news!
Friends for life:
Choosing your friends is one of the most important decisions you can make throughout your life. Often, it’s your friends who you turn to in good times and in bad. List below the qualities you think are important for a friend to have.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Now, pick someone featured in your newspaper who you think would make a good friend. Does he or she possess some of the qualities you listed at left?

__________________________________________________________________________ would make a good friend.

Finally, look through your newspaper’s comics for characters who are friends. Cut out a strip that features these characters and past it on a sheet of paper. Describe below the ways in which they help or complement each other.

When a friend is NOT a friend:
Most young people who abuse drugs don’t get them from shady characters on dark street corners. They usually get them from so-called friends. What will you do or say if a friend tries to pressure you to use drugs? Design a bulletin board featuring those suggestions. Discuss how peer pressure can be used in reverse to discourage friends from using drugs.

In your opinion:
Your opinion about something often influences your decisions. Some opinions you might feel strongly about. Others you might still be forming.

Pick a community, state, or national issue feature on your newspaper’s editorial page. What do you think about the issue? Write your thoughts below, then discuss the issue with a member of your family. Did he or she have a different opinion?

Yes ________ No ________

Speaking of opinions:
Without a doubt, you will run into people that you do not agree with. And that’s O.K. How you handle conflict is what really matters.

Find a newspaper story about someone who did something in anger or because his or her opinions differed from someone else’s. In small groups, discuss how that person could have handled the situation differently. Below, write down your group’s suggestions.