

The Power of Peers



Every year from October 23 to 31, schools across the country take part in Red Ribbon Week, the nation's largest drug-prevention campaign. It began in 1985 to honor Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, a Drug Enforcement Administration agent who lost his life working to stop drug trafficking. His friends and family wore red ribbons in his memory, and the tradition grew into a national movement. Each year, students, schools, and communities use the week to celebrate the choice to live drug-free.

Here's some good news: Most young people are choosing not to use drugs. In a 2025 national survey, 91% of 8th-graders reported abstaining from alcohol, marijuana, and nicotine. Still, the risks are real. In 2025, about 2 million middle and high school students reported using one or more tobacco products in the past 30 days. E-cigarettes were the most commonly used product, followed by nicotine pouches. Scientists are still learning about the long-term effects of vaping, but e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can harm the developing brain. Although it is legal for adults, alcohol is a drug, and it is the most common one used by people under 21. About 4,000 young people die from excessive alcohol use each year.

Over the years, campaigns such as D.A.R.E., "This Is Your Brain on Drugs," and "Just Say No" tried to keep young people away from drugs and alcohol. Today, campaigns such as the FDA's "The Real Cost" take a different approach. What makes some campaigns successful and others less so? What kinds of messages actually reach people your age? What do students at our school believe about how common drug and alcohol use is, and how close is that to the truth?

Help your peers make safe, healthy choices by creating a campaign about underage drinking, smoking, vaping, or other drug use. Your message could make a difference.

The Power of Peers *Rubric*

	Novice	Apprentice	<i>Practitioner</i>	Expert
Description of Prevalence of Usage	includes: - one graphic representation of at least two data sets - number of individuals surveyed in each data set - quantitative measures of central tendency and variability for each data set	includes: - two or more graphic representations of at least two data sets - number of individuals surveyed in each data set - quantitative measures of central tendency and variability for each data set	includes: - three or more graphic representations of at least two data sets - number of individuals surveyed in each data set - quantitative measures of central tendency and variability for each data set - comparison of two or more data sets	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: draws conclusions from random samples
Campaign Content: Resources	includes: - citations - facts and examples from three or more reliable resources	includes: - citations for each resource used - facts and examples from four or more reliable resources, both digital and print	includes: - appropriately formatted citations for each resource used - facts and examples from five or more reliable resources, both digital and print	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: includes hyperlinked resources for each citation
Campaign Content: Format	includes two or three of the following: - headings - subheadings - bold print and/or italics - photographs and/or pictures - labels and/or captions - diagrams and/or flowcharts	includes four or five of the following: - headings - subheadings - bold print and/or italics - photographs and/or pictures - labels and/or captions - diagrams and/or flowcharts	includes all of the following: - headings - subheadings - bold print and/or italics - photographs and/or pictures - labels and/or captions - diagrams and/or flowcharts	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: produced as a print and digital resource

The Power of Peers *Rubric (continued)*

Campaign Content: Information	includes: • claim statement • two or more reasons supporting claim • consistent tone or style	includes: • claim related to one single issue • two or more reasons supporting claim and related to statistical data describing the school community • consistent tone and style	includes: • clearly stated claim related to one single issue • three or more reasons supporting claim and related to statistical data describing the school community • consistent tone and style appropriate for selected audience	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: digital version includes information presented via audio-visual multimedia
--------------------------------------	---	--	---	---