



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 5-8
About the Author:	<i>This lesson has been adapted from Smoke-Free for Life, a smoking prevention curriculum supplement from the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Drug Dependency and Tobacco Control Unit</i>

Mirror Image

Overview

In this lesson, students analyze their own body image and consider what they wish they could change. They discuss how smoking relates to body image, particularly for young women, and learn about the link between beauty and smoking.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an awareness of how they feel about their bodies
- an understanding of how the media can pressure young people to be thin
- an awareness of how the tobacco industry plays on smoking and thinness to market cigarettes

Procedure Note to Teacher: Although this lesson focuses on the relationship between smoking and thinness in young women, it's important to note that more and more boys are also turning to smoking or vaping to reduce weight and improve their appearance. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 30.6% of girls and 31.8% of boys in High School have used any tobacco products in 2019 revealing the slight difference in numbers between the two genders (Source: CDC (2019) Tobacco use among High School students in 2019.) Studies have found that girls who use tobacco are dissatisfied with their weight and wish to be thinner, whereas boys are dissatisfied with their appearance and do it to fit in (Source: Winter, V. (2017) "Adolescent Tobacco and Alcohol Use: The Influence of Body Image.")

Materials

Preparation and Materials

Prepare to distribute the following student handouts:

- *Mirror Image* (educational handout)
- *Smoking and Body Image Q & As* (educational handout)
- *Anti-Smoking Ad*
- *Parody Ad Assignment*

Provide access to arts and crafts materials or digital art tools



Individual Activity

Distribute the *Mirror Image* handout and have students complete it. Assure them that their answers will remain confidential, and that these sheets will not be collected.

Class Discussion

- Why do we think we should look a certain way?
- Where does our notion of an “ideal” body come from?
- Why is there so much focus in our society on body image?
- Who controls what images we see?
- How does the ideal image of a woman’s body differ in other cultures? In other historic times?

Distribute the handout *Smoking and Body Image Q & A* and go through it with the class. Ask:

- How does smoking relate to body image for men? For women?
- Why are teenage girls especially vulnerable to these ideas?
- Do teenage boys feel similar pressures?
- Why isn’t smoking a good way to lose weight?

Assessment Activity: Mock Ads

- Ask students if they know what a *parody* is. (If they don’t know, explain that it’s a text that either makes fun of another text or a particular kind of text. Sometimes parodies are just for fun but people can use them to criticize the ideas that are in a text as well.)
- Project or distribute the *Anti-Smoking Ad* and ask students how it *parodies* tobacco advertising. What specific advertising claims or approaches used by tobacco ads does it criticize? (*It reverses the idea that tobacco products make you thinner by pointing out all the health benefits of quitting.*)
- Distribute the *Parody Ad* assignment sheet and go through it with the class.
- Give each student group one of the five tobacco ads. Point out that all of these connect smoking/vaping to attractiveness in some way.
- Have students, either individually or in groups, identify the claim that their ad makes about smoking/vaping and attractiveness. (You may prefer to discuss this with the whole class to ensure they understand.)
- Have students make a *parody* of their ad that counters the claim or advertising approach. They may do so by making collages from magazines, drawing or painting their ads, using computer generated images, or any other medium you think is appropriate..
- When they are finished, have students answer the following questions.
 - What was the first thing you noticed about the original ad?
 - What did choose to make fun of in your mock ad?
 - What is the message in your mock ad now compared to the original ad?
 - How did the original ad make you feel?
 - Did the parody ad change how you look at the original advertisements?



Mirror Image

Use this worksheet to think about your body image. You don't need to write your name on this sheet. Your answers will remain confidential.

1. Write as many words as you can to describe your body and its parts (think of height, weight, hair colour & type, skin, hands, feet...)

2. Draw a red circle around the things you like about your body.

3. Think about the things you don't like about your body. What can you do about them? Check the boxes that apply:

Remember that "there's a lot more to you than meets the eye". Appearance is just one part of the picture. Who you are also includes your personality, talents, and strengths.

Face your fears. Instead of shying away from mirrors, take a really good look. Stand in front of a mirror and look – really look, as if you were looking at yourself through someone else's eyes. Don't think about what you would like to look like (forget the magazine and TV images). Take some time and just appreciate what you see. The human body, in all its shapes and sizes, is beautiful!

Be patient. Your body is gradually changing into an adult's body. It may feel awkward or uncomfortable for a while... even foreign. But that's all just part of the growing process.

Focus on the things you do like. Don't just zero in on the "problems" and the things you'd like to change.

Change your eating and/or exercise habits. Healthy food and regular exercise help you look and feel your best.

Have a sense of humour. If you can be light-hearted about your own shortcomings, you'll never have to be afraid of what other people think.

4. Why do you think so many people wish they looked differently than they do?



5. What would you tell a best friend who was unhappy about the way they looked?

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Tobacco and Body Image Q & A

Does smoking help you lose weight?

- People sometimes start smoking or vaping to lose weight, but there's not much evidence that it works. Any weight that is lost comes at a high price: your health, appearance, and feeling of self-control. Ironically, smoking leaves you out of breath and makes it harder to exercise.

When smokers or vapers quit, do they gain weight?

- Often they do, an average of 2-4 kilograms (4-9 pounds). That's one reason why people who quit should get regular exercise, such as bicycling, swimming, skating or working out. Another reason is that exercise helps them make it through the withdrawal period. It doesn't usually take much effort to lose the few kilos they've put on during the quitting process.

Does quitting nicotine make you want to eat more sweets?

- Nicotine affects levels of blood sugar (glucose) in the body, so that nicotine withdrawal can trigger a craving for sweets. Sometimes, smokers and vapers who are quitting also snack more often to fill the "gap" that cigarettes used to fill.
- These withdrawal symptoms pass, however.

How do tobacco advertisements take advantage of women's insecurities about body image?

- Tobacco companies know that many women in our society think they should be thin, so the models in the ads are skinny, and the cigarettes are called slims, lights or longs. These ads feed the idea that all women should look like models. One group in the United States became angry at billboard cigarette ads directed at women, and pasted their own slogan on top. It read: Love Your Body – Not Hers
- Associating thinness with tobacco can start early. Researchers have found a direct relation between early smoking (before grade 6) – in both girls and boys – and low body satisfaction and fears about being overweight.

How does smoking affect your appearance?

- Nicotine — the active chemical in both cigarettes and vape pods — constricts the blood vessels that bring oxygen to the skin. Without enough oxygen, skin ages faster – smokers end up with gray complexions and wrinkles.
- Smoking stains the teeth and fingers, turning them yellow. The smell of cigarette smoke clings to the hair and clothes, making them smell stale.
- Smoking also causes bad breath, which the smoker often isn't even aware of, except perhaps in the morning. "Smoker's breath" can't be entirely washed away with mouthwash or chewing gum, because it comes from the old smoke and tars that have accumulated in the lungs.

Sources:

Stop Smoking, Stay Trim (The Lung Association).

"Smoking, Weight and Appearance: Some Common Questions and Answers" from Facilitator's Guide: Diary of a Teenage Smoker (Health Canada).



Parody Ad Assignment

Questions to ask before you make your parody ad (*answer on a separate sheet*):

- Can you think of other examples of parodies? How do they make fun of another text, a genre (for example, superheroes or fairy tales) or an idea?
- Take a look at the tobacco ad you were given. How does it try to make you think that using tobacco and being attractive are connected?
- What was the first thing you noticed about the original ad?

Making your parody ad:

Think about how you can make a similar ad that *counters* or *makes fun of* the ad you were given. Do you want to make an ad that criticizes something about using tobacco? An ad that criticizes tobacco companies? An ad that encourages people to quit or to not start using tobacco?

Questions to ask after you make your parody ad (*answer on a separate sheet*):

- What did you choose to make fun of in your mock ad?
- What is the message in your mock ad now compared to the original ad?
- How did the original ad make you feel?
- Did the parody ad change how you look at the original advertisers?



Anti-Smoking Ad

OPEN CAPILLARIES

AVOID VITAMIN LOSS

DELETE TOXINS

LIMIT SMOKERS LINES

THE BEAUTY OF QUITTING

Quit smoking and prevent the damage it causes to your face. Stop now and discover the results of healthier skin. Get Serious. Get NicoDerm CQ.

Please do not use this product if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. For more information, visit www.nicodermcq.com.

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Rewrite The Rules.

FIN

Electronic Cigarettes

REDEEM YOUR **\$5 OFF** COUPON AT FINCIGS.COM/ROLLINGSTONE

FIN
Delicious. Cigarettes.

The advertisement features a woman in a red polka-dot skirt and white top, holding a gas nozzle as if it were a cigarette. She is standing at a gas station with a vintage car. The background shows a clear sky and a gas pump. The overall aesthetic is retro and rebellious.

SMOKE IN STYLE

With blu Electronic Cigarettes

Freedom never goes out of fashion. Control when and where you want to smoke with blu electronic cigarettes. blu produces no smoke and no ash, only vapor, making it the ultimate accessory and the smarter alternative to regular cigarettes. Step out in style with blu.

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With no ash, no odor, and an unmistakably rich taste, blu is everything you enjoy about smoking without the things you hate. You control when and where you want to smoke. Take back your freedom with blu.

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