

Eyes on What Lies

Grade: 8

Traffic Safety Issues

Eyes On What Lies

What's the Point?

Every junior high student is excited about the upcoming opportunities to drive. This lesson looks at some of the underlying issues behind careless driving by youth, seat belt usage, and driver distraction.

Lesson goals include:

- A discussion of the pressures and temptations that come with the transition to high school and how those pressure and temptations can be complicated by the ability to drive.
- Impacting the student with hard-hitting statistics regarding youthful driving, the usage of seat belts, and the topic of distracted driving.
- Encouraging the students to not take driver or occupant safety for granted, and be proactive in all situations where traffic safety is concerned

This lesson is designed to be used in conjunction with Eyes On What Lies video.

The Lesson:

Note: Possible questions are marked with an arrow, and **facts that need to be stressed are in red and bold print.**

Open the lesson by asking some open-ended questions about how the students feel about the transition to high school, such as:

- What are you the most excited about when you think of being in high school?
- Do you think there are going to be more negative pressures in high school? Why or why not?
- Do you think your peers are already dealing with some of those pressures now?

Note: Don't spend a great deal of time with these questions-maybe a total of 3 or 4 minutes, at most. These are just to "break the ice" and get them talking.

Then, move to questions about driving: You can use these and also come up with other ones.

- Are you excited about being able to drive?
- Do you think that driving adds to a young person's pressures? Why or why not?

Hand out the questionnaire. Tell the students that you will be giving them a little quiz about young drivers. **Tell them to be sure to mark that this is a "pre-test."** Tell them that they will

be taking the same test a little later to see what they have learned from today. *Collect the pre-tests when they are done*

Go on to these questions before you show them the video:

- Do you think young drivers are more likely or less likely to be involved in crashes than older drivers? Why?

Fact: Per mile driven, 16-19 year-olds have the highest rate of fatal accidents.¹

- How do you feel about seat belt use?
- Do you think most teens wear their seat belts? Why or why not?

Fact: Teenagers generally are less likely than adults to wear seat belts.²

- Why are teenagers less likely to wear seatbelts? Is there pressure to be “reckless”?

Fact: Every operator and front seat passenger of a passenger vehicle operated on a public highway in this state shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened safety seat belt system.³

- It is their responsibility as the driver to make sure everyone is buckled up.

Fact: The rate for South Dakota teen seat belt usage in the ages between 14 and 17 years old was 61.9 percent.⁴

- Why do you think this is true? (Peer pressure? The need to look “cool”? General disregard? Need to be reckless?)

Fact: 11 percent of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to be distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.⁵

- Why do you think that this age group is the most affected by distracted driving?

Fact: South Dakota state records show drivers younger than 25 represented about a third of the injurious or fatal accidents, despite representing only 16 percent of the driving population.⁶

- Why do you think these facts are true?
- What factors could contribute to these statistics?

Tell the students that you are going to show them a video, and that you will continue the discussion after the video. **SHOW THEM EYES ON WHAT LIES.**

Notes: The following portion of the discussion is to help the students comprehend what they just saw. The video is powerful, so be sensitive to students reaction.

¹ www.cdc.gov

² www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/NewDriver/BeginDrivers/images/BTDLo.pdf

³ http://dps.sd.gov/enforcement/highway_safety/safety_belt_use_law.aspx

⁴ http://dps.sd.gov/enforcement/highway_safety/safety_belt_use_law.aspx

⁵ <https://www.sd.aaa.com/news/member-news/laws-distraction-scary-stats-about-distracted-driving>

⁶ http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/state-ranks-dead-last-in-teen-driving-safety/article_e29a678c-47a6-11e0-b697-001cc4c03286.html

- What are your thoughts about the video you just saw?
- Does anyone have a story to share about a similar driving experience- either involving you, a family member, or an acquaintance?
- What could they have done to avoid being involved in the crash in the first place?
- Do you agree with the officers in the video that having friends in the car can be equally as distracting as technology?
- Did anything in the video surprise you or are you aware of how big the issue of distracted driving is?
- Do you feel a strong social obligation to respond to text messages or other social media immediately? Why or why not?

Final questions regarding peer pressure, distracted driving, and future intentions, and also reinforce some facts given in the video.

- What sort of pressures do you think young drivers might feel that could lead them to make bad choices when they are behind the wheel?
 - What about the need to look “cool”?
 - How about the feeling of being “indestructible,” or that “it won’t happen to me?”
- Do you feel that teens are able to measure “risk” like an adult? Why or why not?

Fact: the area of the brain that regulates risky behavior is not fully developed until about age 25.⁷

- How do you think this fact impacts driving habits? Occupant habits?
- Can you see where the situation can be made even worse by mixing alcohol or other drugs with driving? How?

Fact: In South Dakota, through 2006-2014, there have been 66 deaths and 887 injuries due to alcohol related motor vehicle accidents involving teens.⁸

- Why do you think that youth today put themselves in dangerous situations?

Fact: Teens are more likely to crash because they are more prone to make simple driving errors, often while they are speeding.⁹

Fact: You double the risk of being in a car crash with one passengers, triple it with two passengers, and with three or more passengers in the vehicle, the crash risk is four times greater than it is when driving alone.¹⁰

- What does that say to you about the importance of being a proper occupant?

⁷ National Institute of Health

⁸ <http://www.safesouthdakota.com/thenumbers.php>

⁹ Minnesota Department of Public Safety

¹⁰

- Why do you think that additional young people in a vehicle increases the chances of being in a crash?
- Do you think it is justified for young people to say something if they feel they are in a dangerous situation? Why or why not?
- Would you be willing to say something if you were in a situation like that?
- What would you say?
- Would you mind someone saying something to you if YOU were driving in an unsafe manner? Why or why not?
- How important is it to avoid distraction when you are driving?
- What are some forms of distraction? (Examples: Radio/cd player, cell phone, iPod, eating, loud music, other occupants.)
- Why do you think rural and familiar roads are so dangerous?
- Do you plan to always wear a seat belt?

Fact: When you close your eyes for just one second at 60 mph, you will travel 88 feet.¹¹

- Think about how long it takes you to read or answer a two sentence text message. Just in the few seconds that it takes to read a text message, you are traveling a considerable amount of distance. You are also not alone on the road and not all drivers are traveling at the exact same speed as you. It does not take long to approach a car going 40 miles an hour when you are traveling 60 miles an hour.

Fact: In 2013, 3,154 were killed in distracted driving crashes.¹²

Fact: A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive. 20 percent of teens and 10 percent of parents admit that they have extended, multi-message text conversations while driving.¹³

- The issue for distracted driving extends beyond teenagers. Do you think that parents can influence their children to text and drive or not to?
- Why do you think that even after endless warnings, people still persist to drive distractedly?

¹¹ <http://dot.nd.gov/divisions/safety/fastfacts.htm>

¹² <http://www.distraction.gov/>

¹³ <http://www.distraction.gov/stats-research-laws/facts-and-statistics.html>

Hand out the post-test, and make sure they indicate “**post-test.**” Collect the tests. If time permits, you may want to go over the questions and give them the right answers.

The Summary:

Thank the students for their attention and thank the teacher for giving you this time with them. End by saying that you were here today because you care about their well-being, and that you hope they remember what they have learned and that they will take the lesson to heart. Tell them to keep their “Eyes on what Lies.”

Evaluation Form
Youth Transitions Traffic Safety Lesson

Is this a **pre-test?**_____ or a **post-test?**_____

School:_____ Grade:_____

Gender: Male_____ Female_____

1. Which age group has the highest number of drivers involved in fatal crashes?

- 16 year olds
- 18 year olds
- 20 year olds
- 21 year olds

2. Due to increased awareness, teens are more likely than adults to wear seat belts.

- True
- False

3. Which age group has the largest percentage of distracted driving accidents?

- 60-74 year olds
- 40-59 year olds
- 20- 39 year olds
- 20 years or younger

4. In South Dakota, drivers under 25 years old represented what percentage of total car accidents?

- 5%
- 33%
- 48%
- 60%

5. The area of the brain that controls risky behavior is fully developed at about what age?

- 12
- 18
- 21
- 25

6. If I am driving a car, it is _____ responsibility to ensure my passengers are buckled up.

- Mine
- Each passenger individually

7. If I am in a car with friends, I should always speak out if the driver is being unsafe.

- True
- False

8. Most crashes happen on _____.

- Rural roads
- Major highways

9. How far do you travel in a car going 60 miles per hour if you close your eyes for just one second?

- 88 feet
- 146 feet
- 29 feet
- 7 feet

10. The percentage of teens involved in fatal crashes has increased in the past few years.

- True
- False

Answers:

1. 16 years old
2. False
3. 20 years or younger
4. 33%
5. 25
6. Mine
7. True
8. Rural roads
9. 88 feet
10. False