

# LESSON PLAN

## The importance of sleep

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### CONTEXT

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Good quality sleep is important for the maintenance of a healthy mind and body, which, in turn, supports academic performance. This lesson seeks to help young people to expand their understanding of the impact of sleep quality in an age-appropriate context. The lesson activities aim to develop awareness of ways to address common sleep-related problems through information on getting sufficient, good quality sleep.

This lesson is best used within the context of a unit of work on healthy, balanced lifestyles. The learning builds on the key stage 2 and 3 lessons in the pack — supporting a progressive, developmental PSHE education programme.

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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We are learning:

- about the importance of sleep and strategies to maintain good sleep habits.

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### INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Students will be able to:

- explain the importance of sleep for wellbeing and brain function — particularly during adolescence
- explain how lifestyle choices can affect sleep quality
- describe a range of strategies for ensuring appropriate sleep patterns and suggest advice for those struggling to sleep.

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### RESOURCES REQUIRED

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- Box or envelope for anonymous questions
- Coloured pens
- Resource 1: *Helpful and less helpful sleep behaviours*
- Resource 2: *Consequences of poor sleep habits*
- Resource 2a: *Consequences answer sheet*
- Resource 3: *Managing sleep difficulties*
- Resource 3a: *Sleep difficulties answer sheet*

## LESSON SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIMING
1. INTRODUCTION	Outline the lesson objectives and outcomes. Recap ground rules. Ask how many hours of sleep year 10 students should be getting.	5 mins
2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT	Read through Abe's scenario and highlight behaviours which both help and detract from a healthy sleep pattern.	10 MINS
3. WATCH & COMMENT	Watch then share reactions to a video outlining sleep-related issues for teenagers.	5 MINS
4. CONSEQUENCES OF POOR SLEEP HABITS	Ask how different situations might be impacted by a lack of sleep.	15 MINS
5. IDEAS TO PROMOTE SLEEP	Collate class's ideas on what supports effective sleep by creating a class mind map.	5 MINS
6. MANAGING INSOMNIA CARD SORT	Sort cards into true and false when managing insomnia.	10 MINS
7. ENDPOINT ASSESSMENT	Revisit baseline scenario — write advice for Abe to help him sleep better.	10 MINS

## CLIMATE FOR LEARNING

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson for guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, communication and handling questions effectively.

## KEY WORDS

Circadian rhythm, insomnia, sleep cycle, body clock, wind down, sleep hygiene

## INTRODUCTION

Outline the lesson objectives and outcomes. Establish or reinforce existing ground rules. Ask students how many hours of sleep they should be getting to function optimally at their age. Explain that we will be finding out the answer to this question during today's lesson.

## BASELINE ASSESSMENT

**Hand out Resource 1:** Helpful and less helpful sleep behaviours. Read through Abe's scenario and ask students to highlight behaviours which both help and detract from a healthy sleep pattern in two different colours. Circulate to observe general trends in highlighting choices.

**Discuss responses as a class:** Gauge students' understanding of the concepts introduced in the scenario (i.e., Abe getting an early night, sleeping in after the alarm had gone off, missing breakfast and late night routines). This is a baseline activity to help assess students' initial knowledge and understanding and should be used to help adapt the rest of the lesson. You may choose to explore these concepts now, or develop them during the lesson.

*\*Ensure students keep their work to one side to revisit later in the lesson.*

10 MINS

Watch then share reactions to a video outlining sleep-related issues for teenagers.

<https://www.boystownpediatrics.org/KnowledgeCenter/Videos/Pages/The-Importance-of-Sleep-For-Teens.aspx>

If preferred, the key learning point can be shared verbally instead: young people of this age group need approximately 9 hours' sleep per night. This is similar to childhood sleep requirements but importantly — around 13/14 years old — there is a natural shift to a later sleep pattern, i.e. around 11pm to sleep and 7-8am to rise. Yet this natural cycle can easily be impacted by social and academic commitments which in turn disrupt the natural sleep pattern and can make a young person more tired.

You could ask students...

- How does the recommendation of 9-9 ¼ hours' sleep compare with the original estimates at the start of the lesson?
- What do you think are the biggest barriers to young people getting enough sleep?
- What are the challenges for young people in getting the right sleep environment in their bedrooms?

### CONSEQUENCES OF POOR SLEEP HABITS

Allocate one scenario from Resource 2: Consequences of poor sleep habits to each group of students (approximately 4-6 students per group). Ask them to discuss what the potential consequences of their character's poor sleep habit(s) might be, what they should do next, and how they could change their sleep-related behaviours in future.

Feedback as a class to cover all the scenarios. Key learning points are provided on Resource 2a: *Consequences answer sheet*.

### IDEAS TO PROMOTE SLEEP

Fill a class mind-map with ideas of how to promote sleep and how to avoid issues with sleep. Ideas could include: avoiding stimulating activities for 60-90 minutes before bed, curbing caffeine and making healthy lifestyle choices (e.g. avoiding alcohol and nicotine).

You may wish to share the concept of social jet lag — it's suggested that for every hour lost/gained when travelling across time zones, it takes the body 1 day to catch up. Oversleeping at the weekend can have a similar effect; having a lie in for 3 hours can take the body 3 days to catch up to this sleep pattern change.

SUPPORT	You may wish to provide a list or set of pictures to help students select which things they think will help a person to sleep.
CHALLENGE	Invite students to complete more detailed online research on sleep hygiene and report back any interesting findings. Ensure any websites used are suitable and encourage students to assess their reliability.

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## MANAGING SLEEP DIFFICULTIES CARD SORT

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20 MINS

Ask students to sort the cards from Resource 3: *Managing sleep difficulties* into statements which are true (i.e. they typify behaviours which address sleep difficulties), or false (behaviours that make it more difficult for someone to sleep).

When discussing shifting sleep habits, explain that it takes approximately 4 weeks to establish a new sleep routine. If a person is struggling to adapt their sleep pattern, they can try shifting their alarm by 10 minutes each week.

*\* In order to save time and preparation, it would be possible for students to simply annotate Resource 3 with 'T' or 'F' to indicate true or false. However, this might limit the capacity to extend this activity.*

SUPPORT	You could reduce the number of cards provided to focus on the challenges most likely to face the individuals concerned.
CHALLENGE	Invite students to rank the behaviours into those most to least likely to encourage sleep. This is likely to be based on personal reflection about what has the biggest impact on their and their family's sleep quality and quantity rather than based on objective research findings.

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## ENDPOINT ASSESSMENT

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Revisit the baseline scenario involving Abe. Ask students to annotate their original work to show any changes in opinion or to add interesting comments based on what they have learnt in the lesson. All students should write at least 3 pieces of useful advice for Abe to help him sleep better.

This activity demonstrates progress and should be reviewed through class questioning and feedback to ensure students have met the learning outcomes.

Key points you may wish to highlight are that:

- 'Getting an early night' can be counterproductive if it is a change of sleep pattern as the level of sleep hormone is unlikely to be high enough to encourage sleep — this means a person is more likely to struggle to sleep and may therefore be unable to sleep, even at their normal bed time.
- Pressing the 'snooze' button can again mean disrupting the normal sleep pattern. It is best to avoid this if possible. Experts suggest we will find it easier to wake naturally in 90-minute cycles — so plan to wake after 9 hours as standard or 7.5 hours' sleep if having a one-off late night.
- Not eating breakfast increases the likelihood of sugar cravings and energy dips which are already potential problems due to lack of sleep — this is why Abe grabbed junk food and energy drinks. Such food/drinks can then disrupt the sleep cycle further so are best avoided.
- Eating a large meal late in the evening can make it more difficult to sleep — as can watching TV and using screens which produce blue light waves that disrupt the release of sleep hormones.
- Preparing for the next day in advance is helpful, as is his technique of separating school work and home, and his regular exercise.

### SLEEP RESEARCH

Plan and conduct a survey of close friends and family about their sleep patterns. This could include questions about how much sleep, when they sleep, how they prepare for sleep, techniques they use if struggling to sleep etc.

Ensure any follow up discussions from this activity are suitably distanced to ensure young people do not share sensitive details.

Students can then use this information to help them decide on a priority for the creation of an advert which raises awareness of a particular aspect of sleep hygiene. This could be a video played in assembly or tutor times, a poster which is displayed around the school or a leaflet which is passed to younger students or parents.