

# English Language Arts 5: Teenage Pregnancy

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## Aim/Rationale

**Cycle 1 and Cycle 2:** Students will gain awareness of the short and long term responsibilities of having a baby as a teenager. They will locate and research community resources for pregnant teens.

### Trigger Warning

Discussions around teenage pregnancy

#### Cycle 1 Competencies

- 1) *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn*
- 2) *Represents their literacy in different media*
- 3) *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts*
- 4) *Writes a variety of genres for personal and social*

#### Cycle 2 Competencies

- 1) *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn*
- 2) *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts*
- 3) *Produces texts for personal and social purposes*

## Lesson

### Materials

#### **Cycle 1 and Cycle 2:**

Computer, projector, reflective journals, video clips

## Hook [5-10 min]

### Cycle 1 and Cycle 2:

Choose a short clip from 16 and Pregnant, or the Teen Mom series

#### Class Discussion:

Do you think this accurately depicts the realities of teenage pregnancy? Why or why not?

## Development/Teaching Methods

### Cycle 1 Preparation

As a homework assignment, have students keep a journal of their activities for one day. Have them answer the following questions in their journal:

- What time did you wake up?
- What time did you go to sleep?
- What did you eat during the day? Be specific.
- How much time did you spend with friends?
- What activities did you participate in? How much time did you spend at each?
- Were you tired during the day? If so, were you able to nap?
- How much time did you spend on homework?

Ask students to provide and describe an example of teen pregnancy in a television show, film or novel that they have watched or read. If there are specific clips for viewing load them ahead of time.

### Cycle 1 Learning Activity (50 min)

Have students share some of their experiences in relation to the details they recorded in their journal. Visually chart a typical day in the life of a student.

#### Discussion Questions:

- How might being pregnant or having a child affect their daily life?
- What are the responsibilities of being a parent?
- How would having a child affect their education? Other aspects of their future? What kinds of financial responsibilities come with being a parent?
- How important is support from friends and/or family?
- How might other people react to a teen pregnancy?

Add the appropriate adjustments to the visual schedule.

#### Discussion Groups:

In small discussion groups have your students compare the example they brought from the media to their understanding of the realities of teen pregnancy.

#### Guiding Questions:

Does the show, film or novel accurately describe teen pregnancy?

Who produced/wrote the media?

If there is variance in media within the group, how does the medium/format change the way the topic is dealt with?

**Group Discussion:**

View some of the clips provided by the students and have the groups explain some of their findings.

**Conclude the activity by highlighting the following points (5 min):**

- A baby can be a very real and serious result of a sex between a person with a penis and a person with a vagina. Both parents are equally responsible for raising their child and legally responsible for supporting this child until the baby becomes an adult.
- Teen parents face many challenges including lack of support from family and friends, or having to put baby up for adoption.
- There are support services and resources available for teenage parents. (See Appendix on the Toolkit website for resources).
- Many factors can reduce the chances of becoming a teenage parent including having goals that you do not want to give up, talking with parents, resisting peer pressure, abstaining from sex, or using birth control consistently and correctly.

*(Remember to suspend judgment concerning teen pregnancy; this activity is aimed at developing a realistic understanding of life as a young parent, not to condone or condemn).*

## Adaptations for Cycle 2

Watch the following clips on teen pregnancy in the U.S.:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahf6M2d0PMI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rlee5XVw6TY>

**Discussion Questions:**

- How do these clips differ from the previous clip from 16 and Pregnant/Teen Mom? Why might that be the case?
- Who is the target audience for these clips? How is this evident?

**Group Discussion:**

In small groups have students research the video sources and the experts consulted.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Where do the statistics from the videos come from? Who sponsored the research?
- Do you think the statistics presented are accurate in Canada? Find comparable statistics for Canada and Quebec - make sure to find reputable sources.

**Group Discussion:**

- What did you find in your research?
- Is the information in the videos accurate?

In their reflective journals have students hypothesize the possible reasons for the (supposed) rise in teen pregnancy and the decrease in contraceptive use amongst teens in the U.S. Where do they get their information about these topics from? Whom do they consult? Why do they think it is important?

Other options: Novel Study, *Gather Together in My Name* - Maya Angelou

## Culmination

### Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Have students design a small poster, which aims to prevent teen pregnancy. Make sure they choose a target audience (i.e. teens, parents, educators etc.), and an approach to their campaign/mode of persuasion (i.e. pathos, logos, ethos). Encourage students to be as non-judgmental as possible within their campaign.

## Performance Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

### Cycle 1:

- Exercise critical media literacy skills
- Conceptually understand the responsibilities of a teen parent
- Understand some of the social pressures that may impact teen pregnancy rates
- Connect their own lives to the reality of teen pregnancy

### Cycle 2:

- Exercise critical media literacy skills
- Understand the underlying forces at work concerning research
- Critically examine research
- Understand the social, political and financial factors which influence teen pregnancy rates
- Connect their own lives to the reality of teen pregnancy

## Assessment Ideas

Write a persuasive paper on sexual education in the school setting. Have students develop an argument either for or against a comprehensive or abstinence only based sex education program.

Make sure they use a specific format for their mode of persuasion.



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