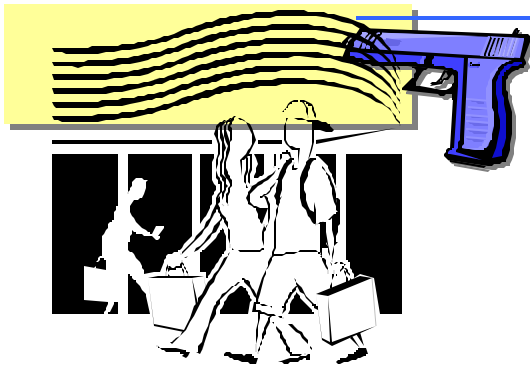


#3671



TEENS AND GUNS: PREVENTING VIOLENCE

Grade Levels: 8-13+
29 minutes
AIMS MULTIMEDIA 1996
1 Student Activity Sheet

DESCRIPTION

Shocking statistics about teens, guns, homicides, and violence set the tone as different people examine the problem of teens and guns from a variety of viewpoints. Listen to an undercover policeman/rapper; educators, victims, parents, students, perpetrators, a judge, and actor Samuel L. Jackson discuss possible solutions. Ends with the rap group Slick Boys.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS



Subject: Behavioral Sciences

- ◆ Standard: Understands various meanings of "social group," general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function
 - Benchmark: Understands that people often like or dislike other people because of membership in or exclusion from a particular social group
 - Benchmark: Understands that members of a group and even people in a crowd sometimes do and say things, good or bad, that they would not do or say on their own
 - Benchmark: Understands that "social group" has many meanings (e.g., any set of people who regularly spend time together for any reason; groups classified according to region or occupation such as Southerners or blue-collar workers; groups that people formally and deliberately join or are assigned to such as sororities, military units, scouts, street gangs, or the Shriners)

Subject: Health

- ◆ Standard: Understands the relationship of family health to individual health
 - Benchmark: Knows characteristics needed to be a responsible friend and family member (e.g., participating in family activities, assuming more responsibility for household tasks)
 - Benchmark: Knows how health-related problems impact the whole family
- ◆ Standard: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health

- Benchmark: Knows strategies to manage stress and feelings caused by disappointment, separation, or loss (e.g., talking over problems with others, understanding that feelings of isolation and depression will pass, examining the situation leading to the feelings)

DURING SHOWING

Interrupt viewing and ask discussion questions after each of the following segments.

4. Amy Regan (Seattle 911 call)

- a. Amy was killed by a friend who was “playing” with a gun. Why do so many gunshot deaths of teenagers occur this way? (Guns are left within reach of children by parents. Youngsters think the weapon is unloaded and act out a shooting.)
- b. The young man who accidentally killed Amy was convicted of manslaughter. Was that fair? Should he have been let off or should he have been convicted of a more serious offense such as second-degree murder? (Open discussion.)



5. Eric Davis in alley

- a. As he emerges from the alley, undercover officer Eric Davis is dressed as a “street tough.” Why does this image frighten so many people? Discuss the unfairness of stereotypes of black men and youths “threatening” others by their mere appearance. (“Gangsta” rap videos, TV news of gang killings, drive-by shootings.)
- b. Officer Davis turned his life around after he was shot as a gang member. How can other gang members be persuaded to do the same without going through the trauma of being shot? (Talk to them about where they are going with their lives.)

3. James in Miami

- a. The father of James is still very angry about the paralysis of his son. Discuss the pain that is caused parents and family by thoughtless acts such as gun carrying and use. (The loss of a son or daughter, arrest and possible incarceration.)
- b. How can James’ father deal with his anger in positive ways?



4. Willie Jones

- a. Why did Willie Jones’ community become so outraged by his death? (His death, it might be pointed out, dramatizes the frustration of a community when it sees “the best and the brightest,” those who represent hope for the future, gunned down senselessly.)
- b. Discuss the risks of innocent bystanders getting hit by gunfire that goes astray, or being targeted for trivial reasons. Do most students realize the danger they are in from random gunfire? (Open discussion.)



5. Samuel L. Jackson

- a. Jackson urges moviegoers to separate in their minds the difference between entertainment and real violence. Do most youngsters do that, or do movies and television encourage and validate violence? (There is a strong split among experts on this question.)
- b. Should the community attempt to abolish violence in public entertainment, or censor the degree of violence allowed, or rely on education and common sense, as Jackson recommends? (Consider the First Amendment freedom-of-speech questions.)
- c. It is estimated that kids see 25,000 murders and 250,000 acts of violence on TV before the age of 18. Does this fact have an influence on the attitudes of young people toward violence? Does so much violence on the screen make them less sensitive to the dangers of real violence? (Open discussion.)

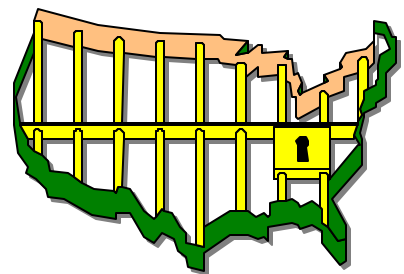


6. Dale Jefferson

- a. Dale said that he shot and killed the bully who was hassling him because a gun he had acquired through a home burglary was easily obtainable. Experts say that a great many guns fall into the hands of young people via this route. Does that fact make an argument against responsible citizens having handguns in their homes? (Discuss the Second Amendment rights.)
- b. Dale said that having the gun gave him a false sense of empowerment. Discuss how a gun can make a person falsely feel more powerful. Does the need to rely on a gun make a person weak and cowardly?
- c. Dale says that now, years after the shooting, he is still haunted by memories of it. Discuss guilt and how it can linger and haunt us for a long time after an event.

7. Judge William Pate

- a. Judge Pate says that courts are getting increasingly tough on youthful gun offenders. What forces in our society are at work to create that attitude? (More violence in street, the public demanding safer communities.)
- b. Pate also said that teenagers as young as 14 are being tried as adults because of using guns. Is that fair and in the public interest? (Open discussion.)



8. Eric Davis at juvenile hall

- a. Officer Davis grew up and now works in the "projects." Why do the projects seem to breed crime and violence? (Projects are enormous, crowded publicly owned apartments for poor people, mainly large cities. They are now being phased out because the massing together of large numbers of people who have little hope of escaping poverty tends to create a tinderbox of frustration that leads to high violence and crime.)

- b. Davis says that when a young person shoots another, "One shot, two drop—him and you." What does he mean by that? (The person who got shot is injured or dead, and if you did the shooting, you're going to pay for it.)
- c. What does he mean when he points to his brain and says, "This is the coldest weapon you've got"? (In street slang, it means this is the best weapon you've got.)

AFTER SHOWING



Discussion Items and Questions

1. If a student knows of another who carries a gun, on- or off-campus, should he or she report it? Does this make him or her a "snitch"? Is being a snitch in that situation good or bad?
2. Is there ever a valid reason for a teenager to carry a gun, on- or off-campus?
3. Do many young people distrust police? If so, why and how can the situation be made better? (Better communication between law enforcement and the public.)
4. Have you ever seen a gun in the hands of a fellow student? Without giving names or tipping off identities in class, describe the person and how he or she is respected and why you think he or she carries a gun.
5. Is dress conformity a sign of insecurity or low self-esteem (e.g., baseball caps backward, droopy pants, etc.)?

Applications and Activities

1. Appoint a student committee to gather details of gun policy in your school and your district. Does state law apply in this area?
2. Have students write a report about incidents of gun violence they have personal knowledge of.
3. Invite city, county or school police to address the class (or school). Have students prepare "tough" questions that will satisfy youthful police skeptics.
4. Start a class letter-writing campaign to various government officials voicing concern about teenage gun violence. Inform the school paper and local press of your efforts.
5. Organize a school-wide antigun poster campaign with appropriate prizes and publicity. Local newspapers will probably be happy to publish the best ones.
6. Start a school petition stating the students' opposition to guns on campus or the unauthorized possession of guns by teens.
7. Have a mock trial of a youth accused of murder by handgun. Have the class create a scenario and have the parts of judge, accused, lawyers, and others played by students.
8. Have "Supreme Court mock hearing" and arguments on meaning of the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution, and what it authorizes in the way of gun ownership.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Bullets Have No Names on Them #3015
- Handguns: Made for Killing, Not for Kids #3613
- Kids Saving Kids #3486
- Under the Gun #3676
- Weapons and You #3195

World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **HANDGUN CONTROL**

www.handguncontrol.com

Policy site addressing handgun control issues and legislation.

- **PLEDGE**

<http://www.pledge.org/>

An organization devoted to stopping gun violence.

- **POLICENOTEBOOK**

<http://www.ou.edu/oupd/>

From the University of Oklahoma. Recurring topics include public safety such as crime prevention, fire safety, personal security, first aid, and safe surfing. Main index has a powerful search engine.

- **VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

<http://www.pcvp.org/>

This site comes from California's Pacific Center for Violence Prevention. Easily accessible. Delicately handles a sensitive subject. Simple graphics.

- **ADDRESSING SCHOOL VIOLENCE LINKS**

<http://search.yahoo!igans.com/search/igans?p=violence>

Guns, assault, the Colorado tragedy, and more. Suggests kid-tested links.

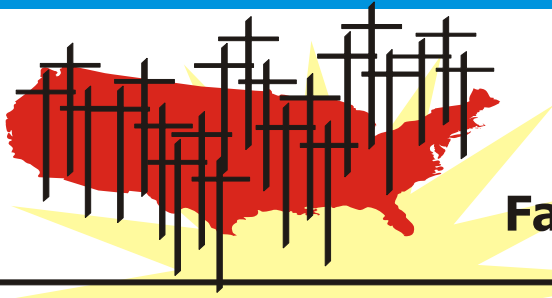
- **KEEP SAFE SCHOOLS**

<http://www.keepschoolssafe.org/>

The Youth Violence and School Safety Initiative is a joint effort of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA). Background information for parents, teachers, and concerned students.

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

- Facts About Youth Gun Violence



Facts About Youth Gun Violence

- 1.** Firearms are now the leading cause of death for both black and white teenage males; homicide for blacks, suicides for whites.
- 2.** Guns are the method used in 65% of male teen suicides, and 47% of female teen suicides.
- 3.** One in every four American homes contains a handgun. The mere presence of a gun in the home leads to a tripling of the risk that a homicide will occur in that home, and five times the risk that a suicide will occur.
- 4.** For every time a gun kept in the home is used in self-defense, other guns are used 43 times in suicides or accidental or deliberate fatal shootings of family members and acquaintances.
- 5.** 1.2 million latch-key children have access to guns in the home when they come home from school.
- 6.** 88% of children who are injured or killed in unintentional shootings are shot in their own homes, or in the homes of friends and relatives.
- 7.** In a recent year, handguns were used to murder 13 people in Sweden, 91 in Switzerland, 87 in Japan, 68 in Canada, 22 in Great Britain, 10 in Australia, and 13,165 in the United States.
- 8.** The murder rate among 14- to 17-year olds increased 165% in the 10 years since 1985.
- 9.** Gunshot wounds to youth under age 16 increased by 300% from 1986 to 1990.
- 10.** Since 1984, gun homicides by teenagers have at least tripled, while those involving other weapons have declined.
- 11.** 35% of juvenile hall inmates and 10% of high school students questioned in a nationwide survey said it was "OK to shoot a person if that is what it takes to get something you want."
- 12.** A 1993 survey showed that 83% of inmates in juvenile halls said they had owned a gun, while 22% of students attending inner-city high schools said they owned firearms.
- 13.** Whereas the rate of homicides by adults 25 and older has continued to decline steadily, the rate among 18- to 24-year olds increased 62% from 1986 to 1991.
- 14.** Nearly one-fourth of the 262,300 people arrested for weapon offenses in 1993 were younger than 18.
- 15.** In 1991, juveniles ages 12-17 were more likely to be victims of violent crime than adults 25 and older.
- 16.** In the next 24 hours, 65 American men, women and children will die in handgun fire.
- 17.** More Americans were murdered with firearms in the last 4 years than were killed in the Vietnam War.
- 18.** For black males, age 15 to 19, firearm homicides have increased 125% since 1984.
- 19.** Black males age 15-24, while only one percent of the U. S. Population, constitute 14% of the victims of homicide and 19% of the perpetrators.
- 20.** The direct cost of firearms injuries to the U. S. health care system is more than \$4 billion as of 1991.