

## Peer pressure– why is it so powerful and how can we overcome it?



Emma's friends have snuck a bottle of drink with vodka in it to school. They are taking it in turns to drink some in the car park. Emma really doesn't want it – it tastes horrid and she doesn't want to get in trouble. Emma still has a sip of it, despite her worries.

### Challenge:

What could the consequences be of what Emma just did? What does Peer Pressure mean?

### More Challenging:

Why did Emma do this, even though she didn't want to? Explain.

### Mega Challenging:

Emma is usually a good student, yet she has taken a really stupid risk. Analyse how powerful peer pressure can be.





## Peer Pressure

### Learning Outcomes:

Identify strategies to resist peer pressure and reasons this can be so difficult.

Describe the best ways particular case studies can resist peer pressure and the meaning of herd mentality.

Explain the difference herd mentality, herd behaviour and peer pressure and analyse which strategies will work best in which case.

### **Key Term:**

Peer Pressure - direct influence on people by peers, to follow by changing their attitudes, values, or behaviours to conform to those of the influencing group.





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZA09vyY76g8>

Watch the clip and answer the questions below at your challenge level.

What kind of pressures are students sometimes put under?

What strategies can help?

What happened to the boys that cheated? Was it worth the risk?

What is your 'inner voice' – how can it help?

What is manipulation – how does recognising this is happening help?

How does imagining what your parents/ guardians would say help?

How can having strong self-esteem help you overcome peer pressure?





## Case Studies

We're now going to examine some case studies.

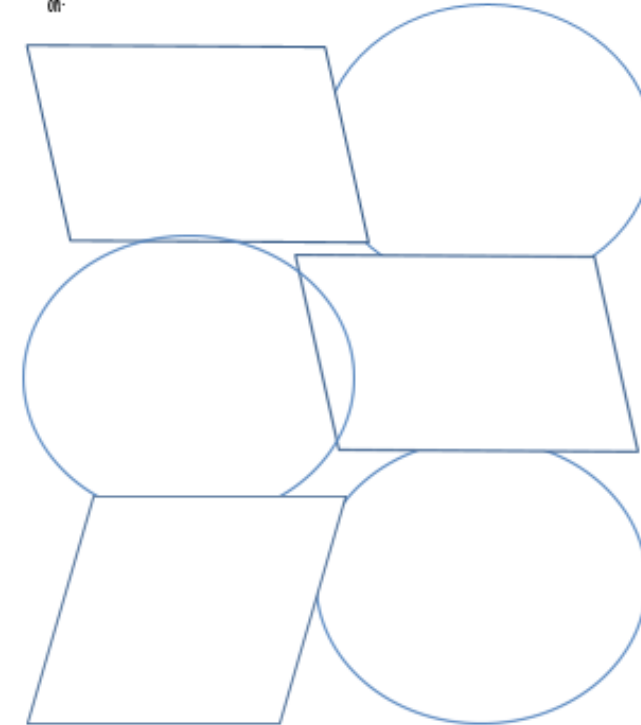
Read the case studies in your pairs and complete one of the spaces with your advice. **After a few minutes your teacher will tell you to pass it on to the next group.**

Be prepared to feed back your answers to the class.

Hint – use the strategies you learned in the video!



Stuart, 11, plays football in a park near his house most Saturdays. On his way home, one of the lads, Rob, gets out a pack of cigarettes and starts smoking. Then suddenly his dad walks over. Rob says, 'Here Stuart, cover for me' and throws Stuart the packet of cigarettes. Stuart must think quickly. What should Stuart do? Choose one box for your group to write their advice in, then pass it on.





## Source Extract

Source Extract - 'Mob Mentality' - from the WiseGeek Website

Herd behaviour - why peer pressure can be so hard to resist.

One reason for herd behaviour is that people and animals tend to do what others around them are doing. This usually is because those who join the group in the behaviour figure that if several others are doing something, it must be worthwhile, or they would not be doing it. For example, people figure that a crowded restaurant must be serving good food, or it would not be as busy. In most cases, this thought process comes naturally or subconsciously, which is one reason why animals take part in herd behaviour.

Herd Mentality

The term "herd mentality" is often used to something that involves more conscious thought than herd behaviour. This type of mentality can be influenced by things such as peer pressure, conformity, the need for acceptance and the desire for a sense of belonging. These things often cause people who are in groups to behave in ways that are similar to others in the group. For example, a person might choose to listen to different music when in a group of friends than he or she would when alone, because the others might make disparaging remarks if another type of music is chosen. Another example might be a teenager who drinks alcohol or smokes cigarettes because of peer pressure from his or her friends.

Other factors come into play when the term "mob mentality" is used to refer to something negative. Two of the main factors are the greater anonymity that exists within a group and the distribution of responsibility for the group's actions. These factors sometimes make a person believe that they can act a certain way within a group and not have the same consequences that the same actions would have if he or she acted alone. For example, if a person is in a group that is vandalizing a building, he or she might believe that there is less of a chance of getting caught than if he or she was acting alone, because it might be difficult to identify every person who was involved. He or she might also feel less guilt because other people also vandalized the property.

Another factor in mob mentality is the sense of confusion or even panic that can exist in a large group. An example of this can be seen when people in crowds suddenly begin rushing in one direction. Although many people in the group might not know why this is happening, they see the urgency in the group and begin rushing in that direction, too. In extreme cases, the urgency and panic

## So why is peer pressure so hard to resist?

**READING ALOUD OPPORTUNITY!**

We'll now read a source extract as a class.



**Challenge:** In pairs identify five reasons why peer pressure is so hard to resist according to the article.

Underline the reasons on the sheet and then describe them in your own words in your books.

**More challenging:** Explain why good students often cave in to peer pressure, using quotes from the article explained in your own words.

**Mega challenging:** Explain the difference between herd mentality, herd behaviour and peer pressure. Which of the strategies we've learned about would help us most in each case? Analyse.





## Plenary

Write down the three best strategies you've learned today for coping with peer pressure. Number them in order of how well you think they'll work for you. Be prepared to feedback your answer as lesson exit ticket.

**STORY:** 11, plays football in a park near his house most Saturdays. On his way home, one of the lads, Paul, gets out a pack of cigarettes and starts smoking. Then suddenly he dials round over Paul's eyes. There Stuart, cover for me! and throws Stuart the packet of cigarettes. Stuart must think quickly. What should Stuart do? Choose one box for your answer to write their advice in. Then pass it on.

