



Snuggle with Pam

Peer Pressure

Work sheet

A. Did you know?

The mechanisms of peer pressure

To understand what peer pressure is and why it has such impact on our lives we need to recognize the fact that fitting in and being part of a group is part of life. As it is very important for our survival that we have other people around us, we learn from a very early age to imitate others. We learn from other people and they learn from us.

There are many positive examples of how peer influence can make a person grow and develop new skills. A classmate shows you how to solve a difficult maths problem or how to do a new trick on your skate-board. Maybe you admire your friend and you want to be more like him or her. In turn, you may influence your classmate to like the same films or music as you do.

But peers can also have a negative impact on you. For example, friends at school may ask you to join in skipping classes with them just for fun. Another classmate might try to make you write nasty comments about someone on Facebook. You may end up shoplifting just because some friends want you to do it, although you know that it's wrong. These situations are all examples of negative peer pressure.

One explanation of why peer pressure is so powerful is that people want to be loved and accepted by others. It is easier to be influenced to do things that you wouldn't normally do if you're in a crowd. The idea that "everyone else is doing it so why shouldn't I?" can make sensible people behave in strange ways.

You don't think peer pressure is worth discussing? Watch this!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2NduSCLiMA>

B. Discuss

Discuss in small groups. Choose one or two of the questions and discuss them in class.

1. How would you define “peer pressure”?
2. Do you have any experience of peer pressure?
3. In what areas do you think that peer pressure is most common?
4. Do your friends accept you if you have an opinion of your own?
5. If your friends think somebody is cute, will that affect your opinion?
6. Is there peer pressure about grades? Try to describe it.
7. Is peer pressure always negative? Try to think of situations in which peer pressure could be positive.
8. What advice would you give to a friend who feels that peer pressure is hard to cope with.
9. Why do you think peer pressure exists?
10. Do you think that peer pressure is different in different cultures?
11. Do you think that it would be possible to live in a society with no peer pressure at all?
12. What do you think is the best way to deal with peer pressure?



B 1. Discuss

Read the story about Angela and discuss it in small groups

Angela is a 13-year-old girl from Notown. She has a crush on a boy in her class, Cosmo, and she has received signals from him that he is interested in her too. One evening she took a nude photo of herself and sent it to Cosmo. A classmate borrowed Cosmo's phone, found the picture and forwarded it to a friend. The friend passed it on to another friend who passed it on to yet another friend. Within a few hours the photo had reached a large group of students in her school and in other nearby schools.

When Angela came to class the next day, she had no idea that everyone knew about the picture. Her classmates giggled and whispered about her behind her back and someone wrote "whore" and "slut" on her notebook when she wasn't looking. On her best friend's Facebook wall she later read comments about her and the nude photo. She realised what had happened, but it was too late. The cyber bullying became worse and worse. In class she got text messages with insults and threats from people she didn't even know. Nobody wanted to talk to her anymore and even her best friends turned their backs on her. A guy from another class sent her a nasty picture of a fat pig and the text: You wanna make love tonight?

That evening Angela wrote in her journal. "Everybody is talking about me behind my back and I hate it! I don't know what to do. Everybody hates me and I haven't done anything wrong! I will never go back to school again! I just want it to stop!..."

- **What advice would you give to Angela?**
- **What would you like to say to her "friends" to make them stop?**
- **Have you experienced cyber bullying or cyber threats?**
- **How can cyber bullying be stopped?**
- **What can parents and teachers do to help Angela?**

C. Attitudes

Famous persons also experience peer pressure, sometimes a lot of it. See what some famous persons have said about peer pressure:

“There's always pressure, from other people and yourself. If you're happy with the looks you're born with, then what are you going to do your whole life? We keep thinking up new things and finding better ways of doing things because we're not happy with what we're given.”

- Natalie Portman

“In school, kids are always trying to fit in with the crowd. Everyone goes through that and feels peer pressure from that. I know I did when I was growing up. I definitely wanted to hang out with the cool kids and tried to be something I'm not.”

- Joe Jonas from *Jonas Brothers*

“I'm not in this world to live up to your expectations and you're not in this world to live up to mine.”

- Bruce Lee

“I stopped going to school in the middle of fourth grade. Everyone grows up with the peer pressure, and kids being mean to each other in school. I think that's such a horrible thing, but I never really dealt with it in a high school way.”

- Hilary Duff

“Homer: Now remember Lisa, always give in to peer pressure.

Lisa: But what if someone really bad tells me to do something really bad and...

Homer: ALWAYS”

- the Simpsons

Hollywood Teens about peer pressure:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIzOGRFc6Og>

D. Express yourself with Old Nick

Welcome to Old Nick's language school. When it comes to talking about peers and peer pressure, it's good to know the correct lingo, otherwise it's easy to get confused. Here you will learn different words and expressions I'm sure you didn't know beforehand.



Here are some different definitions of **peer pressure** from *Urban Dictionary*:

peer pressure – an all powerful force that keeps us from learning from other's mistakes.

peer pressure – intangible pressure to be the equal or better of your peers.

peer pressure – the damn thing that causes you to eat a super giant burrito that is 2 feet long and about 10 cm in diameter even though you cannot handle it all in your stomach.

Words for **peer** / **friend**:



British slang:

mate



Cockney slang:

mate Empire state

mate Dinner plate

mate Garden gate

mate China plate



Aussie slang:

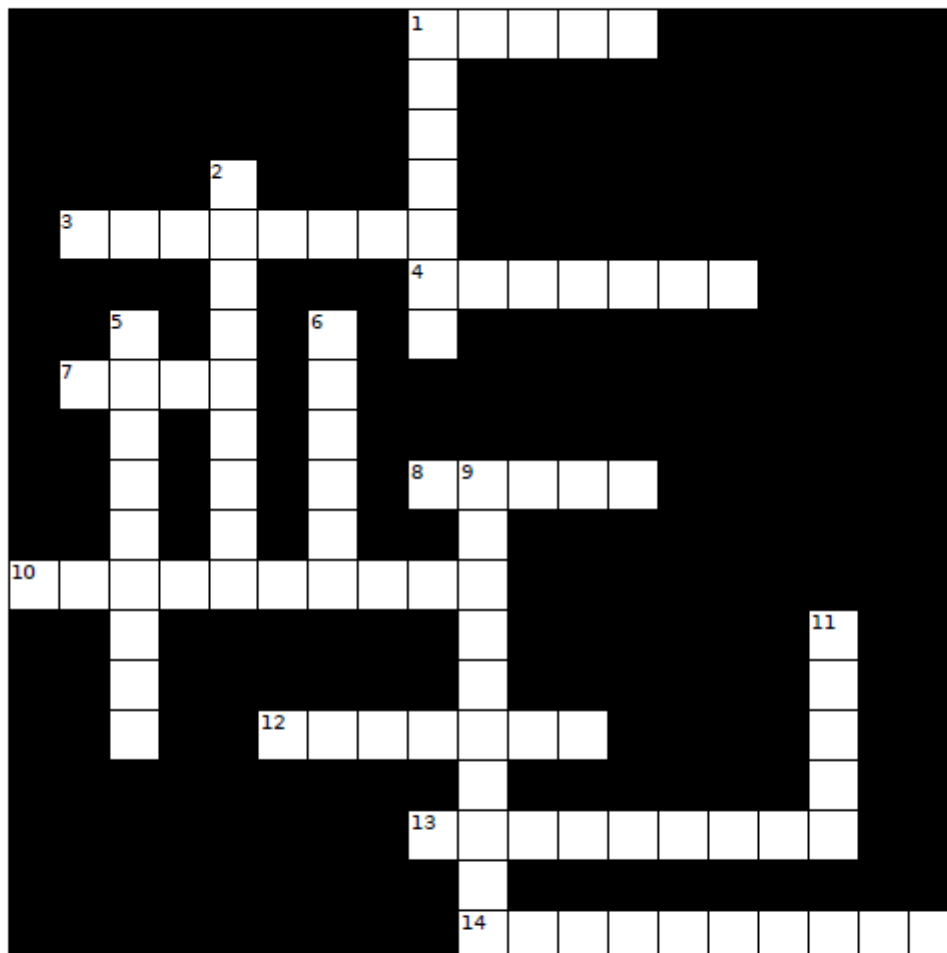
mate

cobber

mug (friendly insult, for example: "come here, yer mug")

E. Crossword

Peer Pressure UR



- Across
- 1 komma överens
 - 3 inblandad
 - 4 åsikt
 - 7 stig, smal väg
 - 8 töntar, nördar
 - 10 skolutflykt
 - 12 mobbad
 - 13 uppmuntra
 - 14 utmattande

- Down
- 1 överge
 - 2 besatt
 - 5 lyckas
 - 6 påverka
 - 9 erfarenhet
 - 11 döma

F. Who are you?

What would you do? Choose the best answer to the question below.

Two of your most popular classmates are having a party on Saturday and you are invited but your best friend isn't. No one has really said it, but you understand that she hasn't been invited because some of your classmates think that she is boring. You really want to go because you have heard about all the fun and you don't want to miss it. At the same time, you don't want to hurt your friend's feelings.

- a) I would go without telling my friend. It's not my fault that they don't like her and besides, I have the right to have fun, don't I?
- b) I would say no to the party and do something fun with my best friend instead. Who needs these people anyway?
- c) I would ask why they hadn't invited her and try to make them change their minds about her.

You are:

- a) Of course you have the right to have fun and go to parties if you are invited. It is also true that it isn't your fault that they don't like your friend. But wouldn't it be nicer if she could come too? Have you thought about how she would feel if she knew that you went to the party behind your back? If you decide to go anyway you should talk to her about it first and tell her that you are sorry that she wasn't invited and that if it had been your party you would have invited her.
- b) You are very loyal to your friend and that is a good thing. It is good to stand up for the people you care about. Just make sure that you don't blame her later on for you missing the party. If you feel that you missed all the fun because of her, that may harm your friendship. Then it is better to be honest both to her and yourself and go to the party.
- c) If you are honest about how you feel for your friend and show them clearly that you want her to be included they will probably understand and invite her too. If they really can't see her qualities and still want to leave her out then they may not be the kind of people you want to hang out with. By asking them you will find out and it will be much easier for you to make the right decision. It is worth a try!

G. Lyrics

Look at the lyrics below. What is this song about really? How can you tell? Are there any key phrases? Were there words or phrases you didn't know since before? Can you find metaphors or similes in it?

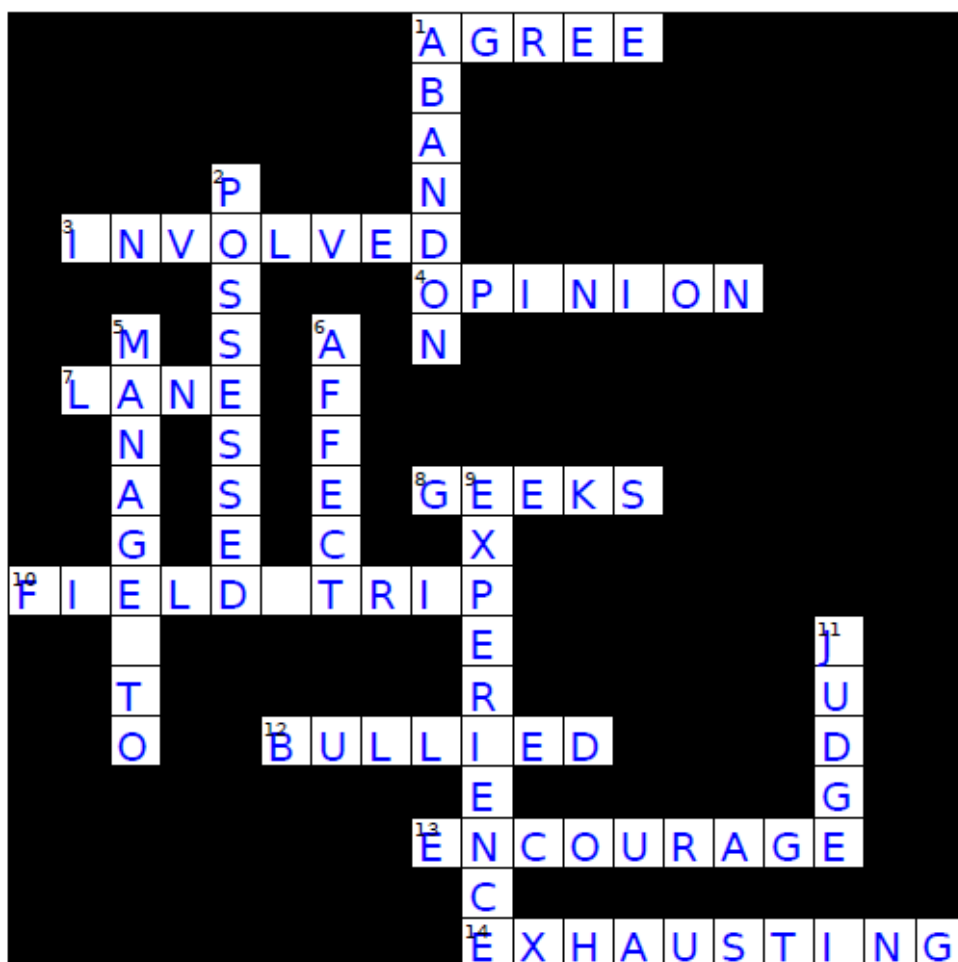
“Peer pressure” by the Screamers

Everywhere I look, I get pressure from my peers
Some of them are straight and some of them are queers
Some of them are black and some of them are white
Some of them are wrong and some of them are right

Peer pressure, peer pressure, I can't say no
Peer pressure, peer pressure, it won't let go
Feel it in the morning, all through the day
(Peer pressure, peer pressure, no other way)
Pressure at your school, pressure at your job
Peer pressure makes me want to join the mob
The pressure is building, it's getting so hot
Peer pressure makes me want to fit in a slot
I got it for you, you got it for me
Peer pressure, peer pressure, can't you see

G. Key to Crossword

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