Program Description
With adolescence comes new independence. And with that freedom comes choice and the temptation to break rules. Teenagers often risk their futures by skipping school. And a driver’s license opens the door to a whole new world of risk-taking. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that a 15-year-old is more likely to commit a violent crime than an adult, especially because kids often believe they’re invincible. This program looks at some devastating results of kids taking risks without really considering the consequences.

Discussion Questions
Before watching the video
- Do teens make riskier choices than adults?
- What is someone’s reputation, and how can choices affect a reputation?
- What can help you decide whether a choice is healthy or risky?

After watching the video
- What are some choices students will be faced with that could affect the rest of their lives? (Whether to drive safely; whether to finish high school; whether to lie, cheat, or steal; whether to treat others with consideration.)
- Why do students think teens are more likely to make risky choices than adults? (Statistics indicate that they do.)
- Do most teens consider consequences when they make a bad choice? (Answers will vary.)

Lesson Plan
Student Objectives
- Review the possible consequences of making risky choices.
- Become familiar with statistics involving teens.
- Create and play a board game designed to show how bad choices can lead to setbacks.
Materials

- *Reality Matters: Risky Business* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- Computer with Internet access
- Poster board, markers, paper, index cards, and bottle caps or other game tokens

Procedures

1. Review some of the statistics presented in the program and listed below. Then ask the class what the statistics mean to them. Do they know of teens who have been in car accidents or dropped out of school? What has happened to them? How might cheating or plagiarizing a paper affect a student’s future? Why do students think teens are more likely to make risky choices than adults? Do they think teens consider consequences when they make a bad choice?

   - Teen drivers are twice as likely to be involved in a fatal accident as other drivers.
   - Every year 6,000 teens die and 600,000 are hurt in car crashes.
   - Those who don’t finish high school are more susceptible to health, economic, and social problems than those who do.
   - High school dropouts are twice as likely to have incomes below the poverty level than those who finish school.
   - It is more likely that a violent crime will be committed by a teen than an adult in the United States.
   - The percentage of students who admit to cheating in school is 97 percent.

2. To help students realize the effects decisions can have, they will develop a board game called Choices and Consequences. Divide the class into groups of four. The group will come up with 24 different choices and outcomes—12 good and 12 bad. The choices will be real-life ones; the outcomes will either move the player forward in the game (for a good choice) or set him or her back (for a bad choice). Some examples of choices and outcomes are listed here. Students can decide the number of spaces a player will be moved forward or back according to how big a boon or setback a choice might be. To keep the game moving, though, they should probably limit setbacks to no more than three spaces, and not include too many such choices.

   - You cheat on a math quiz. Move back one space.
   - You help a younger student practice reading. Move ahead a space.
   - You refuse to shoplift a CD even though your friend urges you to do it. Move ahead two spaces.
   - You drink at a party and are involved in a car accident. Move back three spaces.
   - You stay in school and earn your degree. Move ahead three spaces.

3. The game board the students create should have a starting space at least 40 steps or moves from the end goal—in this case, a bright future! Game boards might be designed to look like a ladder.
in which players advance up rungs, a path with stepping stones, or a staircase in which players move up and down steps. They should draw their game board on poster board and write each of the 24 choices and outcomes on an index card. Use simple objects, such as bottle caps, as tokens for each player.

4. To play, shuffle the index cards and place them face down on the game board. Students take turns drawing cards and moving their tokens along the board. They must draw a good outcome card to make the first move. If they get moved back to the start, they’ll need to get another good outcome card to start again. Continue drawing cards and making moves. Reshuffle cards once they’ve all been used and continue until one player reaches the end—and a bright future.

5. Should students need some fodder to come up with their choices and outcomes, these resources will come in handy:

- The Ad Council’s High School Dropout Prevention page
  http://www.adcouncil.org/research/wga/high_school_dropout_prevention/?issue3Menu
- Character Counts brochure: “The Six Pillars of Character”
  http://www.josephsoninstitute.org/MED/MED-2sixpillars.htm
- Character Counts brochure: “Groundwork for Making Effective Decisions”
  http://www.josephsoninstitute.org/MED/MED-3groundwork.htm
- DriveHomeSafe.com
  http://www.drivehomesafe.com/just_4_u_teens.htm
- Students Against Destructive Decisions statistics page
  http://www.saddonline.com/stats.htm

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students’ work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions and devised outstanding choices and outcomes for their board game.
- **2 points:** Students participated in class discussions and devised adequate choices and outcomes for their board game.
- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in class discussions and failed to develop enough choices and outcomes to complete their board game.

Vocabulary

character

*Definition:* An assessment of a person’s values, traits, and abilities

*Context:* Pete was a boy of good character; he unselfishly helped others.
consequences
Definition: The result of a decision or course of action
Context: When Tiffany decided to drop out of school, she didn’t consider the consequences of not being able to earn a good living.

hazing
Definition: Humiliating or punishing someone, often as a rite of initiation
Context: Freshmen at Josh’s school were often victims of hazing in which upper classmen stole their books or made them sing or dance in public.

plagiarism
Definition: Using someone else’s written work without attributing it
Context: Turning in a composition downloaded from the Internet is plagiarism. It can get a student a failing grade or suspension from school.

reputation
Definition: The image—either good or bad—that others have of someone
Context: Sean had always had a reputation as a good student until he was caught cheating on a test.

Academic Standards

National Academy of Sciences
The National Science Education Standards provide guidelines for teaching science as well as a coherent vision of what it means to be scientifically literate for students in grades K-12. To view the standards, visit http://books.nap.edu.

This lesson plan addresses the following science standards:

• Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal health; Risks and benefits

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
McREL’s Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit http://www.mcrel.org/.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

• Language Arts—Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
Support Materials
Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- [http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html](http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html)

**DVD Content**
This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

**How To Use the DVD**

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

**Play Video** — This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

**Video Index** — Here the video is divided into four parts (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

**Curriculum Units** — These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher’s Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

**Standards Link** — Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

**Teacher Resources** — This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

**Video Index**

I. Taking Chances (6 min.)
Two teens severely injured in an auto accident highlight the risks of dangerous driving.

II. Dropping Out (6 min.)
The story of two school dropouts focuses on their GED program. Also examined are the problems that led them to drop out, as well as the consequences of not finishing high school.
III. Out of Line (7 min.)

Cheating, lying, plagiarism, and hazing are some of the bad choices students can make. Explored are reasons kids make these choices, including ego, desire for power, and trying to fit in.

IV. Choices (4 min.)

The lack of close relationships and the feeling that no one cares may be a major reason teens make bad choices. Featured are consequences of making bad choices, with a look at the loss of self-esteem.

Curriculum Units

1. Choices or Chances?

   Pre-viewing question
   Q: What choices can you make in your life?
   A: Students’ perceptions of choices will vary.

   Post-viewing question
   Q: What does “with choice comes responsibility” mean?
   A: When you make your own decisions, you must live with their outcome. It also means you must be responsible enough to know if your choice can hurt you or anyone else.

2. Difficult Choices

   Pre-viewing question
   Q: What does getting a driver’s license mean to you?
   A: Answers will vary.

   Post-viewing question
   Q: What are the benefits and responsibilities of having a driver’s license?
   A: A driver’s license gives teens independence from their parents, which requires responsibility for the safety of the car, the passengers, pedestrians, and other cars on the road.

3. Out of Control

   Pre-viewing question
   Q: What are examples of out-of-control driving?
   A: Answers will vary, but students should mention speeding and driving while drinking.

   Post-viewing question
   Q: Why are teens twice as likely as adults to have fatal auto accidents?
   A: Teens are usually less experienced and more easily distracted while driving, and they tend to take more risks.

4. Careless Driving

   Pre-viewing question
   Q: Do you know anyone who has been in a serious auto accident?
   A: Answers will vary.
Post-viewing question
Q: What caused the accident that injured Masha and Armando? What was the outcome?
A: Racing another car, the driver of their car lost control and hit a tree. Armando’s legs were crushed and his back broken; his internal injuries were fatal.

5. A Challenge for Youth

Pre-viewing question
Q: What can a high school dropout do?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: Why would teens volunteer to attend the Youth Challenge Academy?
A: Students get the chance to complete high school, learn discipline and life skills, and stay out of trouble.

6. Dropping Out vs. Staying In

Pre-viewing question
Q: What happens to kids who drop out of school?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: What is the connection between criminals and high school dropouts?
A: Not all high school dropouts become criminals, but almost all hardened criminals are high school dropouts.

7. Bad Behaviors

Pre-viewing question
Q: What kinds of trouble can teens get into?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: Why do some kids do things they know are wrong?
A: Some kids think cheating on schoolwork, for example, is not really wrong. Others think they won’t get caught. And others try to fit in with a group, in spite of the risks.

8. Cheating in School

Pre-viewing question
Q: What percentage of teens do you think have cheated at school?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: What did the psychologist say is the worst thing about teens who cheat?
A: She said that many kids do not think it is wrong to cheat.
9. Plagiarism

Pre-viewing question
Q: What is plagiarism?
A: Answers will vary, but most students will know that it is presenting someone else’s work as your own.

Post-viewing question
Q: Why is it wrong to plagiarize?
A: Plagiarizing can become a bad habit that prevents students from knowing how to do their own work. Also, it can result in failing a course or getting suspended.

10. Hazing

Pre-viewing question
Q: What is hazing?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: Why do you think hazing takes place?
A: Older students may enjoy humiliating younger students, possibly because it’s tradition or because they were once hazed. Younger students don’t complain to adults because they want to be accepted.

11. Why Care?

Pre-viewing question
Q: Do your parents affect your behavior?
A: Answers will vary based on experiences.

Post-viewing question
Q: What was suggested as a reason that teens engage in risky behavior?
A: Surrounded by people who don’t know them, many teens don’t think their behavior will be found out.

12. Consequences of Risky Behavior

Pre-viewing question
Q: What determines how you feel about yourself?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: How can a bad choice affect self-esteem?
A: You tend to feel good when you work hard and overcome obstacles. When you cheat and lie, you don’t feel good about yourself.