

# Dysfunctional Eating

## Summary

This lesson integrates Health Standard 6 (dysfunctional eating) with Language Arts Standard 7 (imperative writing). It teaches students the dangers of dysfunctional eating. Students create a recipe for a healthy snack and present it to the class both orally and in written format.

## Main Core Tie

Health Education - 6th Grade

[Strand 5: NUTRITION \(N\) Standard 6.N.3:](#)

## Additional Core Ties

Health Education - 6th Grade

[Strand 5: NUTRITION \(N\) Standard 6.N.4:](#)

## Time Frame

5 class periods of 45 minutes each

## Group Size

Large Groups

## Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication

## Materials

"The Seven Silly Eaters", a picture book by Mary Ann Hoberman

Video "Skin Deep: A Story About Eating Disorder Prevention" by the Disney Video Leasing Library 1-800-295-5010 (optional)

Video "The Karen Carpenter Story" (optional)

## Background for Teachers

### **Eating Disorders**

Many teens spend a great deal of time worrying about their weight. Some even try to lose weight. Sometimes these worries and efforts get out of control. Obsession with food intake, coupled with mental and emotional problems, can lead to eating disorders. Eating disorders are extreme and damaging eating behaviors that can lead to sickness and even death.

Eating disorders can be triggered by many psychological factors, including low self-esteem, poor body image, and depression. Teens are at risk because of the normal stresses during the teen years and the natural growth patterns of their bodies. Eating disorders are serious; they can be fatal. People with eating disorders need professional help.

**Anorexia nervosa** is an eating disorder characterized by self-starvation leading to extreme weight loss. Anorexia means "without appetite" and nervosa means "of nervous origin." Most people who develop anorexia nervosa are teenage girls and young women. Men and teenage boys can also have the disorder, however. People with anorexia nervosa have a distorted body image. Most also have trouble coping with everyday stresses, such as high expectations, the need to achieve, or the need to be popular.

Most people with anorexia nervosa eat very little. Some develop malnutrition, a condition in which the

body doesn't get the nutrients it needs to grow and function properly. They may also develop shrunken organs, bone loss, low body temperature, low blood pressure, and a slowed metabolism. In some people with anorexia, an irregular heartbeat may lead to cardiac arrest.

Treatment for anorexia nervosa sometimes requires a stay at a hospital or clinic. There, the person will get the nutrients needed to restore physical health. She or he will also receive counseling to address the underlying problems causing the disorder.

Another type of eating disorder is **bulimia**, or bulimia nervosa. Bulimia is a condition in which a person eats large amounts of food and then tries to purge. Many people with bulimia force themselves to vomit. Others take laxatives to force the food quickly through their body. Although bulimia is most common among young women and teenage girls, young men and teenage boys can also develop the disorder.

People with bulimia are extremely concerned about being thin and attractive. They have an overwhelming need to maintain control over their bodies. They might gorge on large amounts of food, then, fearing that they are losing control of their bodies, they may take drastic steps to regain control. Some go on crash diets, including fasting, to try to make up for overeating.

Bulimia damages the body in many ways. Stomach acids from frequent vomiting can damage teeth and injure the mouth and throat. Vomiting can also cause the stomach to rupture. Repeated use of laxatives can damage the kidneys and liver, causing long-term health problems. Many people with bulimia suffer from malnutrition as a result of emptying the body of nutrients.

Another eating disorder is **binge eating disorder**, or compulsive overeating. This disorder may be the most common eating disorder, affecting between 1 million and 2 million Americans. People with binge eating disorder eat unusually large amounts of food at a time. Unlike people with bulimia, though, they do not rid their bodies of the food. Afterward, they often feel a sense of guilt and shame.

People with binge eating disorder may use food as a way of coping with depression and other mental/emotional problems. However, the guilt and shame they feel after bingeing adds to the depression. This creates a cycle that can be difficult to break without professional help. Because binge eating disorder often leads to excess weight, it contributes to many health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

People who have eating disorders usually need professional help. Sometimes this help can come from a counselor or psychologist. Help is also available through clinics and support groups such as Overeaters Anonymous, which are found in many communities. If a friend develops an eating disorder, you might want to speak to a school nurse or counselor. It is natural to want to solve your friend's problem by yourself. However, you can help most by showing support and guiding him or her to a health professional.

Family and friends can also provide much-needed support for a person with an eating disorder. Often their role is to encourage the person to seek help.

### **Imperative Writing**

Expository writing is writing that shares knowledge. It informs or explains, sometimes by defining, classifying, or giving directions.

Imperative writing is a type of expository writing where the author explains a process, step by step. Transition words help make the order of the steps clear for the reader. Some transition words include: first, next, then, finally, afterwards, after, lastly, etc.

### Student Prior Knowledge

Students should understand the structure of the Food Guide Pyramid and be familiar with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. They should understand what a balanced diet consists of as well.

### Instructional Procedures

#### **Day 1**

Read aloud "The Seven Silly Eaters" by Mary Ann Hoberman. Ask the students if the family had a balanced diet. Lead a discussion about what it means to have a balanced diet. Introduce the concept of dysfunctional eating. Teach the students about anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, fad dieting, and having an unbalanced diet. (Allow students to share feelings and experiences) Show the video called "Skin Deep: A Story About Eating Disorder Prevention" or "The Karen Carpenter Story".

## **Day 2**

Discuss the video. Help students recognize the concept of self-abusive behaviors. Determine as a class how dysfunctional eating may have negative effects on mental, physical, and social health. Have the students choose a favorite nutritional snack. Tell them that they will be doing some imperative writing. Explain what imperative writing is and discuss the elements. You may want to have the students come up with different transitional words and write them all on the board.

## **Days 3-5**

Instruct students to write a 1.5 page paper explaining how to make their favorite nutritional snack. They need to assume that the audience has never seen or heard of the snack before. Remind students to use proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and to use transition words correctly. (Review if necessary). Make sure students get their rough drafts edited and revised before producing a final draft.

When their final draft is complete, explain to the students that they will be doing an oral presentation the following day. They need to bring all of the supplies needed to show the class how to make their snack they may choose to bring a little taste of the snack for each class member if they wish.) The students really love this part!

Invite students to figure out the nutritional content of their snack and include that information in their written report.

## Extensions

In "The Seven Silly Eaters", Mrs. Peters gets a birthday cake made up of all her children's favorite foods. You may wish to have the students figure out the nutritional value of that cake.

## Assessment Plan

Students will be assessed on Dysfunctional Eating using a short quiz.

Students will be assessed on the Imperative Writing using a the 6 + 1 Trait Writing Rubric

The oral presentation will not be graded.

## Rubrics

[6+1 Trait Writing Rubric](#)

## Bibliography

Hoberman, Mary Ann. The Seven Silly Eaters. 1997.

Glencoe/McGraw-Hill. Teen Health Course 3. 2003.

## Authors

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