

## Perceptions versus reality classroom activity

### Perceptions versus reality activity learning objective:

After completing this activity, students will be able to explain how perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.



### About the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS):

The YRBS is led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and it's taken every two years by high school and middle school students across the country. Students answer questions in six areas, and one of the areas is alcohol and drug use. It's a good way to find out what students are doing and to track how behaviors change over time.

### Instructions for educators:

Show your class the Youth Risk Behavior Survey results from either the Wisconsin Department of Health Services or the CDC for national-level data. Explain to students that this survey is taken by students, so the results are what their peers self-report about their behaviors.

Either print out the attached Perceptions Versus Reality Worksheet or send it to students to fill out on their computer or tablet. Ask them to complete the worksheet individually or in small groups.

If time allows, ask individual students or small groups to share the results with the class.

# Perceptions versus reality worksheet



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Start by finding the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey results for the state you live in. If the results are not available for your state, find the national-level data and complete the activity for the country as a whole.

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) keeps all of the data over time, and the CDC website (cdc.gov) is a good place to start. Be sure to search for YRBSS. Then, answer the following questions by yourself or in a small group.

1. What percentage of high school students currently vape?

\_\_\_\_\_

a. Is this number higher or lower than what you expected?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What does this tell you about what you thought was happening, and what students actually report about current vape use?

2. What percentage of students reported first-time vape use before the age of 13?

\_\_\_\_\_

a. Is this number higher or lower than what you expected?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What does this tell you about what you thought was happening and the percent of students that tried vaping before the age of 13?

3. Now, choose another result that you think is surprising or interesting. What is the topic the question focuses on?

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- a. What surprised you or interested you about this result?

4. What did you find out about what you thought your peers were doing versus what they are actually doing?