

# Contents


<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Health</b>	
- Staying Healthy, Eating and Exercise	3
- Smoking	15
- Alcohol	24
- Drugs	29
<b>Changes</b>	
- Puberty	35
- Divorce and Separation	43
- Moving on to Secondary School	49
<b>Some of the Problems of Life</b>	
- Bereavement	55
- Bullying	62
- Disability	70
- Racial Discrimination, Prejudice and Racism	77
<b>Being a Responsible Citizen</b>	
- Crime and Respect for Authority	85
- Dealing with Criticism	93
- Personal Responsibility	97
- Safety	105

## Dealing with Criticism – Pupils’ Notes

No matter what you do there will always be people prepared to criticise your actions.

This might be criticism of you personally or of something that you have done. For instance, you might have spent many hours producing a piece of writing, some art work, a sculpture or a model that you feel very proud of, only to have someone tell you that it is complete rubbish.

Criticism of this sort can be most upsetting and it is very easy to take it personally, but you should always try to remember that when someone criticises a piece of your work, it is the work that is being criticised and not you.



Criticism is usually difficult to accept and it is often very hard not to immediately and aggressively react to it or to set out to prove the critic wrong, but it is worth remembering that generally speaking criticism is the opinion of one person and that someone else might see things in a completely different way. You should always try to accept the criticism calmly and do your best not to over-react.

There are basically two kinds of criticism:

- destructive criticism, where the critic will be very clear about what he or she thinks is wrong with something or somebody, but will not offer any suggestion or help as to how it might be improved. Destructive criticism can include put downs, trivialising, sarcasm and sneering.
- constructive criticism, where the critic will say what he or she thinks is wrong but will then offer suggestions and advice as to how things might have been done better.

If someone offers you constructive criticism, try to see this as helpful and to take note of the advice and to see it as an opportunity for improvement. Even so, when you have spent a lot of time producing something that you think is really good, any form of criticism can be painful, upsetting and often quite depressing.

After you have been criticised it is often easy to shut yourself away and feel miserable about it. At a time like this, if you have a friend that you can trust and who will be honest with you, it is often a good idea to discuss this criticism with your friend simply to talk things through. It will probably make you feel better and you might even come to understand what the critic is actually getting at.

Sometimes criticism is more personal and it is you that is being criticised. You might find yourself being criticised for what you are wearing, for the way you speak, for your friends or for the places where you like to hang out.

These forms of criticism might be upsetting to you because they seem to infringe on your personal space. Usually this sort of criticism happens because of a conflict, often within a family, where your views differ to those of other family members.

Again, try not to over-react. Your views will undoubtedly be different from those of the person who is being critical, but what you must try to do is to find some common ground where you can come to some sort of agreement. Failure to do this will simply make matters worse and you will reach a point where you are no longer speaking to each other at all.



In adult life people like politicians and celebrities, or anyone in what could be called public life, finds that information about their lives becomes public property. Just look at all the fan magazines.

Celebrities are often criticised for all sorts of different behaviour. Often this criticism is quite unfair and much is quite untrue, but it doesn't stop the stories from being widely circulated in newspapers and magazines.

The person who is being criticised must make a decision whether to ignore the criticism in the hopes that the story will die and everyone will simply forget it, or to deny what they are being criticised for in order to try and put the record straight.

You may think that it would be good to be famous, but this is one of the definite downsides.

## Dealing with Criticism – Questions

1. One of the things that young people like to do is to choose their own clothes and to decide what they are going to wear. Most schools have a uniform policy. Do you think this is a good idea - yes or no - and why?
2. You have saved up your money and bought what you think is a really trendy outfit. When you get home your family tell you they think it is dreadful. You are obviously upset by this. Were you right to buy the outfit in the first place if there was a chance that it would upset your family? What do you think you should do?
3. You have painted a picture that you are really proud of, but you are very upset when someone tells you that they think it is a load of rubbish. How do you think you should react?
4. Imagine that you are a famous pop star. How do you think you would feel about seeing endless stories about your life in magazines, especially if some of them were simply not true?

# Personal Responsibility

## Teachers' Notes

A sense of personal responsibility is something that develops as children grow older. Very young children have no need for this because someone else will always do their thinking for them, but gradually they will be expected to do more thinking for themselves.

Gradually they will learn to feed and dress themselves and begin to understand the need to share things with others. They will begin to understand basic rules of safety, such as not climbing on high things where they might get injured if they fall off.

They will begin to appreciate the difference between recklessness and caution and responsibility and irresponsibility and understand the need to care for their own safety and the safety of others.

Gradually they will learn that there is a need for them to take on wider responsibilities as they move towards adulthood. Financial responsibility and budgeting is only touched on, but teachers might wish to develop this theme in greater detail.

Responsibility for the environment will doubtless be a big issue during the lifetime of these children. Although there is already a general move to recycle rubbish rather than simply dump it, in the next few years recycling will obviously become a way of life.

There will be a responsibility to conserve dwindling natural resources and the ever-widening gap between the richer and poorer countries will highlight the international responsibility of the worldwide community.

## Personal Responsibility – Pupils' Notes

When you were very young you didn't have to take responsibility for anything at all. Everything would have been done for you, simply because you were unable to do anything for yourself. You would have been fed, had your nappy changed, been dressed, been put to bed, been taken out and been given toys to play with.

As you grew older you started to do things for yourself, like holding a spoon to feed yourself and beginning to choose your own toys.

The next stage was when you began to understand that certain things, like climbing on chairs, were dangerous because you would be hurt if you fell off. This was the first stage of beginning to take responsibility for your actions.

Once you started to mix with other children you began to understand the need to share things and to respect and care for other children and their belongings so that they in turn would do the same for you. As you grew older you became responsible for more and more things.

By now you are expected to take responsibility for your own property and for remembering what to take to school, whether it be last night's homework or today's lunch. You will also be responsible for your personal hygiene, such as cleaning your teeth and washing your face. You will probably also have been given certain responsibilities in school.

Learning to ride a bike is another important point in someone's life, but it must be done responsibly. Some people never learn to ride a bike, but for those who do, riding on roads is an example where responsible behaviour can be the difference between life and death. An irresponsible cyclist, who does not follow the rules, can very quickly cause, or have, a very nasty accident.

As you move on towards adulthood, you will have to take on financial responsibilities. You probably already have pocket money so you may have a bank account. You will already have learnt that it is impossible to spend more than you earn and that you must learn how to budget and save up for the things that you want.



Another of the responsibilities of life is looking after other people. You may already have the responsibility of looking after a younger brother or sister, or some other member of your family. In the future you might have the responsibility of bringing up your own children or of looking after an elderly or sick relative.

Other responsibilities are to the community at large. We live in a democracy, where laws are made by an elected parliament and local communities are run by local elected councils. We have a responsibility to obey laws but we also have a responsibility to take part in elections for members of parliament and local councillors. It is only by voting that we can be responsible for who is elected.

### **Irresponsibility**

Personal responsibility is an important skill of life. The opposite of responsibility is irresponsibility and recklessness. A reckless person will not think about the results of his actions and will do things regardless of any consequences.

A good citizen is not reckless or irresponsible.

Examples of reckless and irresponsible behaviour would include playing on railway lines, running across a busy road dodging the traffic or throwing stones at cars and buses. This sort of behaviour can result in serious accidents and tragedy, not just for the person who was being reckless, but for a whole number of other people.

Another example of extremely reckless and irresponsible behaviour is making fake 999 calls. This, of course, is illegal and anyone caught making such a call would be in very serious trouble.

### **Environmental responsibility**

We also have a responsibility to our environment. We are fortunate to live in a world that is full of natural resources, but many of the resources that we regard as being vital are gradually being used up. At one time nobody worried about this because there was always plenty in reserve, but as these resources gradually begin to run out, there is more and more concern about finding alternatives.



An example is electricity. The normal way to make electricity is in a power station that burns coal, gas or oil. These are what we call fossil fuels. They are found deep underground and reserves are beginning to run out, so alternative methods will have to be found.

Our society has now reached a point where to many of us our cars are essential to our way of life. Added to this, road transport is just about the only way that goods and freight can be moved around the country. In recent years the number of cars and other vehicles has increased and continues to do so. Cars and freight vehicles have got bigger, faster and more comfortable and the amount of fuel that they use has increased accordingly.

The growth of popularity of foreign holidays and cheap air travel has caused a dramatic increase in the number of flights. The fuel for aircraft, cars and freight vehicles all comes from oil and as we have already seen, these reserves are starting to run out. It is clear that in the future new forms of transport will need to be developed or new sources of fuel will need to be found.

Much of our heating is either by oil, gas or coal, or by electricity that uses one of these in its manufacturing process. Modern people like their houses to be much warmer than people did years ago, so we either have to use more energy to increase the temperature, or we must improve the insulation of our houses to cut down on the heat that is lost.

Scientists predict that reserves of oil will begin to run out somewhere between 2020 and 2040, so it is likely to be in your lifetime.

The world is now faced with two choices;

- cut back on the use of oil,
- find some alternative source of power.

The hope is that with a world full of so many natural resources, scientists will find new sources of energy that have not yet even been thought of. Of course they may be unlucky. Time will tell and you must wait and see.

## A throw-away society

We now live in what has become a throw-away society. In the last 50 years the way people shop has completely changed. In the 1950s when you went food shopping you would go to a shop and tell the shopkeeper what you wanted and you would then be served.

These days most shopping is done in supermarkets or in self-service stores and since everything is going to be handled by several people, it must all be wrapped up much more carefully. Most of this wrapping will obviously get thrown away. The result is that the amount of household rubbish per family has increased enormously over the years.

The big problem faced by society is what to do with all this rubbish.

Traditionally rubbish has been put into large holes in the ground that have been left after sand and gravel has been removed to build houses. These holes have then been filled with household rubbish, which is then squashed down before fresh earth has been put on the top. After a few years, once it has all settled down, housing estates have often been built on top of these former tips and you would never have known that the hole had been there in the first place.

This system worked very well while the amount of sand and gravel that was being dug out was about the same as the amount of rubbish being tipped in the hole. Once we began to get more rubbish, we began to run out of holes. This meant either cutting down on the amount of rubbish or finding some other way of disposing of it.

One answer to this disposal problem is to recycle most of our rubbish. Rather than tip it all into the same bin, if we get into the habit of sorting it out, much of it can be reused. For instance, glass, paper, plastic and metal cans can all be recycled and grass clippings and other garden refuse can all be converted into compost to grow organic food.



The eventual target is to reach the point where nearly all rubbish is recycled. One of the problems is that to do the job properly you need a different disposal bin for each category of rubbish and you need to train people so that recycling becomes a way of life.

Our homes are now full of domestic appliances, but 50 years ago that was far from the case. It was not until the 1950s that washing machines and fridges first became widely available in homes, although dishwashers were still very rare at that time. These early appliances were made to last and a family would be very upset if a washing machine or fridge was still not working perfectly 30 years after it had been bought. Today appliances will probably need to be replaced after about five to eight years, which poses an additional problem of what to do with them. At one time they simply ended up in holes in the ground along with everything else.

The same applies to the problem of disposing of enormous amounts of IT equipment. Technology has advanced at such a pace that the average life of a computer is now little more than three years. This adds to the amount of large equipment that has to be disposed of.

Appliances like washing machines, fridges and computers can all be dismantled and many of the components reused or reclaimed. This is a very expensive process, but it is no longer acceptable simply to dump them into holes in the ground.

## **International Responsibility**

We also have to realise that we are all part of the worldwide community. Some countries are richer than others so there is a responsibility for the rich countries to help the poorer ones.

On 24th October 1945 an organisation known as the United Nations (UN) was established. The organisation came into being following the end of a second world war in 20 years. Between them these two wars killed millions of people.

51 countries signed a charter, which among other things aimed to establish peace throughout the world and ensure that all people had a better standard of life, regardless of whichever country they come from.

Today 192 countries are members and the UN has an enormous number of different organisations designed to help different groups and fill different needs throughout the world.

As individuals we can all help to do our bit. There are a great many charities that operate worldwide in countries where there are particular needs. Some of these are medical charities, working with children and adults to fight diseases and illnesses, some are relief charities that specialise in dealing with natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, others are educational charities that help to establish and run schools, while others specialise in helping people to improve their lifestyle by using different methods to grow crops. Some are run by churches and some by organisations such as the UN.

All of these charities, and many others, depend on voluntary contributions, so by donating to these charities you will be helping people that you will probably never see, but whose lifestyle can be greatly improved by your generosity.

## Personal Responsibility – Questions

1. Taking responsibility is an important part of life. Make a list of all the things that you are responsible for during the course of an average day.
2. Make a second list of all the extra things that you think your parents are responsible for.
3. Energy is getting scarcer and more expensive. Make a list of ways in which you could conserve energy in the home.
4. Issues relating to the disposal of rubbish are discussed in the text. Burying rubbish in the ground is mentioned and so is re-cycling; find out something about other methods of rubbish disposal and how it might be put to good use.
5. Many countries in the world are very poor in comparison to us. There are a great many charities that specifically help these countries. Can you find out about some of these charities?
6. Other charities provide aid and assistance when there are natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods and famine. Can you find out about some of these charities?
7. As an individual how do you think that you are best able to help people in need from different countries of the world?