

Growing Minds in Social Studies #1

Lessons for Stimulating Thinking

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Teacher's Guide For "Cough"

ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

In a sense, this activity is all about social amenities. Although coughing is an individual and reflexive behavior, your students are asked to think of it as a significant event in a variety of social settings. Even for young people, the cough is so commonplace that it isn't very noteworthy. When people are suffering from colds or the flu, however, coughs are more closely regarded. Regardless of the social context, the contention in this activity is that coughs can be quite significant.

To get your students thinking about the phenomenon of a cough in social situations, you might ask them to offer a few examples of its being used deliberately. They might mention the times when it is an occasion to warn someone that he or she should be alert to a newcomer's presence, letting the person speaking know that what is being said might be overheard. Or they might give the example of someone's saying something inappropriate and another person's coughing to communicate the idea that the comment was improper. Coughing is usually a sign of an obstruction in the throat that needs to be cleared, but it can also be used in these social situations.

Level 1: Considering whether a cough is appropriate in a variety of situations

After an introduction that leads your student to the notion that a cough can be a social gesture, they are asked to consider the appropriateness of a cough in ten situations. These situations are commonplace, and your students should be able to respond readily.

Level 2: Imagining a cough as having caused seven results

At the second level of student involvement, your students are invited to consider the idea of a cough as being the cause of seven widely varying events. These events range from a bruised shin to an extra hour of sleep, and thus your students must do some imagining. This part of the activity may cause some blank stares and head scratching. Students should be given enough time to come up with thoughtful responses.

Level 3: Sketching a scene based on one of the coughing episodes

Finally, your students are invited to give visual interpretations of one of the seven consequences of a cough.

Targeted Learner Outcomes: The student will:

- consider whether it is appropriate to cough in ten situations
- imagine how a cough would have resulted in seven consequences
- sketch a scene featuring a cough

Cough

A. A cough is a minor explosion. It is also a major distraction during the performance of a symphony or a violin concerto. The harder someone tries not to cough on such occasions, the more he or she thinks about it, and the more likely it is that he or she will cough.

On the other hand, a cough is sometimes used as a signal for warning someone. In what situations might a cough serve as a warning?

When is it appropriate to cough? When is it not appropriate? Consider each of these situations and tell why you think a cough is appropriate or not.

1. When you have just inhaled smoke from a campfire. _____

2. When your mouth is full of food. _____

3. When something is caught in your throat. _____

4. When your partner has just played the wrong card in a game. _____

5. When you have just entered a room in which a party is taking place. _____

6. When you open a wrapped present and see something you don't really want to own. _____

7. When you have made a mistake with a name as you try to introduce two people. _____

8. When no waiter at a restaurant will come to your table after you have been seated for ten minutes.

9. When you want to let two people who are talking about you know you are nearby. _____

10. When you are embarrassed because you can't think of anything to say. _____

B. When might a cough have these consequences?

1. a bruised shin

2. a button popping

3. a fight

4. a soiled tablecloth

5. another hour of work at the drawing board

6. an extra hour of sleep

7. someone's receiving a bouquet of roses
