



ROAD SAFETY ADVOCACY & PSA PROJECT

Grades 9-12 | Lesson 12



A group of six students and one teacher are gathered around a table, working on a project. The students are of various ethnicities and are all smiling and engaged in the activity. They are looking at papers and notebooks on the table. The teacher, a woman with curly hair and glasses, is standing and pointing at a notebook. The background shows a bookshelf and a window with blinds.

Lesson Overview

**Knowledge is
Only Powerful if it
Leads to Action.**

Students apply their full curriculum understanding to develop a road safety PSA concept — learning why peer-to-peer communication works, how to use credible data and how to turn safe driving values into a message that moves people.



BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

Explain why **PEER-TO-PEER COMMUNICATION** is more effective than authority-based messaging for teen audiences.

Identify the three key components of a persuasive road safety PSA: **CREDIBLE DATA, PERSONAL STORY AND A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION.**

Use real ARDOT or NHTSA data to **SUPPORT A ROAD SAFETY ARGUMENT.**

DEVELOP A PSA CONCEPT — including audience, message, medium and a measurable goal — for a school-based safety campaign.

Learning
Objectives

Key Vocabulary

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA):

A communication intended to raise public awareness or change behavior on an issue of community concern — not for commercial purposes.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY:

The duty of individuals to contribute to the safety and well-being of their community through advocacy and responsible personal behavior.

SOCIAL NORMING:

A persuasion approach that shifts behavior by communicating what most members of a group actually do — counteracts the perception of risky behavior as normal.

CALL TO ACTION:

A specific, concrete instruction that tells the audience exactly what to do differently — the most actionable part of any PSA.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The specific group a message is designed to reach, defined by demographics, behaviors or values — effective PSAs are precisely tailored.



Why Peer-to-Peer Messaging Works

Who delivers a message often matters as much as what the message says — especially with teen audiences.

Teens are significantly more likely to change behavior in response to peer messengers than adult authority figures.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

**You are more likely to
change a classmate's
behavior than any
adult in this building.**

PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTANCE:

Teens are more likely to resist messages from authority figures; peers have more credibility.

SOCIAL NORMING:

When peers communicate safe behavior as the norm, it changes perception of what's "normal."

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION:

A peer story feels real and relatable; a statistic from a government brochure often doesn't.

Research finds that teen-to-teen road safety campaigns show measurably higher attitude change than adult-delivered programs.



The Three Components of an Effective PSA

Effective PSAs don't just inform
— they move the audience to feel
something and then do something.

1. CREDIBLE DATA: A specific, sourced statistic that makes the problem feel real and urgent.

2. PERSONAL STORY: A relatable scenario or experience that creates emotional connection to the issue.

3. CLEAR CALL TO ACTION: One specific, achievable thing you want the audience to do differently.

THE TRAP TO AVOID:

Vague messaging ("Drive Safe!") that doesn't tell anyone what to actually do.

TEST IT:

Can someone who sees your PSA name the **one action they should take**?
If not, the CTA isn't clear enough.

**A PSA without a clear call to action is just awareness.
THE GOAL IS BEHAVIOR CHANGE.**



Using Real Data & Your PSA Concept

Data gives your message authority.
Know where to find it and how to use it responsibly.

**ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
(ARDOT)**

Road safety
statistics

ardot.gov

**NATIONAL HIGHWAY
TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADMINISTRATION
(NHTSA)**

Fatality and
crash statistics

cdan.dot.gov

**CENTERS FOR
DISEASE CONTROL
AND PREVENTION
(CDC)**

Injury data
and teen driver
data by state

cdc.gov

**ARKANSAS
STATE POLICE
(ASP)**

Crash data

gis.ardot.gov



PSA PLANNING STEPS:

- 1. Choose a topic**
- 2. Define your audience**
- 3. Write your mission statement**
- 4. Find your statistic**
- 5. Draft your story**
- 6. Write your CTA**
- 7. Choose your medium**

MEDIUM OPTIONS:

Short video, social media post
or Reel, school poster, morning
announcement, hallway display

Class Discussion

1

Is road safety advocacy something you feel personal ownership over — or does it feel like a school project? What's the difference?

2

What would it take for students to genuinely believe they can change behavior at your school?

3

Has anything in this curriculum changed how you think about your own driving or riding behavior?

Key Takeaways

- **PEER-TO-PEER ROAD SAFETY MESSAGING** is measurably more effective with teen audiences.
- **EVERY EFFECTIVE PSA NEEDS:**
Credible Data + Personal Story + Clear Call to Action
- Vague messages ("Be Safe!") don't change behavior.
SPECIFIC, ACTIONABLE INSTRUCTIONS DO.
- You have the knowledge, the credibility and the reach to make your school safer — **USE IT.**



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