

Peers

Peers are people of a similar age or level, such as children in the same age group, students in the same class, or workers in the same position. Young people have many peers in high school and college. Parents often worry about the danger of “peer pressure” during that time. “Peer pressure” happens when a group of peers influences someone in their group to do something harmful, such as using addictive drugs or joining a gang. However, there is another side to the influence of peers. Sometimes their influence can provide wonderful benefits.

Groups of peers can engage in positive behavior. They can influence each other to behave in a similar way. Dr. Brett Laursen, a professor of psychology, sees examples of this often. As he points out, “If most of the people in a peer group are getting good grades, a student may study more to fit in with the group.” In this way, peers can inspire each other to develop skills and become more successful.

Peers can also help each other learn how to interact with others. Young peers in a group can practice social skills, including how to handle conflicts. As the Global Journal of Health Science reports, “A peer group influences members to solve conflicts in a way that is acceptable to the entire group.” For example, if one peer yells at another instead of trying to work out their disagreement, that person may be rejected by the group. That motivates them to learn and practice better ways to work out disagreements.

Peers can also encourage each other to get involved in new activities that they would not try on their own, such as playing a sport, joining a club, or traveling to another country. A person’s life would be less interesting if they did not have peers introducing them to new experiences and ideas. When a young person does something new and unfamiliar, it helps them grow and develop as a person. It expands their world. They might even discover a new lifelong interest.

Not every peer or group of peers will be a good influence, but many can be. They can play important positive roles in a person’s life.

Writing Directions: Read the passage above and write an essay about it. Summarize the main ideas of the passage in your own words. In addition, explain how one or more ideas in the passage relate (connect) to something you have experienced, seen, read, and/or learned in school.

Only a small part of your essay should summarize the passage, but make sure to include all the author’s main ideas. Most of the essay should explain how one or more ideas relate to something you have experienced, seen, read, and/or learned in school.

Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that will help your reader clearly understand your essay. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.