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Vocabulary

There are 26 tricky vocabulary words throughout this issue underlined in blue. Can you find them all? Go to Choices Online for activities to help you master these words.

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Should Napping



Illustration by MICHAEL BYERS

Be Allowed at School?

In New Mexico, some schools have nap pods to help students shake fatigue. Is this the solution your school needs? Two *Choices* Teen Advisers weigh in.

YES

“Naps give students a mental boost.”

*Karli Waldrep,
a high school senior
in Illinois*



NO

“It’s just a quick fix for sleep deprivation.”

*Sneha Mittal,
a high school sophomore
in Texas*



I’m **involved** in a musical, and we rehearse every night. Sometimes, I don’t get home until 11 p.m. I’m usually so exhausted that I go straight to sleep and wake up super early to finish my homework. Then I can barely keep my eyes open at school. Taking a midday nap (even a short one!) sounds like the perfect way to help me power through my classes.

I’m not the only one at my school who is part of the musical, so I know that →

I’ve **heard** the horror stories about pulling all-nighters to finish homework or getting so sucked into a TV show that you don’t notice how late it is. They all end the same way—before you realize it, your alarm goes off for school and you’ve only had a couple hours of sleep!

That’s why I’m never surprised when I see classmates dozing off during a lesson. It’s also why I don’t think naps at school are the answer. Napping is just a →

COURTESY OF FAMILY (KARLIE); COURTESY OF FAMILY (SNEHA)



YES (continued) some of my classmates must be experiencing the same problem. In fact, most kids do sports or other activities that, when combined with homework, prevent them from getting as much sleep as they should. I speak for all of us when I say having a place and time at school to recharge is a good solution to the problem of sleepy students.

There's even research to back me up. According to a Nationwide Children's Hospital study, the average high school student gets just seven hours of sleep a night—up to three hours less than is recommended. Lack of sleep can affect mental and physical health, as well as academic performance. It's unlikely we'll all find three extra hours to sleep each night, but the National Sleep Foundation says a 20- or 30-minute nap can improve mood and alertness by giving your brain a chance to

“Naps teach students the importance of good sleep hygiene.”

re-energize. Napping at school, therefore, could help improve students' grades.

If schools want to foster healthy behaviors, naps would help emphasize the importance of sleep. Students could learn to practice “good sleep hygiene”—daily routines that help you get a good night's sleep.

Teachers and administrators might worry that napping would cut into the regular school schedule—but it wouldn't have to. Naps could be restricted to a specific time of the day, like lunch, when students aren't in class.

Schools should also consider that allowing naps could result in fewer students falling asleep during class. I'm guilty of it myself, and I worry that my teachers think I'm a slacker when I doze off. In reality, I work really hard, and I hate feeling so tired when I'm trying to learn. The mental boost a nap can provide is just what busy high school students like me need during the school day.

NO (continued) temporary fix for sleep deprivation. Instead of letting us nap, schools should help us learn to manage our time so we can get more rest at night.

The Mayo Clinic recommends that teens get 8-10 hours of sleep in order to stay alert during the day. I get eight hours of sleep every night, but that doesn't mean I don't have a lot to do after school. Besides my homework, I play the piano and I'm on the swim team. To manage my time, I have a calendar on my phone with a list of everything I have to do for the day. Writing everything down helps me plan from week to week.

Schools should also focus on countering bad habits—like procrastinating or overscheduling ourselves—that might cause us to be sleep deprived in the first place. For example, we waste time scrolling on our phones while doing

“Schools should help us with time management instead.”

homework. Schools could offer incentives for turning work in early. This might motivate us to get our work out of the way so that we don't stay up late at night finishing it. Getting homework done efficiently would leave more room in our schedules for sleep.

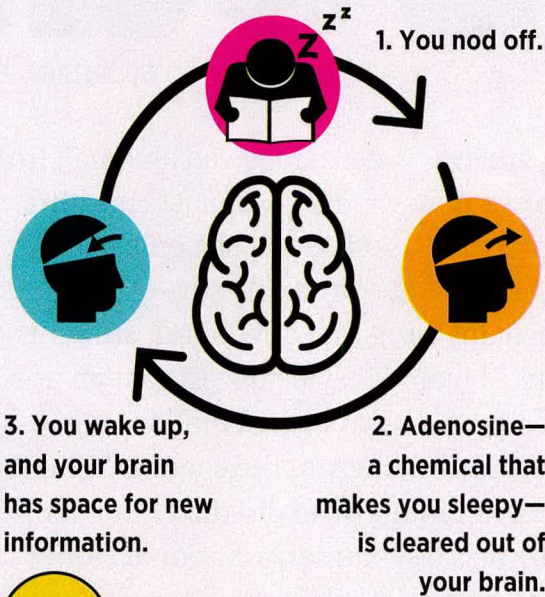
Allowing naps might seem like a good idea, but it doesn't get to the root of the problem. Given the time to nap and a cozy place to do it at school, students might be more likely to pull all-nighters and even less motivated to get enough sleep at home.

Even though it can be difficult, I'm determined to manage my schedule. I want to be prepared for a job that might not allow a midday nap. Yes, some companies allow employees to take nap breaks, but I prefer the long-term benefits of having a consistent sleep schedule instead.

NAPPING FROM A TO Zzzzzz

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A NAP

What's your brain doing while you doze?



Psst

Experts say 20-40 minutes is the ideal duration of a nap—any longer and you'll have trouble waking up.

Napping Round the World

CHINA



Napping has been built in to some cultures for centuries:

- In China, *wu jiao* is a daily 30-minute break for workers.

ITALY



- Many Italian businesses shut their doors for a 2- to 3-hour rest called *riposo*.

SPAIN



- Spanish workers and students often head home for an afternoon *siesta*.

Sleeping on the Job

Businesses are waking up to the benefits of well-rested workers with nap-friendly perks and policies.



Ben & Jerry's was one of the first U.S. companies to allow workday naps.

The Huffington Post's nap room offers nappers calming scents, like lavender.



Zappos spent \$250,000 on a giant aquarium so workers can nap in a relaxing environment.



PRICE CHECK



Nap pods in schools? Not cheap.

Each MetroNaps Energy-Pod, the kind used by four schools in New Mexico, costs \$13,000.

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