

BAD HABITS

WHAT TO DO

This is a Detention Learning Packet. It consists of several pages of text and a Response sheet that asks questions about what you did, why you did it, and what goals you must set to avoid the same problem in the future. Read the text and try to remember what you read. Then read the Response Sheet and write answers to the questions.

WHAT YOU DID AND WHY IT WAS WRONG

You have been given a detention because you seem to be developing some bad habits. Do you have a habit that is causing a problem for you? Be honest!

Bad habits can take many forms. Maybe you are five or ten minutes late all the time. Maybe you have formed the habit of going to the mall or to a movie every day instead of going home and doing your homework. Possibly you drop out of activities or give up on learning something new when it gets too difficult. Maybe you don't keep commitments because it is hard for you to be responsible.

This is an important time in your life. You are at a stage where you are developing into the person you will be for the rest of your life. The habits you form today are important because they can determine your actions later. This includes high school, college, your future job and family life. It is important to develop good habits now so that you can use them in the years to come.

Starting on the next page are three stories about people who developed bad habits. Read them and see if any of them are familiar.

THREE STORIES ABOUT BAD HABITS

MEG MAKES IT TO THE MALL

Meg loves to go to the mall. She loves it too much, in fact. She has fallen into the habit of going to the mall every day. Her grades show it; her average has gone from an "A" to a "C" since her family moved closer to the mall.

Every day after school, Meg and her friends catch the local bus instead of the school bus. They head for the mall to window-shop and get a snack and a soda. Sometimes they see a movie or buy something. But most of the time they just hang out and visit with other people they know.

Meg doesn't get home until late in the evening. By that time, she's too tired and distracted by her mall adventures to do her homework. She eats her dinner and visits with her family. She talks on the phone and then watches the new video she rented at the mall. She doesn't get around to doing homework until past ten o'clock. She's too sleepy to concentrate so she puts the homework away half-finished.

The next morning, she's still sleepy. Sometimes she forgets to finish the assignment. Then she tries to do it on the school bus, but there's never enough time. Besides, she has to make plans about where to meet her friends to go back to the mall in the afternoon. Meg has developed a bad habit of hanging out at the mall. That bad habit is ruining her grades. Meg is sacrificing her education for hanging out at a shopping center with other people who may be hurting their education, too.

QUENTIN THE QUITTER

Quentin is bright and seems to be fun. Everybody should like to be around him, but no one does. In fact, everybody avoids him whenever possible. This is because Quentin never finishes anything he starts. He never lives up to his commitments. He volunteers for things and then doesn't show up, or shows up too late.

In class, Quentin sails along the first few weeks. He really feels that he's getting a good start with whatever he's learning: math, history, Spanish. But then the class starts getting a little harder and more complicated. There are rules to learn and exercises to do, dates to memorize and concepts to understand. If Quentin doesn't get it the first time he reads or hears the material, he gives up. Quentin always quits just when he's getting to the interesting part of the course.

At home, Quentin starts projects but never finishes them. His room is full of half-finished model planes and ships. He started helping his Dad clean the garage. He worked for an hour on Saturday morning and then got bored, so he went to the mall.

Quentin is bright enough to pass from one grade to the next. But classes are becoming more challenging and the material is harder. Quentin is already thinking about dropping out of school. Quentin's attitude toward school may cause him to lose his chance for an education.

TIM THE TARDY

Tim is always late. No matter what the occasion, Tim will be anywhere from ten minutes to an hour late. Sometimes he doesn't show up at all.

Tim comes to class ten to fifteen minutes late every day. He's not late just to homeroom, but to all his classes as well. Once he's in school, he finds some excuse to do things between class. He goes to his locker. He hangs out in the halls. He goes to the washroom one more time. Sometimes he hangs out on the playground. Other times, he goes to make a telephone call and then he's late to class again.

Tim never seems to be able to organize his life. He makes plans to change and sets goals for himself but he can't seem to follow through. He decides every day to be on time, but then something comes up. Someone comes by and wants to talk, so Tim talks. Or he thinks of something he wants to do and he does that first, before he goes to class. As a result, Tim is late again.

On weekends, Tim always has big plans to catch up on his schoolwork. He sets Saturday morning aside to finish the science project that's due next week. But then his friends call and want him to go to a movie with them, so off he goes.

He stays at the movie too long and is late getting home. His mother and brother end up doing the housework alone because Tim is late. He stays up too late on Saturday night and oversleeps on Sunday morning. The family leaves for church without him. Tim can't seem to be on time. Tim is always disorganized.

WHY PEOPLE HAVE BAD HABITS

All people are creatures of habit. It's easiest to do what we are used to doing. Remember how scary and strange it was the first time you came to your new school? Then you learned where things were--the classrooms and the drinking fountains and the cafeteria and the gym. You developed a routine every day: walk in the building, hang up your coat, get a drink of water, check your backpack to see if you have everything, visit with your friends, get in your seat when the bell rings. Your everyday actions become habits. They are things you do over and over again.

Some habits are good, such as brushing your teeth regularly, eating three meals a day, exercising regularly, walking and riding your bike on the right side of the street, or stopping for traffic lights. We couldn't get along without good habits. They make it easier for us to do things without having to think about every single move we make.

On the other hand, some of us develop bad habits that get us into trouble. Meg started hanging out at the mall in the afternoon instead of doing her homework. Quentin began quitting in the middle of tasks, before he ever got into the details. Tim formed the habit of being late for everything.

Other bad habits include:

- Wasting time when you have schoolwork to do

- Always playing before you work
- Watching TV or videos to the point where you don't have time to do your work
- Snacking and eating candy between meals and at school
- Spending all your spare time "hanging out" in the mall, coffee shop or fast food place instead of working on more productive activities
- Spending hours doing your hair, nails and makeup, or adjusting your clothes
- Never preparing for the school day until after breakfast in the morning
- Not taking responsibility or living up to your commitments
- Volunteering for things (at school or at home) and then failing to follow through

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVE BAD HABITS

A school is a place to learn, develop skills, prepare for the future, work together and make friends. The school is a community that depends on people being able to work together in groups for many different purposes.

People who have bad habits disrupt the community. They depend on others to take care of them or to direct them. People with bad habits are not self-directed or self-controlled. Instead, they allow themselves to fall into repetitive, unthinking, routine patterns of behavior. When they do this, their minds are "on automatic" and something or someone else is driving their lives.

Meg doesn't intend to go to the mall every afternoon. She always means to go home and do her homework. But then someone comes by and invites her, or something comes up that she wants to see or do. Meg seems to be controlled by people and events outside herself. She can't break the habit.

Tim doesn't intend always to be late. He really wants to be on time, but he can't break his bad habit. Something always comes up. As a result, no one can depend on Tim to be on time. Everyone has learned to expect Tim to be late. They can't depend on Tim to come early enough to start an activity or to lead a discussion in class. Someone else always has to provide back-up for Tim.

Quentin intends to follow through. But he has a habit of quitting something before he finishes it. Again, other people end up picking up the pieces. They have to do the work that Quentin was assigned. His teachers always end up tutoring him for extra hours at the end of the term just so he can squeeze by with a "D." Quentin's quitting places a strain on the whole community.

Bad habits are harmful in two ways. First, they are harmful to the person who has the habits. Second, they are harmful to the whole community--harmful because other students, teachers, and other staff members have to be inconvenienced. People with bad habits put everyone at a disadvantage.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO IN THE FUTURE

Everybody knows that having bad habits causes other problems. The important thing is to break some bad habits. Try to discover why you have been irresponsible in the past. Try to understand when you are making the decisions about your life and when you are just running "on automatic." Making good choices and being responsible will help get you back on track. Think about it!

You need to set some goals that will help you make some positive changes. A goal is a plan put into action. The questions on the Response sheets that follow will help you set some goals.

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 15.1

BAD HABITS

NAME _____

DATE _____

GRADE __ HOMEROOM _____

WHAT TO DO

Below are some questions about what you have read. These questions will help you learn why you get into trouble and how you can avoid getting into trouble in the future. Your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read your answers. Your answers will not be graded.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If you don't understand what you are supposed to do, ask your detention supervisor.

When you finish, give the Learning Packet and your Response sheets to the detention supervisor and return to your desk. The supervisor will tell you when to leave.

1. Your bad habits have caused some problems for you. What habit has brought you to detention?

2. Why did you have problems with this particular habit? What makes you do what you do? Be honest!

3. What are you thinking or feeling when you let your habit cause problems for you?

4. You've read three stories about students with bad habits. What is Meg's bad habit?

5. What is Quentin's bad habit?

6. What is Tim's bad habit?

7. What is a habit? How can people break them?

8. Write two goals that will help you break this bad habit.

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 15.2

BAD HABITS

NAME _____

DATE _____

GRADE __ HOMEROOM _____

WHAT TO DO

Below are some questions about what you have read. These questions will help you learn why you get into trouble and how you can avoid getting into trouble in the future. Your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read your answers. Your answers will not be graded.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If you don't understand what you are supposed to do, ask your detention supervisor.

When you finish, give the Learning Packet and your Response sheets to the detention supervisor and return to your desk. The supervisor will tell you when to leave.

1. Did a bad habit appear again? What happened?

2. Some habits are good and others are bad. Make a list of all of your good habits.

3. Now make a list of your bad habits.

4. You've read three stories about people with bad habits. Write a goal that will help Meg.

5. Write a goal that will help Quentin.

6. Write a goal that will help Tim.

7. Last time you were in detention, you wrote goals for yourself. Why didn't you reach those goals? Could breaking your word to yourself become a bad habit?

8. Write two new goals for yourself. Remember why you didn't reach your goals last time. Explain why these two goals will help you make some improvements.

