



# Sleep

In this lesson, students will explore what happens when we sleep, the benefits and challenges of getting a good night's sleep and strategies to promote good quality sleep, including where to seek support.



## Recommended age group: 11-16 (KS3/KS4)

## Learning outcomes

### Students can:

- identify what happens when we sleep
- describe the benefits of good quality sleep
- explain strategies to promote good quality sleep and where to seek support if sleep is difficult.

## Preparation

### Before delivering the lesson:

- visit the [Rise Above website](#) and familiarise yourself with its content
- read through [Introduction to Rise Above](#)
- read through [Guidance for learning in a safe environment](#)

## Learning objectives

We are learning what happens when we sleep, the benefits of having a good night's sleep and strategies to promote good quality sleep, including where to seek support.

## Resources

- [Sleep talk! video](#)
- Access to the [Rise Above website](#)
- Blank A4 paper and different coloured pens
- Action plan

## Time

- 45 mins (or can extend to 60 mins)

## Key vocabulary

- Sleep, routine, regeneration, growth, mood, memory, rest, energy, immunity, environment and sleep hygiene

## Student action plan

Students can apply their learning from the lesson and complete their own Action plan. This could be done as an extension or homework task.



## Lesson stimulus (3-4 mins)

Show students slide 2 and ask them to create a mind map in pairs or groups using the sentence starter:

*'Sleep is...'*

Encourage them to write down as many facts or pieces of information as they can to show what they already know about sleep. Prompt students to think about why sleep is important and how we can get good sleep.

## Baseline assessment



### How do you feel? (3-4 mins)

You can choose how to conduct this activity. Students can complete it individually on paper, or verbally in pairs/groups. You could also use 'traffic lights' (red/amber/green) or self-assessment statements e.g. 'I understand where to get help and advice about sleep' depending on your students' preferences.

Students should answer the three baseline questions, on a confidence scale (0 = not confident, 10 = extremely confident) for each of the following questions:

**How confident are you in:**

- A)** listing some benefits of good quality sleep?
- B)** explaining how sleep can affect a person's wellbeing?
- C)** describing actions a person can take to help improve their quality of sleep?





## Core activity 1



### Why do we sleep? (5 mins)

Ask students to look back at their mind maps. Explain that you are going to show them three separate PowerPoint slides (slides 4–6). Their task is to remember as much information as they can from each. Once they have seen all three slides, they will need to add any information they can remember to their mind map using a different colour pen.

Show the students slides 4–6 for a second time and emphasise that sleep has a positive impact on both our brain function and our body function. Run through the different facts.

**NOTE:** Explain to students that a good night's sleep would help them with this activity because good quality sleep has a positive impact on memory function, productivity and performance.

#### Sleep facts

- A good night's sleep has a positive impact on the brain and body, improving performance and productivity.
- It is recommended to not use any screen technology at least one hour before bedtime.
- 11-16 year-olds are recommended to get 8 to 10 hours sleep a night.
- When it's dark our bodies produce a hormone called melatonin which tells our bodies that it's time to sleep.
- Physical activity during the day improves your sleep.
- Sleep affects your physical appearance as well as your mood, mental health and your memory.

#### Brain function

- **Memory:** while we sleep, information moves from our short-term to long-term memory.
- **Concentration and mood:** activity in the brain during sleep improves concentration and mood.
- **Productivity and performance:** decision making and cognitive performance (our ability to think) are improved by sleep.

#### Body function

- **Repair and growth:** the body works to grow and repair muscles, organs and other cells.
- **Immune system:** special proteins are released, which support the immune system (remind students that the immune system helps to protect them from illness and disease).
- **Regulates hormones:** the hormone levels in the body are balanced out.



## Core activity 2



### Good quality sleep vs. poor quality sleep (15 mins)



Ask students to complete the activity on slide 9.

#### Part A:

- In pairs, ask students to name themselves A or B
- Ask the 'A' students to draw an outline of a student and makes notes around the outline to show how good quality sleep might impact them.
- Ask the 'B' students to draw an outline of a student and make notes around the outline to show how a lack of sleep (or poor quality sleep) might impact them.

Clues: Ask students to think about how the person performs in school, how they look, how they feel, what they do or don't do and anything else you can think of.

#### Part B:

- Show the class the first half of the [video](#) (00:00 - 1:34) on slide 10
- Ask students to compare their image with their partners and in a different coloured pen, add on any new ideas they have learned from the video to their sheets.

### Discussion questions :

#### All

- **How would you define good quality sleep?**  
Encourage students to think about length of sleep, and uninterrupted sleep
- **How would someone know they have slept well?** For example, feeling alert, rested, better mood, better appetite, memory
- **Why can sleeping be difficult?**  
For example, mood, thoughts, phones, screens, noises, lights, uncomfortable, stress

Support students with stress or puberty using Rise Above's [Dealing with Change](#) lesson and [Puberty](#) lesson.

#### Further challenge

- **What are the main factors that impact sleep?**  
For example, health, stress, age, sleeping environment, diet, use of technology at bedtime and caffeine (caffeine can make it harder to get to sleep and decrease a person's quality of sleep)
- **How might someone's sleep change with different circumstances?**  
For example, stressful situations, new environments, new baby in the house, different seasons
- **What does a good sleep routine look like to you?**  
This answer will vary depending on the individual, but possible responses might include relaxation techniques, minimising use of screens, and creating a bedroom environment that helps them switch off
- **How might puberty impact on sleep?**  
For example, changes in hormones, mood, changing peer groups, period pain, more use of phones and electronic devices



## Core activity 3



### B-E-D (20-25 mins)

Show students the second half of the video (1:34-3:32) on slide 12.

Ask students to work in small groups. Explain that as a class, students are going to create a B-E-D app or podcast to help support young people struggling with their sleep. Ask each group to produce a feature of the app or podcast to give advice and suggestions in one of the three areas, Bedtime routine, bedroom Environment, or Daytime routine.

Allocate one of the three features to groups or allow students to choose for themselves.

Each group can then prepare a two minute presentation to feed back to the rest of the class. Students can re-watch the video if needed, and explore the Rise Above website to support their learning.

The three features are:



#### Success criteria

Share the success criteria with students to help them structure their app or podcast.

Students should try to include:

1. An explanation of how either bedtime routine, bedroom environment or daytime routine benefits sleep
2. Suggestions on how to build opportunities for rest and downtime
3. Strategies for how someone could improve the quality of their sleep (students can include an example from the video)
4. Tips on what to do if someone's quality of sleep does not improve

Encourage students to be creative, they could draw images, suggest music or anything else to make an awesome app.

#### Presentation

Allow ten minutes for students to present their ideas to each other and provide feedback using 'What went well...' and 'Even better if...'

**NOTE:** Presentations could be spread over two lessons if limited for time.

#### Share with Public Health England

Encourage students to share the content of their B-E-D features and ask further questions, with the [MTV wall](#).



## Plenary



### Dream on... (3-4 mins)

These five students are struggling with their sleep. Ask your students to choose three of the scenarios on slide 14 and think of some advice they might give in response.

1. I find it really hard to get up in the mornings and I'm really tired in the day so I've stopped doing sports and going out so much.
2. I'm in loads of WhatsApp groups and my phone never stops buzzing, I keep staying up late even after I've finished messaging.
3. There are lots of noises in my house and often I find it hard to get to sleep and I wake up lots during the night.
4. I'm really stressed about my exams and worrying about how well I'm doing in school is keeping me up at night.
5. Someone I really care about won't talk to me and I keep waking up in the night thinking about it and can't get back to sleep.

## Assessment for learning



### (3-4 mins)

You can choose how to conduct this activity. Students can complete it individually on paper, or verbally in pairs/groups. You could also use 'traffic lights' (red/amber/green) or self-assessment statements e.g. I understand where to get help and advice about sleep depending on your students' preferences.

Students should reflect on their learning and answer the three baseline questions, on a confidence scale (0 = not confident, 10 = extremely confident) for each of the following questions:

**How confident are you in:**

- A) listing some benefits of good quality sleep?
- B) explaining how sleep can affect a person's wellbeing?
- C) describing actions a person can take to help improve their quality of sleep?

Let students know that it can be very common to struggle with sleep, but if they are worried about it or if a lack of sleep is making things difficult, they can make an appointment with their GP or speak to a trusted adult about what they can do. Childline is a free, confidential service where you can talk about anything that might be worrying you. Childline is available on the phone or online 24/7.

## Extended learning projects

1. Write an Action plan based on the different actions learned in the lesson
2. Draw an image of a positive bedroom environment for good quality sleep and annotate it with notes on what makes good quality sleep.
3. Make a timetable for both daytime routine and bedtime routine that could promote good quality sleep.
4. Create a poster of ways to encourage students to use less technology in their bedtime routine that could be put up around school or published in a school magazine.
5. Create a sleep diary which includes daytime routine, bedtime routine and number of hours slept. Keep it for a week and then write a conclusion about what you have noticed from your own sleep patterns and habits.