

Turn Off TV Week Activities for Teachers

from Jennifer Wolf at www.ScreenTimeMatters.com

Dear Teachers,

Congratulations on your decision to present your students with the Turn Off TV Week challenge! I still remember the week my family first participated in Turn Off TV Week, back in 1979. My older brother's teacher issued the challenge, and we chose to participate as a family. To this day, I listen to music more than I watch TV, because of that challenge! It was so neat, too, that my brother's teacher acknowledged my efforts and included me in the class celebration at the end of the week!

I share that story to let you know that doing this series of simple activities, which are designed to take about 15 minutes of your time each day, can truly have a profound impact on your students' lives!

Please note that these activities are aimed at students in grades 2-4, but can easily be adapted for older or younger students. In addition, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at jen@screeentimematters.com if you have any questions. I'm so looking forward to hearing about the results!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Wolf
Founder of www.ScreenTimeMatters.com

Lesson Plans and Activities

The Week Before - April 14-18, 2008

1. Announce the challenge and prizes!
 - Printable certificates are available on our web site.
 - In addition, www.ScreenTimeMatters.com is raffling off one \$50 U.S. Savings Bond to students who fully participate. (*Please see the note on page 3 of these lesson plans for more information about how to enter your students in the raffle.*)
2. Send home the parent letter asking for each family's support in this endeavor.
3. Secure a volunteer to provide a healthy snack for the class – in celebration of all their hard work – on Monday, April 29th. (For your convenience, there is a request for volunteers already included in the parent letter.)

Monday, April 21 – Tally Up Your Total Screen Time

1. Ask your students what they most enjoy doing with their free time. Consider listing their ideas on your classroom whiteboard or on chart paper.
2. Complete the activity sheet "My Total Weekly Screen Time" together.

Optional Extension Activities:

- Determine the average total weekly screen time as a class.
- Graph the results during math class.

Tuesday, April 22 - Where Does the Time Go?

1. Recall from yesterday's activity how much time the average student in your class spends watching TV per week.
2. Give each child a copy of the "Where Does the Time Go?" activity sheet. Using calculators, work through each of the problems to get a sense of how much of our lives we give over to screen time activities. (Depending on the ages of your students, you will need to assist them in this process and/or allow them to work in groups.)

Optional Extension Activities:

- Complete the "Challenge" activity
- Make projections as a class regarding how much time we'll "lose" to screen time activities if we never change the current pattern for how we spend our free time.

Wednesday, April 23 – Coping With Boredom

1. Introduce the idea that we often choose to watch TV just because we "can't think of" anything else to do at that moment.
2. Give each student a copy of "When I'm Bored, I Can..." and ask him/her to list or draw as many ideas as possible.
3. Share your ideas as a class.

Optional Extension Activities:

- Make a mural of all the different ideas
- Have each student write himself/herself a letter about applying these ideas. Then seal the letters and place them in a secure place. In a month or two, return the letters to each student and ask them how it's going.

Thursday, April 24 – My TV Choices

1. Introduce the idea that just like we have to make careful choices about what we eat, we have to make decisions about what we watch on TV.
2. Give each student a copy of the "My TV Choices" activity sheet. Ask students to answer each question and then share their responses in groups.
3. Discuss the activity as a class. What does this exercise say about the shows we watch but don't really consider to be the most important to us? When Turn Off TV Week is over, would it be possible to set aside some time to watch our favorite shows, with parental permission, and still cut down on our overall TV time? How might we go about doing that?

Optional Extension Activities:

- Make a list of ideas for how we can cut down on watching the shows that just seem to be on as "background noise."
- Have students write brief letters to their parents explaining their ideas.

Friday, April 25 – Almost There!

1. Ask students how their experience with Turn Off TV Week is going.
2. Make a list of the new things they have discovered (or perhaps rediscovered) while the TV was off this week. (For example, games, relationships, music...)
3. Give each student a copy of the "How Turn Off TV Week Changed My Life" activity sheet. Depending on the ages/abilities of your students, you can ask them to either draw or write out their responses to the question "How has Turn Off TV Week changed your life?"

Optional Extension Activities:

- Brainstorm a list of analogies for what this experience has been like.
- Have students type their responses and cut-and-paste them into one E-mail to jen@screeintimematters.com (no need to include last names!). Or, for younger students, simply send in a list of the things students did in place of watching TV. *Note: Screen Time Matters will write back to each class!*

Monday, April 28 – Celebration!

1. Give each student who participated in the challenge a certificate of Achievement.
2. Share the special treat provided by your generous parent volunteer.
3. Discuss what each of you learned this week about yourselves. Do you think you'll watch less TV as a result? Would you do this again next year? What is challenging for you personally? How about for your family?

Enter Your Students in the \$50 U.S. Savings Bond Raffle

In order to enter your students in the raffle, we will need to know who from your class participated in this year's Turn Off TV Week challenge. To enter your students in the raffle, simply E-mail the list of participating students to: jen@screeintimematters.com.

However, **please do not send me children's full names!** You can either send first names with a last initial (if necessary), or you can even submit the list in "code" (using student ID #s, classroom #s, whatever you'd like).

**Please E-mail this list to us no later than Thursday, May 1st.
Screen Time Matters will announce the winner on Friday, May 2nd.**

Thanks so much for your willingness to participate. You're making a huge difference in your students' lives!