

## LESSON 10



# Prime-Time Smartness

*\*Review with the students the difference between educational and recreational screen time. Educational, or instructional, screen time includes the use of computers and other devices for learning during school, learning during out-of-school programs, and completing homework. Recreational screen time is all screen activities that children engage in for fun.*

## Background

In the United States, children watch about four hours of TV every day. And this is in addition to other screen time, such as text messaging, playing video games, and spending time online or on social networks for fun. When added up, TV and other recreational\* screen activities have basically become a full-time job!

And our children are suffering because of it. On average, American youths spend more time watching television each year than they spend in school. This tendency toward an inactive, or sedentary, lifestyle is a contributing factor to more and more children being overweight. The more television children watch, the more likely they are to be overweight. The increase in television viewing has also been associated with elevated cholesterol levels and poor cardiorespiratory fitness in youths as well as less time spent reading, doing homework, and getting the recommended amount of sleep (10 hours for elementary school-aged children).

To combat inactivity, young people should be encouraged to consider healthy alternatives to television viewing and other recreational screen activities, particularly those that involve physical activity.

## Estimated Teaching Time and Related Subject Areas

**Estimated teaching time:** 1 hour, 30 minutes

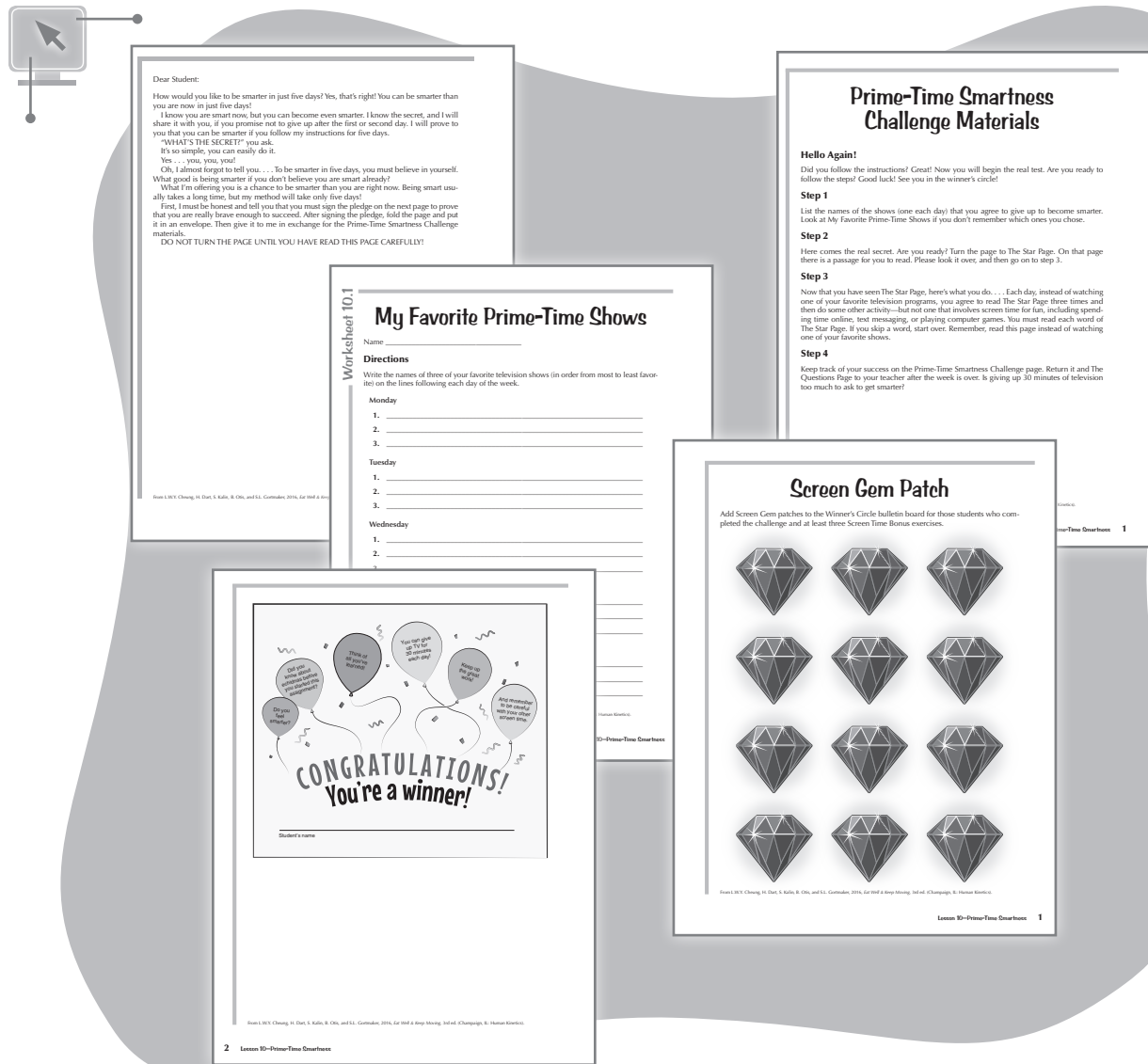
**Related subject areas:** reading, math

## Objectives

- Identify a television program or programs that they will not view in order to participate in an alternative activity.
- Create a list of alternative activities to consider in place of watching television.

## Materials

- Envelopes containing student letter and pledge (one per student)
- One envelope addressed to the teacher containing a pretend teacher-only letter
- Small white envelopes for signed copy of the pledge (one per student)
- Worksheet 10.1, My Favorite Prime-Time Shows
- Packet of Prime-Time Smartness Challenge materials (one for each student who wants to take the challenge):
  - Hello Again!
  - The Star Page
  - Prime-Time Smartness Challenge
  - The Questions Page
- Certificate of Congratulations (one for each student who takes the challenge)
- Screen Gem Patches (one for each student who takes the challenge and at least three Screen Time Bonus exercises)




## Procedure

### Part I: Motivation

1. Begin by telling the class that the office has delivered special letters addressed to “Student Only” and one to you marked “Teacher Only.” (Pass out an envelope to each child, addressed similarly to the example in figure 10.1; each envelope should contain a student letter and pledge.) If your school can afford the expense, you can also have the letters mailed to each student in the class.
2. Provide time for the students to open the letters and read the pages quietly. Encourage students who need assistance to work in pairs. Open the pretend “Teacher Only” letter, and then tell the students that they have been asked to create a list of things that could be done at home during prime-time hours. (Write the words *prime time* on the board.)

*Prime time refers to the time of the day during which most programs on television record their highest viewing audiences.*

Storyville Lane Battle Creek, Michigan	
<b>To:</b> Grade Four Students <b>Class:</b> _____ <b>School:</b> _____	
<i>[To be opened by student only]</i>	

**Figure 10.1** “Student Only” letter address example.

## Part II: Development

1. Ask the students to define *prime time* as it relates to television viewing.
2. Have students identify some favorite shows that they watch between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.
3. Conduct a class poll to determine the class’s favorite shows. Determine students’ first choice, second choice, and third choice (see the example in figure 10.2).
4. Ask the students to study the chart to determine which program would probably be easiest for the class to pass up. For example, if most students picked *SpongeBob SquarePants* as a third choice, it would probably be the easiest show not to watch.
5. Ask students to think of activities they could do when not watching television. As they brainstorm, record the suggestions on the board. List 7 to 10 activities.

Sample alternatives to TV include reading a book, writing a poem, playing a game with siblings, helping younger siblings, playing basketball, dancing, walking to the store, helping with chores, and going to sleep earlier.

Program	Show #1	Show #2	Show #3
A. <i>Adventure Time</i>	18	15	1
B. <i>Phineas and Ferb</i>	10	14	10
C. <i>SpongeBob SquarePants</i>	6	5	23

**Figure 10.2** A sample poll in which students identify favorite TV shows (first, second, and third choices).

## Part III: Application

1. Have students review and discuss their activities list to determine whether the activities are safe.
2. Guide students in reviewing the list again to determine which activities involve the greatest level of physical activity. Code the list as follows:

(+) = some physical activity (e.g., dancing, stretching, playing ball)

(-) = very little physical activity (e.g., reading, playing a board game)

Have students cite the benefits of choosing activities that involve physical activity. Benefits may include the following:

- Exercises the muscles.
  - Exercises the heart.
3. Distribute Worksheet 10.1, My Favorite Prime-Time Shows. Have the students write their three favorite television programs for each day. Ask them to circle one for each day that they would agree to pass up if they were to take the Prime-Time Smartness Challenge (see part IV).

## Part IV: Summary and Extension

1. Explain the Prime-Time Smartness Challenge. Ask students to sign their pledges. Then distribute small white envelopes (one per student) for them to put their pledges into, and collect the pledges. Record the names of the students who agree to participate. Distribute the packet of materials.

The challenge does not have to be limited to students who watch TV. If a student does not watch any TV, she can still participate in the daily activities of the challenge by trading other screen activities, or, where appropriate, she may substitute physically active time for physically inactive time. For example, instead of sitting and listening to music, the student could dance to the music.

If desired, a different or more challenging comprehension exercise can replace the echidnas paragraph on The Star Page. If you substitute for the echidnas paragraph, the exercises on The Questions Page will need to reflect the change to The Star Page.

2. Create a bulletin board titled Winner's Circle. Display pictures of students who participate in the Prime-Time Smartness Challenge. Add the Certificates of Congratulations of the students who return their materials. Add Screen Gem patches for those who completed the challenge and at least three Screen Time Bonus exercises.
3. Make a bar graph with the class to show the numbers of students who gave up 30 minutes of television each day for the week. Make another bar graph that shows the number of students who gave up 30 minutes of other screen time as part of the Screen Time Bonus exercise.
4. Make a pie chart of an average day (24 hours). Have the students estimate and display the number of hours that they do the following activities during that day:
- Sleep
  - Eat
  - Spend in school
  - Play
  - Do homework
  - Bathe, dress, brush teeth, and so on
  - Watch TV or movies
  - Play video games
  - Spend time online or on social networks for fun
  - Text message
  - Participate in other activities
5. Explain the Freeze My TV promotion to students (see lesson 29). Tell them it will be another TV and screen activity they will participate in.

