What does 'assertiveness' mean?

LESSON OBJECTIVES

To enable pupils to:

- learn the meaning of assertiveness
- explore the differences between assertiveness and aggression
- practice assertiveness skills.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

- know the meaning of 'being assertive'
- understand the difference between being assertive and being aggressive
- demonstrate assertiveness skills.

Resources required:

- Pupil's Book pp 60–61
- Dynamic Learning CD-ROM pp 60–61
- Worksheet 10.1 Scenario Cards – photocopied and cut up so that you have at least one and preferably two scenarios per pair of pupils

Starter Activity

1 Read through the activity and get pupils into pairs to practise the different tones of voice that could be used.
2 After they have tried different ways and practised guessing, reconvene the group and talk about how the tone, expression or body language we use can sometimes reveal more than the words we speak.

GET ACTIVE 1

1 Introduce the activity, this time focusing on 'No' as the response that can sometimes be influenced by the way we say it.
2 Display the words 'Aggressively' and 'Assertively' and ask if pupils can give you meanings for them. Use the Pupil's Book definitions to help distinguish their different meanings.
3 Set up the activity so that small groups can work together to answer the three questions in this task.
4 Allow about ten minutes for the discussion and then take feedback from the various groups. Ensure that pupils understand that assertiveness is clearly different from aggression and that learning about assertiveness is today's lesson.

GET ACTIVE 2 AND 3

1 Read through the tips for being assertive. Invite a confident member of the class to model this at the front as you and the class read it aloud. Or model the actions yourself as the class read them to you.
2 Discourage any pupils from trying to model aggression – focus on the positive, and if aggressive characteristics appear then draw attention to them and correct them.
3 Discuss the questions at the beginning of Get Active 2.
4 Get pupils into pairs to practise assertiveness skills and distribute one scenario card from Worksheet 10.1 to each pair. The persuader says the opening line on the card, and the asserter responds.
5 Set up the task of role-playing the conversations. Remind the class this is not acting but rather thinking through and practising a particular type of response. Explain that it is the tone of voice, posture and so on that you will be looking for rather than the ability to say 'No' (that will be tried out next lesson).
6 Ensure that each pupil has a chance to try out both the 'persuader' and the 'asserter' parts of the conversation.
7 Move around the room, praising good assertiveness techniques where you see them, and helping pupils who might be under or over-playing their attempts at being assertive.
8 Ensure that pupils have a chance to give each other feedback before you reconvene the group.
9 Use a combination of asking volunteer pairs and encouraging others (particularly successful pairs!) to demonstrate their assertiveness skills.

GET ACTIVE 4

Summarise the lesson by encouraging pupils to give examples of other types of situations not covered in the scenario cards where being assertive might be very helpful for staying safe or looking after yourself.

Scenario cards

My parents are going away for the weekend. They don't know it but my big brother is going to have a party. You are coming, aren't you?

I'm staying at my Auntie's house. She's got a bottle of vodka at the back of her cupboard. Let's have some – she'll never notice.

You'll be the only person in school who hasn't tried to smoke this stuff – go on.

You're much better at science than me – let me copy your homework.

This mobile phone is going really cheap – I think my sister got it off someone else. Go on – buy it from me.

Want a lift home with me and my friend? He almost passed his driving test so it's OK.

You're good at art – how about doing some graffiti stuff down at the park tonight?

The shopkeeper isn't looking – quick, take those sweets, he won't miss them for ages.

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