

The Facts of Lice

A Health and Social Studies Program



Teacher's Guide

www.liceguide.com

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Canada's magazine for parents of school-age children

Rationale

No one likes head lice. It can be a widespread school problem and can be difficult to deal with. In fact, 1 in 10 elementary school children in Canada will contract head lice this year. Controlling a lice infestation can be a big challenge. However, we can help reduce the rate of school breakouts by educating students on how to prevent the spread of lice.

The topic of head lice falls under the study of health education. Health education teaches students essential knowledge and skills to help them stay healthy. The teaching of health in the school environment can profoundly influence students' attitudes, actions and behaviours.

Expectations


This teacher's guide will focus specifically on key concepts about head lice. Students will be able to:

- Identify facts, signs and symptoms about head lice
- Learn to be sensitive and not to bully others who have head lice
- Evaluate a variety of methods of controlling the spread of head lice in the school

Making the Connection

The lessons and activities in this teacher's guide are cross-curricular and can be incorporated into an existing health unit. The activities integrate language arts, visual arts, drama, music, science and of course, health education. Easy to identify icons will be displayed throughout the guide for easy reference.

Curriculum Connection

Language arts 

Music 

Visual arts 

Science 

Drama 

Health education 

A whole group introductory activity at the beginning of the unit will first assess what the students know about head lice. Following the introductory activity, students are taught the life cycle of lice, how to prevent head lice and they will explore strategies dealing with bullying associated with lice.

Biography of the Writer

Dan Wu is currently an elementary school principal with the York Region District School Board in Ontario. He has taught all grade divisions and has written numerous curriculum documents and guidelines. As an administrator and former teacher, he is well aware of the issue schools and students face during a lice breakout.

Getting Started

The following ideas can be incorporated into your unit of study before you begin:

Lice Bulletin Board

- Display the Lice Song poster along with images associated with the unit of study (note: many images can be downloaded from the internet).
- As the unit progresses, add students' work to the bulletin board.

Display Table

- Display and label a variety of materials that can be used to get rid of lice. E.g.
 - Tools we use to get rid of lice: nit comb
 - Products we use to treat lice: lice shampoo
 - Materials we use to detect and view lice: magnifying glass
- Add a variety of books on the theme of lice to the display.

Word Wall

- Add new vocabulary from the unit of study to the class word wall (lice, louse, infestation, nits, nymph, etc.)

Let's get down to the facts!



Activity Focus

The purpose of this introductory lesson is to assess what students know (or think they know) about the topic, and then introduce students to more facts, concepts and symptoms of lice.

Materials

- Chart paper (for the KWL chart)
- Markers
- Picture book or video about lice
- Lice fact sheet for teachers (included with kit)

Mental Set

1. Introduce lesson with a KWL chart (Know, Want to Know, Learned About) – with three columns drawn onto chart paper.
2. Brainstorm with students what they know (or think they know) and want to learn about lice. Write down responses into the first two columns of the chart.

KWL Chart

Know	Want to Know	Learned About

Input

1. Use a picture book, video or the fact sheet on Lice to introduce the unit of study. Two excellent resources are:
 - “Lots of Lice” by Bobbi Katz – Scholastic Inc. A clever, humorous rhyming book that makes light of lice while introducing facts.
 - “The Lousy Week” by Marc Brown. This is one of the three shows on the video titled “Arthur Goes to the Doctor”.
 2. Before you read the story/view the video or use the fact sheet, review key vocabulary words (lice, louse, nits) and discuss what they mean. Add new words onto the class word wall.
 3. After the introduction, refer back to the KWL chart and review student responses in the first two columns (Know and Want to Know). Compare to see if student responses were addressed in story, video or fact sheet.
 4. Discuss with students what they “Learned About” lice and enter in the third column of the KWL chart.
 5. Discuss the symptoms of lice (head itches, feels like something moving around on or tickling their heads, tiny eggs/nits found on head, etc.).
- * **Note:** Keep the KWL chart posted throughout unit so students can refer to the ideas or add to them.

Follow-up Activity

- Have younger students draw a picture and write new facts they learned about lice.
- Older primary students can write a number of questions and answers regarding lice onto index card and play a lice trivia game in pairs.

The Life Cycle of the Louse



Activity Focus

This lesson introduces students to the life cycle of a louse. It focuses on the three key stages of development and highlights key facts about each stage.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Pictures of a louse, nit and nymph (found at www.liceguide.com)
- Key vocabulary written on cards (louse, nit, nymph) and accompany definitions written on other cards
- Sticky tac
- Sticky notes
- Paper

Mental Set

1. Introduce each word written on the card and sticky tac onto one side of the chart paper.
2. Next, show the pictures of a louse, nit, and nymph (in mixed order) and sticky tac onto the other side of the chart.
3. Have students do a 'think, pair, share' (think to themselves, pair up with a partner, share what they think) in trying to match the words to the pictures.
4. As a class, decide which word matches which picture and attach the word to the picture.
5. Finally, introduce the definitions by reading aloud and have the students match the definition to the word and picture. Attach the definition card to the picture.

Input

1. Discuss the meaning of a life cycle by using other examples (a hen laying an egg, caterpillar changing to a butterfly, etc.).
2. Have students perform another "think, pair, share" and place the pictures in order of the life cycle of a louse.
3. Place the pictures onto chart paper in a cyclical order drawing arrows to connect the stages of development.
4. Share key information of each stage with the students and, on the chart paper, write it down next to the images. See Key Words below.

Key Words (for more info visit www.liceguide.com)

Nymph – term for newly hatched baby louse

Nits hatch into nymphs. Nymphs eat and shed their skins. Nymphs shed their skin 3 times before they develop into an adult louse. Nymphs become adults in about 7 days.

Nit – term for the egg of a louse

Nits are the tiny eggs of a louse and are usually yellow to white in colour. They are like little grains of sand stuck to the hair. They cannot be removed by brushing. Nits hatch 7–10 days after they are laid.

Louse – term used to describe an adult

An adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed and is tan to grayish-white in colour. They can live up to 30 days on a person's head. A female louse can lay between 100 and 200 eggs during that time.

Follow-up Activity

- For younger students, have a teacher-prepared photocopy sheet of the words and pictures of the life cycle of a louse. Students then cut, match and paste the word to the image and demonstrate the proper order.
- Older primary students can draw and label each stage of the life cycle onto sticky notes. Next, students assemble the life cycle onto a sheet of paper by placing the sticky notes in order.

Sing-along with the Loopy Lice Gang

The Lice Song



Activity Focus

The purpose of this humorous musical lesson is to reinforce how lice are transmitted and introduce strategies to prevent them from spreading. The lesson also incorporates movement and actions to accompany the lyrics.

Materials

- The Lice Song classroom poster
- Paper and pencil
- Student journal

Mental Set

1. Use the classroom poster to introduce the lesson and let students know they will learn a new song about lice.
2. Read the poster aloud to the class first. Then, have the class chorally read together.
3. Discuss the contents of the song with the students (i.e. how lice are transmitted and some strategies to prevent the spread).

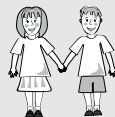
Input

1. Review the theme song of "If You're Happy and You Know It" with the class. Refer to <http://www.kidsworld-online.com> to get an audio version of the song if needed.
2. Slowly model the first verse of the song to the class and ask them to call back. Repeat the modeling and call back with each verse of the song.
3. Once the whole song has been modeled and practiced in verses, continue to practice by singing the whole song together.
4. Add actions and movements to the verses while they are singing.

For example:

Verse 1

Students hold hands with a partner



Verse 2

Students tap their heads



Verse 3

Students jump or hop and use their arms as wings



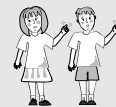
Verse 4

Students pretend to brush their hair when they sing the word "brush"



Verse 5

Students wave their hand and finger as to indicate "NO"



Verse 6

Students draw a big happy smile with their finger in front of their face when they say "nice"



Follow-up Activity

- The class presents their song to an audience (e.g. another class or an assembly).
- The students write new verses for the song.
- Students write a reflective journal entry indicating what they learned from the song.

THE MIS-ADVENTURES OF LICE



Activity Focus

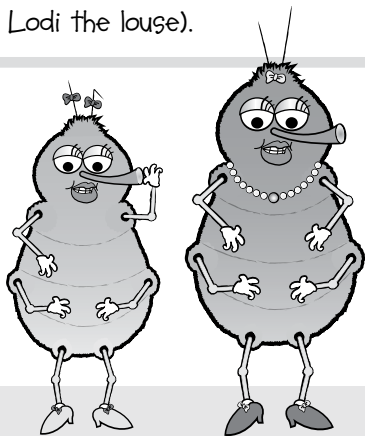
In this lesson, students create a louse character and develop a creative story about its mis-adventures. They use art work to illustrate their story.

Materials

- Cartridge paper
- Art materials: crayons, markers, pencil crayons
- Lined paper
- Pencil and eraser
- Samples of comic strips
- Chart paper and marker

Mental Set

1. Introduce the KWL Chart (from the introductory lesson) and review with students what they have learned about lice. Add to the third column if necessary based on what they learned in prior lessons (e.g. the life cycle of the louse.)
2. Tell students they will write a short story about a louse. Brainstorm students possible character names (e.g. Lurchy the louse, Linx the louse, Lexis the louse, Lodi the louse).



Input

1. On chart paper write down along the side, "Who, What, When, Where and Why."
2. Using the 5-W's as a graphic organizer, model how to create an outline of the story. Students pretend to be the louse and write in the first person point of view, using the word "I". For younger primary students, provide sentence starters or 'fill in the blanks' for them to complete (see example below). For older primary grades, tell students to include as much information about what they learned about lice in their creative story.
3. Pair up students and have them orally discuss their story using the 5-W's with their partner before they begin their outline.

For example:

Who - Hi, my name is _____ the louse.
What - I was born from an _____ called a nit.
When - It took me _____ days to hatch. I grew into an adult louse in only _____ days.
Where - I live in your _____.
Why - I can spread to your friends' heads when you share your _____ with them.

Follow-up Activity

- Younger students fill in the 5-W's organizer with simple one sentence responses and draw pictures to accompany their story.
- Older primary students write more detailed creative stories using the 5-W's organizer to outline their thoughts. Once stories have been completed, students present their story in a comic strip format with drawings and dialogue bubbles. Share samples of comic strips for students to refer to and examine common elements of comic strips (black outlines, dialogue bubbles, etc.).

**BULLYING
LICE IS**

**ABOUT
NOT NICE**



Activity Focus

This lesson focuses on the sensitivity of students who incur a lice infestation. The lesson teaches students how to identify different types of bullying when it occurs and also teaches students strategies for dealing with bullies.

Materials

- Chart paper (for the T-chart)
- Marker
- Journal

Mental Set

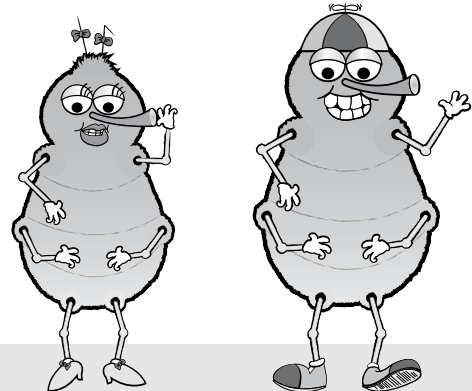
1. Conduct a “Think, Pair, Share” by asking students how they would feel if they had lice.
2. Ask students to share responses through “popcorn style” (calling aloud responses without hands up) as you write responses on one side of the T-chart.
3. Next, ask students how they would feel if someone made fun of them for having lice. Repeat steps 1 and 2 and record responses on the other side of the T-chart.

Input

1. Review responses from the T-chart on both sides. Discuss with students the similarities and differences.
2. Introduce the topic of bullying by connecting it to the context of making fun of someone who might have lice. Brainstorm with students different forms of bullying and record on chart paper. Share some of the ideas below that were not mentioned.
3. Ask students, “If someone is being bullied because they have lice, what would you hear the bully say and what would you see the bully do?” Record responses on chart paper under the two categories.
4. Next, brainstorm with the students a variety of strategies for:
 - What a child with lice can do or say to the bully.
 - What a bystander who watches can do or say to the bully.Record responses on chart paper.

For example:

Teasing	being mean and pretending it’s a joke
Whispering	telling lies to make someone sad
Hurting	making someone cry
Name calling	calling someone names that hurt them
Laughing at	making fun of someone
Leaving out	not letting someone play with you
Intimidation	making someone feel scared



Follow-up Activity

- Arrange students into groups of three and conduct role plays. One student will play the role of the bully, one student will play the victim with lice and the third student will play the bystander. Students can refer to the chart papers created in class to help them with their responses and actions. Rotate the roles in order for everyone to get an opportunity to play each role.
- Have students write a journal entry and reflect on what they learned about bullying. Next, have them write how they will treat other students in the class or school who might in the future have lice.

When head lice appear in your classroom

Spreading the Word

Communicating with students and parents is the first step in dealing with a lice breakout in the classroom. Creating an understanding among children about a lice infestation can be challenging. Here are some helpful hints on how to talk about a breakout with your classroom, individual students with head lice and concerned parents.

Classroom

Introduce the lesson [Bullying About Lice is not Nice](#) in this teacher's guide. The lesson will sensitize your students to a classroom outbreak and reinforces the message that bullying is not nice and can be prevented. As for individual students with head lice, it is important to reassure them that:

- head lice are not their fault
- it doesn't mean they are dirty
- many children have gotten it this year; it's a common problem
- it doesn't hurt
- they won't become ill
- there are methods to get rid of head lice

Showing your student humorous illustrations of head lice such as the *Loopy Lice Gang* will help dispel some of the fears while explaining the problem.

Parents

Parents, like children, are a crucial audience for you in helping control the head lice problem. As primary caregivers, they can directly influence the flow of information, in addition to the assessment and treatment. The educational leaflets provided with this kit can help ease parents' anxiety and help answer many of their questions. The website www.liceguide.com is also a great source of information.

Prevent the Spread

- Head lice are very contagious and are spread through head-to-head contact and the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes, scarves, hats, headphones, sleeping bags and stuffed animals. To minimize the risk of repeated outbreaks, remind your students not to borrow these items.
- Give each student their own plastic bin for school supplies and, if possible, individual lockers or separate hooks for clothing.
- Stress the importance of placing hats and scarves in coat sleeves.
- Encourage children with long hair to keep it tied up or braided from August to November, the time infestations are most likely.
- Reinforce these messages before vacations or holidays - times when children are likely to spend time with their family and friends.
- Watch for telltale scratching that might indicate head lice, and contact the school nurse and parent for immediate treatment.

Treating Head Lice

Head lice can be treated with a special medication, called pediculicide. This is most commonly found in shampoo or cream rinse applications available from pharmacists. Proper use of the products and effective lice eradication will ensure children return to school quickly, and that the family and school experience less stress. For more information on lice treatment refer to the "Break the Cycle" handout.