

Course Syllabus: 9th Grade Health Education

Grade Level: 9th Grade (Freshman Year)

Instructor: Bateman

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Course Overview

Welcome to High School Health! Freshman year is a pivotal transition period. This course equips 9th graders with the foundational health literacy, critical thinking, and decision-making skills needed to navigate high school and beyond safely and confidently.

Aligned with the **California Health Education Content Standards**, the curriculum focuses on six essential content areas through interactive skill-building, discussions, and real-world application.

The 8 California Health Skill Standards

In 9th grade, success isn't just knowing facts—it's practicing real-life skills:

1. **Essential Concepts:** Understanding key health facts and body systems.
2. **Analyzing Influences:** Recognizing how social media, peers, culture, and family impact choices.
3. **Accessing Valid Information:** Finding reliable, science-backed health resources (and spotting misinformation).
4. **Interpersonal Communication:** Master refusing pressure, resolving conflicts, and asking for help.
5. **Decision Making:** Learning to evaluate choices and consequences before acting.
6. **Goal Setting:** Designing realistic personal health plans.
7. **Practicing Health Behaviors:** Developing daily habits for stress management, sleep, and safety.
8. **Health Promotion:** Standing up for your own health and advocating for peers and community.

Unit Breakdown & 9th Grade Focus Areas

Unit 1: Navigating High School & Mental Wellness (Weeks 1–3)

Focus: Freshman transition, coping skills, and emotional resilience.

- **Topics:** High school transition stress, managing workloads, recognizing anxiety and depression, reducing mental health stigma, suicide prevention, and asking a trusted adult for help.
- **Key CA Skills:** Standard 3 (Valid Resources), Standard 7 (Stress Management).
- **Freshman Project: "My Mental Health Toolkit"** — Map out personal coping strategies and save trusted school/local support contacts.

Unit 2: Nutrition, Body Image & Lifetime Fitness (Weeks 4–6)

Focus: Fueling growing bodies and navigating social media standards.

- **Topics:** Balanced nutrition for teens, deciphering food labels, energy drink/cafeine risks, media influence on body image, and finding enjoyable physical movement.
- **Key CA Skills:** Standard 2 (Media Influences), Standard 6 (SMART Goal Setting).
- **Freshman Project: 2-Week Fitness & Meal SMART Goal Track** with mid-point reflection.

Unit 3: Substance Awareness & Peer Pressure (Weeks 7–9)

Focus: Real-world refusal strategies and safety awareness.

- **Topics:** Vaping, e-cigarettes, nicotine addiction, alcohol misuse, prescription drug risks, awareness of fentanyl in counterfeit pills, and clear refusal techniques.
- **Key CA Skills:** Standard 4 (Refusal & Assertiveness), Standard 8 (Peer Advocacy).
- **Freshman Project: Refusal Skills Role-Play** — Practice clear, confident refusal scripts in common 9th-grade peer scenarios.

Unit 4: Digital Safety & Personal Security (Weeks 10–11)

Focus: Safe online behaviors and physical safety.

- **Topics:** Digital footprint, cyberbullying prevention, consent online (sending/sharing imagery risks), CPR/First Aid basics, and concussion safety in sports.
- **Key CA Skills:** Standard 5 (Decision Making), Standard 7 (Injury Prevention).

- **Freshman Project: Digital Footprint & Privacy Audit** for social media accounts.

Unit 5: Sexual Health & Healthy Relationships (Weeks 12–15)

*Compliant with the **California Healthy Youth Act** (Ed Code §§ 51930–51939).*

Parents/guardians receive advance notice and opt-out information per state law.

- **Topics:** Characteristics of healthy vs. unhealthy friendships/dating, setting personal boundaries, understanding consent, STI and HIV prevention, contraceptive methods, and local clinic access.
- **Key CA Skills:** Standard 1 (Concepts), Standard 3 (Clinic/Resource Access), Standard 4 (Boundary Communication).
- **Freshman Project: "Healthy Boundaries" Scenario Analysis** — Evaluate communication choices in dating and peer dynamics.

Unit 6: Community & Environmental Health (Weeks 16–18)

Focus: Broadening perspective beyond self.

- **Topics:** Environmental hazards (air/water quality), organ donation facts, sleep hygiene for teens, routine check-ups, and campus wellness.
- **Key CA Skills:** Standard 8 (Advocacy).
- **Final Capstone Project: Freshman Health Advocacy Campaign** — Design an infographic, poster, or PSA addressing a wellness topic relevant to 9th graders on campus.

Assessment & Grading Breakdown

Category	Weight	Details
Skill Projects & Role-Plays	35%	Hands-on application of health skills (e.g., refusal practice, goal tracking).
Quizzes & Scenario Exercises	25%	Concept checks and situational decision-making tasks.
Classwork & Reflections	25%	Daily journal prompts, group discussions, and activity sheets.

Category	Weight	Details
Final Advocacy Capstone	15%	End-of-semester campus health campaign project.

Expectations & Classroom Values

1. **Respect & Inclusion:** Health class covers personal topics. We foster an environment where everyone feels safe asking questions without judgment.
2. **Fact-Based Learning:** Opinions are welcome in discussions, but health claims must be backed by credible medical sources (e.g., CDC, CDPH, school nurse resources).
3. **Communication:** Reach out early if you need support with assignments or navigating stress.