



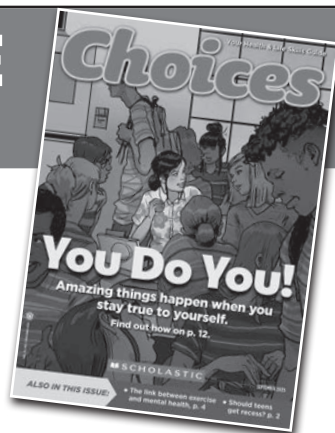
TEACHER'S GUIDE

September 2025

SCHOLASTIC

YOUR HEALTH & LIFE SKILLS GUIDE

Choices



Welcome Back!

Dear Teachers,

How was your summer? I hope you got some well-deserved rest and relaxation. Here at *Choices* we were hard at work on our fall issues, and I can't wait to share them with you. Here are a few new features I'm especially excited about:

- **Prereading questions.** Our longer articles now begin with an important question for students to keep in mind as they read.
- **Reflection prompts.** Longer articles also end with a prompt for a written reflection encouraging readers to connect the material to their own lives.
- **Short-answer questions.** ALL our stories now include short-answer critical-thinking questions as part of the teaching assets available online.

I hope you absolutely love these new features. If you get a chance, please drop me a line and let me know what you think!

Warmly,
Jennie Yabroff
Editor, *Choices*
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What
I'm excited about
in this issue!



"I'm excited to share teenage scientist Heman Bekele's story with our readers! I loved talking with Heman about resilience and how he's learned to handle rejection." —Chava Pearl Lansky, associate editor

Join the Choices Community!

Harness the power of other *Choices* teachers by joining our Facebook group at
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We are committed to your satisfaction. You can contact us at 1-800-724-6527.

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The Truth About PEER PRESSURE

It's natural to want to fit in—but real confidence comes from knowing when to step away from the crowd.


By RACHEL MORSE
Illustrations by MICHAEL EVES

As you read, ask yourself: Why are you especially vulnerable to peer pressure?

Raise your hand if you've ever shown up to school wearing the same sneakers as your friends. How much about your usual lunch table. Are there things that connect everyone—like a favorite slang word, a trendy hairstyle, or a snack you're all obsessed with?

Psychologists call this behavior "herd mentality." Herd mentality is your natural instinct to follow the crowd. It's why peer pressure works. It can be very hard to not do something that all your friends are doing.

When it comes to trends like being obsessed with the same slang or snacks, succumbing to peer pressure is usually pretty harmless.



12 SCHOLASTIC CHOICES September 2025

Pgs. 12-17 Friendship

The Truth About Peer Pressure

Learning objective: Understand what peer pressure is and why it happens.

Essential question: How can you identify peer pressure and successfully combat it?

CASEL Competency: Relationship Skills
NHES 4; Lexile® measure: 860L

Online resources: Spanish translation, comprehension quiz and questions, extension activity, vocab, reflection prompt

© REAL TEEN

WASHING AWAY CANCER

Heman, 16, invented a bar of soap that can heal damaged skin.

By CHRYA PEARL, LANDRY

As you read, ask yourself: What are some challenges Heman has overcome?

When Heman Bekele was a little boy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he saw laborers working in the hot sun. As he got older, his parents explained the importance of protecting his skin from the sun. After Heman traveled with his family to Fairfax, Virginia, he remembered those lessons.

"As I started learning more about skin cancer, it just struck a nerve," he says. As a budding scientist, Heman had a thought: What if he could invent a simple, affordable treatment for skin cancer?

After years of trial and error, with many disappointments along the way, Heman did just that. Today his skin cancer-fighting soap is undergoing testing to make sure it's safe and effective for people to use. Heman says it hasn't always been easy getting people to take him seriously as an inventor. But his persistence and determination paid off—and he wants other teens to dream big too. Here's Heman's story.



18 SCHOLASTIC CHOICES September 2025

Pgs. 18-21 Real Teen

Washing Away Cancer

Learning objective: Meet a teen using his love of science to help others.

Essential question: How has Heman learned to overcome challenges?

CASEL Competency: Self Management
NHES 8; Lexile® measure: 920L

Online resources: Spanish translation, comprehension quiz and questions, extension activity, vocab, reflection prompt

© ON THE JOB

I Am a Chef

By JARRETT STIGER
Illustrations by RAFAEL ALVAREZ

As you read, ask yourself: What are some traits that make a person a good chef?

Jarrett Stiger has always been interested in food. He grew up cooking dinner for his family, then worked in restaurants when he was a teen. Today Jarrett owns a restaurant in Atlanta, Georgia, called Little Bear. As the chef and owner of a restaurant, he does a lot of everything. A typical day might include writing recipes, planning menus, ordering ingredients, cooking, and talking to customers. Jarrett says being a chef is a lot of work, but he loves it all at a desk all day. "It's different from a lot of other jobs," he says. "But if you can handle the stress, it's just amazing." Read about Jarrett's journey to becoming a chef.

JARRETT'S ADVICE FOR BECOMING A CHEF

There are many paths to being a chef. Some start in high school, but many others start in college. The most important thing is to get a job at a restaurant. Jarrett says, "This can start as the bottom, washing dishes and preparing ingredients, and work your way up."

My first job was as a prep cook at a local deli and bakery. I cut up vegetables and helped with simple recipes. Then I did internships at a few fancier restaurants.


After high school, I went to culinary school. I learned to use knives, make sauces, and butcher meat. I also took classes about the restaurant business.

I worked in a lot of restaurants before I was ready to run my own kitchen. It was important for me to see ingredients. I could get really frustrated. I needed Little Bear.

I never hoped to be the owner of a restaurant. I just wanted to be a chef. I love it.

My restaurant serves a mix of Jewish and Chinese cuisines. My favorite moments are watching guests eating and laughing and enjoying every bit of food.

Now we sell our Chinese dumplings and buns. I am not a big fan of rice.



22 SCHOLASTIC CHOICES September 2025

Pgs. 22-23 Goal Setting

On the Job: I Am a Chef

Learning objective: Understand the role of a chef and the traits that make a person a good chef.

Essential question: What does a chef do, and how can you become one?

CASEL Competency: Responsible Decision Making

NHES 6; Lexile® measure: 800L

Online resources: Spanish translation, comprehension quiz and questions

Deepen Engagement at Choices Online

The print magazine is just the beginning.
Get more with these interactive online resources.



1. SPANISH TRANSLATIONS:

All stories are available in Spanish. Use the pull-down menu on the left-hand side of each story.

2. POLL: After you read our debate about whether teens should have recess, ask your students to cast their votes in our interactive poll.



3. QUIZ: Check out our guide to exercising to help improve your mental health, then have students test their knowledge with our fun interactive quiz.

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