



Social Proof: Lesson Plan

Topic	
Social proof is an informational influence on human behavior: in uncertain situations where individuals are not sure how to act, they assume that other people have more knowledge or information than they do, so they look to others for cues and mirror their actions.	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics • Psychology • Social Studies 	30-45 minutes
Video link:	
https://academy4sc.org/topic/social-proof-following-the-crowd/	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
Students will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define social proof. • Apply social proof to economics and marketing. 	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
Conformity, social groups, self-image	
Materials Needed	
Worksheet, Student Internet Access	
Before you watch	
Turn & Talk: Have students work with a partner to come up with examples of times in their lives when a friend or peer influenced them to purchase something.	
While you watch	
1. What are the two types of social influence that motivate people to conform?	



2. What are the six types of social proof?
3. Name one example of dangerous herd behavior.

After you watch/discussion questions

1. Can you think of an example of social proof in an advertising campaign you've seen recently?
2. Can you name one example of a trend popularized through social proof by social media influencers?
3. Can you think of an event in history in which people were driven to act by social proof?

Activity Ideas

- Have students research a TV commercial campaign and write a paragraph outlining the type(s) of social proof used. Students should describe specific examples and how they contribute to the overall persuasion of the consumer.
- Have students design their own TV commercial or social media advertising campaign for a product they would recommend to a friend. Students should write a script for the commercial or sponsored video that incorporates three types of social proof, as well as a one-page reflection explaining their decisions.

Sources/places to learn more

1. "The 6 Principles of Persuasion by Dr. Robert Cialdini [Official Site]." *INFLUENCE AT WORK*, 25 June 2019, influenceatwork.com.
2. HQ, Psychology Notes, et al. "What Is the Social Proof Theory?" *The Psychology Notes Headquarters*, 11 Mar. 2018, psychologynoteshq.com.
3. Guthrie, Chris. "Influence: Principles of Influence in Negotiation." *Marquette Law Review*, vol. 87, no. 4, 2004, pp. 829–837, core.ac.uk.