

Open Your Class With This Tomorrow- Activity 1 Buzz: Inside the Minds of Thrill-Seekers, Daredevils, and Adrenaline Junkies

Teacher Directions: This resource provides the original thrill, adventure, and boredom susceptibility subscales from Zuckerman's Sensation-Seeking Scale for classroom use. The experience-seeking and disinhibition scales were altered to be appropriate for use in the high school classroom.

Have students take one or all the subtests for sensation seeking or have them review some of the question prompts to examine how each type of sensation seeking is different.

Interpreting Sensation-Seeking Scores

These questionnaires are for general information only and should not be treated as a substitute for professional advice. Sensation-seeking scores provide insight into individual differences in the desire for novelty and intensity in experiences.

Score Profile for Each Sensation-Seeking Component:

- 0 – 3 → Low (*Prefers stability and routine, avoids high-intensity activities*)
- 4 – 6 → Medium (*Balanced between novelty-seeking and cautious decision-making*)
- 7 – 10 → High (*Strong desire for intense or new experiences, often thrives on excitement*)

Score Profile for Total Sensation-Seeking:

- 0 – 16 → Low Sensation-Seeking (*Values routine, avoids excessive stimulation*)
- 17 – 27 → Medium Sensation-Seeking (*Enjoys a mix of excitement and predictability*)
- 28 – 40 → High Sensation-Seeking (*Actively seeks new, intense, or risky experiences*)

These scores are relative comparisons to general population trends and are not absolute indicators of personality. Encourage students to reflect on their unique sensation-seeking patterns and how they may evolve.

Sensation Seeking Theory

Sensation seeking is a personality trait that describes an individual's tendency to seek out novel, intense, and varied experiences. People high in sensation-seeking are often drawn to excitement, new challenges, and stimulating environments, while those low in sensation-seeking prefer stability, predictability, and routine.

Sensation seeking personality is measured based on four main components:

1. **Thrill and Adventure Seeking** – A preference for exciting physical activities that involve some level of risk, such as extreme sports or high-adrenaline experiences.
2. **Experience Seeking** – A desire for new ideas, cultures, sensory experiences, and unconventional lifestyles, including trying new foods, traveling, and engaging with diverse perspectives.
3. **Disinhibition** – A tendency toward spontaneous, impulsive, and socially uninhibited behaviors, such as risk-taking in social settings and seeking unstructured experiences.
4. **Boredom Susceptibility** – A low tolerance for monotony and routine, leading to a need for constant change and excitement to avoid boredom.

Discussion Ideas

- Introduce sensation-seeking as a personality trait that includes thrill-seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition, and boredom susceptibility. Discuss how these traits shape behaviors, preferences, and risk-taking tendencies across different areas of life.
- Explore how sensation-seeking relates to arousal theory, which suggests that individuals engage in activities that help them maintain their ideal stimulation level. For example, some may seek high-energy experiences like extreme sports (thrill-seeking), while others explore novel intellectual or cultural experiences (experience-seeking).
- Discuss real-world examples of disinhibition and its effects. How can disinhibition lead to positive spontaneity, such as public speaking or creative expression, versus problematic impulsivity? Have students reflect on times they acted without overthinking and analyzing the outcomes.
- Examine sensation-seeking and the Big Five personality traits. How might thrill-seeking align with extraversion? Could high boredom susceptibility relate to low conscientiousness? What personality traits might correlate with experience-seeking or disinhibition? Have students discuss possible patterns and exceptions.
- Self-reflection activity: Have students complete the four sensation-seeking subscales to assess their tendencies. Encourage discussion on how their results connect to their hobbies, social behaviors, and future career interests.
- Apply sensation-seeking concepts to psychology topics like adolescent risk-taking, personality theories, and decision-making. How might sensation-seeking influence risk-taking in teenagers, and what strategies help manage impulsivity while embracing positive stimulation?
- Encourage students to reflect on how sensation-seeking influences their behaviors while emphasizing that personality traits exist on a continuum and may change over time.

Each of the four sensation seeking tests are included below.

Note: This resource provides the original thrill and adventure seeking, and boredom susceptibility subscales from Zuckerman's Sensation-Seeking Scale for classroom use. The experience-seeking and disinhibition scales were altered to be appropriate for use in the high school classroom.

Zuckerman's Sensation-Seeking Scale Form V

The sensation-seeking survey reveals five scores, one for each component of sensation-seeking and a total sensation-seeking score. The following assesses only the thrill- and adventure-seeking component.

Thrill- and Adventure-Seeking

Directions: Each of the items below contains two choices. Please indicate which of the choices most describes your likes or how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Give yourself one point for each A answer and 0 points for each B answer.

1	A. I often wish I could be a mountain climber. B. I can't understand people who risk their lives climbing mountains.	
2	A. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening. B. A sensible person avoids dangerous activities.	
3	A. I would like to take up water skiing. B. I would not like to take up water skiing.	
4	A. I would like to try surfing. B. I would not like to try surfing.	
5	A. I would like to learn to fly an airplane. B. I would not like to learn to fly an airplane.	
6	A. I would like to go scuba diving. B. I prefer the surface of the water rather than being underwater.	
7	A. I would like to try skydiving. B. I would never want to try jumping out of a plane, with or without a parachute.	
8	A. I like to dive off the high dive board. B. I don't like the feeling I get standing on the high dive board (or I don't go near it at all).	
9	A. I would like to sail a long distance in a small but seaworthy sailing craft. B. Sailing long distances in small sailing crafts is foolhardy.	
10	A. I would enjoy the sensation of skiing very fast down a high mountain slope. B. Skiing down a high mountain slope is a good way to end up on crutches.	

_____ Thrill- and Adventure-Seeking Score

Scoring

Add up the total number of points. This is the score on the Thrill- and Adventure-Seeking component of sensation seeking.

0-3 = Low

4-6 = Medium

7-10 = High

Sensation-seeking consists of four distinct components.

- Thrill- and adventure-seeking (quest for risk)
- Experience-seeking (love of new sensations of the mind and senses)
- Disinhibition (ability to be unrestrained)
- Boredom susceptibility (dislike of repetition)

Adapted from: Behavioral expression and biosocial bases of sensation-seeking. Adapted from Zuckerman, M. 1994. Cambridge University Press. 1994

Zuckerman's Boredom Susceptibility Form V

The sensation-seeking survey reveals five scores, one for each component of sensation-seeking and a total sensation-seeking score. The following assesses only the boredom susceptibility component.

Boredom Susceptibility Section

Directions: Each of the items below contains two choices. Please indicate which of the choices most describes your likes or feelings. There are no right or wrong answers. Give yourself one point for each A answer and 0 points for each B answer.

1	A. I can't stand watching a movie that I've seen before. B. There are some movies I enjoy seeing a second or even a third time.	
2	A. I get bored seeing the same old faces. B. I like the comfort and familiarity of everyday friends.	
3	A. When you can predict almost everything a person will do and say, they must be boring. B. I dislike people who do things just to shock or upset others.	
4	A. I usually don't enjoy a movie or play when I can predict what will happen in advance. B. I don't mind watching a movie or a play when I can predict what will happen in advance.	
5	A. Looking at someone's personal videos or travel photos bores me tremendously. B. I enjoy looking at personal videos or travel photos.	
6	A. I prefer friends who are excitingly unpredictable. B. I prefer friends who are reliable and predictable.	
7	A. I get very restless if I have to stay home for any length of time. B. I enjoy spending time in the familiar surroundings of home.	
8	A. The most annoying thing you can do in a social setting is to be boring. B. The most annoying thing you can do in a social setting is to be rude.	
9	A. I like people who are sharp and witty, even if they do sometimes insult others. B. I dislike people who have fun at the expense of hurting the feelings of others.	
10	A. I have no patience with dull or boring people. B. I find something interesting in almost every person I talk to.	

_____ Boredom Susceptibility Score

Scoring

Add up the total number of points. This is the score on the boredom susceptibility component of sensation seeking.

0-3 = Low

4-6 = Medium

7-10 = High

Sensation-seeking consists of four distinct components.

- Thrill- and adventure-seeking (quest for risk)
- Experience-seeking (love of new sensations of the mind and senses)
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Zuckerman's Disinhibition Scale Form V (revised for high school)

The sensation-seeking survey reveals five scores, one for each component of sensation-seeking and a total sensation-seeking score. The following assesses only the experience seeking component.

Disinhibition Section

Directions: Each of the items below contains two choices. Please indicate which of the choices most describes your likes or the way you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Give yourself one point for each A answer and 0 points for each B answer.

1	A. I enjoy parties where people let loose and act uninhibited. B. I prefer smaller gatherings where people stay in control.	
2	A. I enjoy situations with no strict rules and can do whatever feels right in the moment. B. I prefer structured environments where expectations are clear.	
3	A. I like to act on impulse and see where the moment takes me. B. I prefer to plan my actions and consider the consequences.	
4	A. I enjoy being around people who take risks and push limits. B. I feel more comfortable around people who are predictable and cautious.	
5	A. If something seems fun, I'll try it first and worry about the consequences later. B. I prefer to consider the risks before trying something new.	
6	A. I enjoy high-energy social environments, like school dances, pep rallies, or big group hangouts where people are loud and spontaneous. B. I prefer smaller gatherings where I can have meaningful conversations.	
7	A. I like to challenge social norms and break rules when I feel like it. B. I believe rules exist for a reason and should be followed.	
8	A. I like doing things that surprise people, even if they're a little unpredictable. B. I prefer sticking to behaviors that others expect from me.	
9	A. I feel comfortable taking big risks in social settings. B. I prefer to play it safe in social situations.	
10	A. I enjoy trying new things even if they go against expectations. B. I prefer sticking with what I know and feel comfortable with.	

___ Experience Seeking

Scoring

Add up the total number of points. This is the score on the disinhibition component of sensation seeking.

0-3 = Low

4-6 = Medium

7-10 = High

Sensation-seeking consists of four distinct components.

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- Experience-seeking (love of new sensations of the mind and senses)
- Disinhibition (ability to be unrestrained)
- Boredom susceptibility (dislike of repetition)

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Zuckerman's Experience Seeking Scale Form V (revised for high school)

The sensation-seeking survey reveals five scores, one for each component of sensation-seeking and a total sensation-seeking score. The following assesses only the experience seeking component.

Experience Seeking Section

Directions: Each of the items below contains two choices. Please indicate which of the choices most describes your likes or the way you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Give yourself one point for each A answer and 0 points for each B answer.

1	A. I enjoy meeting people with different perspectives and backgrounds. B. I prefer spending time with people who are like me.	
2	A. I like to explore new and unusual places, even if I don't know what to expect. B. I prefer to go to familiar places where I know what to expect.	
3	A. I enjoy books, movies, and TV shows that introduce me to new settings, cultures, and ideas. B. I prefer books, movies, or TV shows that feel familiar and comfortable.	
4	A. I like to try new activities, even if I'm not sure I'll be good at them. B. I prefer to do things I already know I enjoy and am good at.	
5	A. I enjoy trying foods from different cultures, even if they seem unusual. B. I prefer to stick to foods I already know and like.	
6	A. I like traveling to places where I can experience new cultures, traditions, or ways of life. B. I feel most comfortable traveling to familiar places.	
7	A. I like to explore different experiences, even if they are entirely outside my routine. B. I prefer to stay within familiar activities that I know I enjoy.	
8	A. I like stepping outside my comfort zone with my style, hobbies, or creative projects. B. I prefer to stay within what feels safe and familiar in my interests.	
9	A. I enjoy exploring unique and unconventional music, art, or performances. B. I prefer music and art that follow traditional styles.	
10	A. I like talking to people who challenge my thinking, even if I disagree. B. I prefer conversations that focus on familiar topics I understand well.	

___ Experience Seeking

Scoring

Add up the total number of points. This is the score on the experience seeking component of sensation seeking.

0-3 = Low

4-6 = Medium

7-10 = High

Sensation-seeking consists of four distinct components.

- Thrill- and adventure-seeking (quest for risk)
- Experience-seeking (love of new sensations of the mind and senses)
- Disinhibition (ability to be unrestrained)
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