Health Education Pacing Guide and Unit Planner

What is a pacing guide?

A **pacing guide** is a written schedule or chart displaying the topics/skills and behavioral outcomes related to a health education unit or curriculum to be addressed over a defined period of time. A pacing guide may also be known as a curriculum map, program timeline, instructional guide, or year-at-a-glance.

A **pacing guide** is an itinerary for teaching. Pacing guides outline a sequential order in which material is taught across academic subjects and grade level(s) or span, complementing the scope and sequence document(s) to guide instruction in health education.

A **pacing guide** can take many forms, but as implied, is intended to regulate the pace of the instruction.

Differences between a scope and sequence and a pacing guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope and sequence (S&amp;S)</th>
<th>Pacing guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The <strong>scope</strong> identifies a set of learning objectives/outcomes and topics that will be studied.</td>
<td>• Pacing guides predict the pace (i.e., time) of implemented instruction and focused health behavior outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Objectives/outcomes and specific topics are aligned to national, state, and local education standards, benchmarks, and indicators, in addition to local context and priority health needs.</td>
<td>• The teacher may decide, individually or collectively with peers and leadership, what they will teach and when they will teach it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The <strong>sequence</strong> identifies the order in which objectives/outcomes and topics are taught (e.g., Grades 6, 7, or 8).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• S&amp;S will not include specific lesson instruction activities, assessment strategies, or adaptation strategies.</td>
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</table>

**The scope and sequence outlines the specific health behavior outcomes across grade levels to guide curriculum development, selection, or revision.**

**Pacing guides keep teachers on track to deliver the intended curriculum.**


# Benefits to Using a Pacing Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits for School Districts</th>
<th>Benefits for Teachers</th>
<th>Benefits for Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Helps increase student performance by ensuring curricular continuity across schools</td>
<td>• Helps identify cross-curricular opportunities and avoid unintentional repetition during teaching</td>
<td>• Helps students identify what they are expected to know and be able to do throughout the unit or curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps avoid gaps in learning when students transfer schools</td>
<td>• Helps highlight opportunities to engage parent/school/community partners who may enhance teaching</td>
<td>• Encourages students to follow along throughout the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps maintain curricular and instructional fidelity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Guidance on Creating Pacing Guides

It is best to work with a **team of people who have health education teaching and subject matter experience** (e.g., grade level and health education content) when writing the pacing guide. Classroom teachers are essential members of the pacing guide development team, providing context for lesson pace/timing and familiarity with unit or curricula content and skills.

### Creating a Health Education Pacing Guide

1. **Evaluate the school calendar** and determine how many class day(s) or instructional minutes will be devoted to health education.
2. Use a **scope and sequence (S&S) document** to determine the desired health behavior outcomes (HBOs) the unit or curriculum is addressing. The S&S serves as the foundation to build the pacing guide and select appropriate health education instructional materials. If applicable, curriculum specialists and teachers should review all S&S document(s), those locally developed or provided by commercially-available health curriculum, as they develop pacing guides for instruction.
3. Create the pacing guide by **mapping out health education topics and specific units/lessons in instructional blocks** (e.g., weeks, months, quarters). Ensure the pacing guide complements the S&S document and availability of instructional time for health education in the district or school.
4. **Note any critical date(s) that may impact instruction** and record those in the pacing guide. It may also be helpful to include comments about opportunities to engage parent, school, and community partners during instruction.
   - For example, during the sexual health unit, school-based or community-linked health services staff could help facilitate a physical or virtual clinic visit.
5. **Review the draft health education pacing guide** and make sure it meets student, teacher, school, and district needs. **Seek feedback from curriculum and instruction staff, health education teachers, support staff, and others** to ensure pacing guide content follows a logical and appropriate pattern of instruction. Revise as necessary.
6. **Provide teachers and instructional staff with copies of pacing guide in an easily accessible format** (e.g., hard-copy or online access).
7. **Monitor and evaluate pacing (speed) at which health topics and units/lessons are being delivered.** Determine a process for reviewing and updating the pacing guide, as needed. The pacing guide should remain flexible and reflect teachers’ actual instructional delivery in health education over time.
8. **Use the pacing guide to develop unit plans for specific topics-skills throughout the health education unit or curriculum.** Unit planning is an organizational tool to help teachers determine what students need to accomplish in each unit, and how and when they will accomplish it through lesson-specific details.
Health Education Pacing Guide Template
The following fillable Pacing Guide template is available at:
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health-education/docs/pacing_guide_template.docx in Microsoft Word format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Curriculum Unit and Lessons</th>
<th>Health Behavior Outcome(s)</th>
<th>Important Dates</th>
<th>Potential Partner Collaboration</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Six Weeks</td>
<td>9/2 - 9/6</td>
<td>HIV/STD testing and treatment</td>
<td>Unit 1: HIV/STD Prevention Lessons 1-4</td>
<td>Engage in behaviors that prevent or reduce STDs, including HIV infections.</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday</td>
<td>School nurse can facilitate clinic tour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Six Weeks, the template includes spaces for additional weeks with the same columns as above.

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<tr>
<th>Instructional Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<th>Potential Partner Collaboration</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter Break</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For 4th Six Weeks, the template continues with the same columns as above, allowing for additional weeks.

Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4
Relationship between a unit plan and pacing guide

Unit plans are a common tool used in long-range curriculum design and planning; they constitute a critical element to support teachers’ instruction across any content area. Unit plans can be developed using a pacing guide which typically reflects the sequential order of student learning and behavioral outcomes across corresponding grade levels or spans as described in a scope and sequence (S&S).

- Unit planning is an organizational tool to help teachers determine what students need to accomplish in each unit, and how and when they will accomplish it through lesson-specific details.
- Unit plans will include the central health topic(s), appropriate learning objectives/outcomes, and the amount of instructional time devoted to each topic or lesson within the unit or curriculum.
- Unit plans contain multiple lessons that are connected, sequenced, and related.
- The unit plan specifies the number of days, class periods, or minutes that teachers might devote to each health education lesson and can help teachers stay on track during the curriculum unit.
- The unit plan also outlines alignment with national and state content standards (e.g., national health education standards).

Elements of a Unit Plan

A unit plan commonly includes a set of core elements:

- Chronological layout of lesson objectives
- Appropriate national/state/local standards, benchmarks, or performance indicators
- Primary lesson content/topic(s)
- Student skill(s) being targeted
- Instructional activities for students
- Cognitive and skill-based assessment technique(s)
- Modifications or adaptations, if applicable (e.g., special education, teaching of English as a second language)
- Resources and materials needed

Additional elements to consider adding to the unit plan include:

- Lesson essential questions (EQs) (i.e., Key questions that stimulate thought, inquiry, and critical thinking among students during health education instruction)
- Key lesson vocabulary
- Opportunities to integrate across other content areas/standards
**Unit Plan Template**

The following fillable Unit Plan template is available at: [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health-education/docs/unit_plan_template.docx](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health-education/docs/unit_plan_template.docx) in Microsoft Word format.

### Sample Health Education Unit Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson #</th>
<th>Health behavior outcomes (HBOs)/Student learning objectives (SLOs)</th>
<th>Standards/Benchmarks</th>
<th>Target Skill(s)</th>
<th>Instructional Activities</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Modification/Adaptation</th>
<th>Materials &amp; resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SH1: Is my relationship healthy or not?</td>
<td>HBO1. Establish and maintain a healthy relationship HBO2. Avoid pressuring others to engage in sexual behaviors HBO3. Identify 3 warning signs that a relationship is potentially unhealthy or abusive HBO4. Classify 3 methods of resolving conflict as either healthy or unhealthy</td>
<td>NHES 4.1.1 Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health NSES HR.8.CC.1 – Compare and contrast the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships HR.8.SM.1 – Explain the criteria for evaluating the health of a relationship</td>
<td>Ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks</td>
<td>1. Arrange two-minute video “What Makes a Relationship Healthy” 2. Large group discussion: characteristics of healthy/unhealthy relationships Skills practice 3. Small groups (3): relationship role-play scenarios 4. Exit slip: reflection prompt: evaluating healthy vs. unhealthy relationships</td>
<td>Peer assessment rubrics – relationship role-play scenarios “Before You Go” reflection</td>
<td>Include subtitles and written script for Amaze video Provide white boards for student response in large group discussion Provide relationship role-play scenarios in multiple languages Students develop their own relationship role-play scenarios</td>
<td>Laptop or desktop computer LCD projector and screen Amaze video link Relationship role-play scenarios – 1 deck/small group Peer assessment rubric – 1/ student Exit slips “Before You Go” – 1/ student Writing utensils for each student</td>
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<tr>
<td>SH2</td>
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