

Student Activity: M45: Temperament on the Web

Purpose: Temperament, defined as a person's characteristic emotional reactivity and intensity, remains relatively stable across the lifespan. The Preventive Ounce was founded in 1984 by two psychologists who wanted to help parents understand how their child's temperament may be related to a variety of developmental problems, including temper tantrums, sleep irregularities, and distractibility. This nonprofit, preventive mental health organization has a Web site that provides a wealth of information. Use this activity to extend the discussion of temperament.

Time required: 20 minutes

Materials: Internet access

Task: Have students work individually or with partners to explore the website at www.preventiveoz.org and prepare a paper or oral presentation addressing the following questions:

- Why is temperament important?
- Where did the concepts of temperament originate?
- What are the major areas of temperament?
- How early in life does temperament appear?
- Are there gender differences in temperament?
- Does birth order affect temperament?

Discussion: All these questions (as well as several others) are posed and answered at the site. Students can explore other questions, learning what researchers have discovered about temperament.