

STUDY GUIDE: SMOKERS AND THE PEOPLE WHO SMELL THEM

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PYRAMID

OBJECTIVES

After viewing, students should be able to:

- Describe some harmful effects of smoking.
- Discuss issues related to smoking like peer pressure, addiction, advertising, other tobacco products, parental influence, etc.
- Discuss different ways to communicate a message.
- Using critical thinking skills, analyze various ways to “read” a message about smoking.

Note to Educator

This video program is based on a stage play produced by the STAGES Program, a non-profit organization that has brought its award-winning shows to over 70,000 students, parents and educators. This anti-smoking program is endorsed by the Campaign For Tobacco Free Kids.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before viewing:

- What are your reasons for smoking or not?
- Where did you get your information about smoking: friends, school, television, magazines, Internet, etc.?

After viewing:

- Mary, the first guest, tells us lots of reasons why she likes to smoke. That’s what her words say. What do her tone of voice and body language tell us about her? What is the “real message” of Mary’s segment?
- What is the message in the commercial of the two friends smoking together when they are young and old? How important do you think peer pressure is in making decisions?
- The “doctor” presented lots of evidence against smoking:
 - smoking kills 390,000 people every year in the U.S.
 - 30% of all cancer deaths are tobacco-related
 - 87% of all lung cancer deaths are related to cigarettes
 - 3000 young people start smoking every day: that’s one million a year
 - the younger you start smoking, the harder it is to quit

Would these statistics keep you from smoking? Why or why not? Which of these effects bother you the most? Why?

- Two boys say that smokeless tobacco doesn’t cause lung cancer. What are the possible effects of chewing tobacco?
- The segment between the father (ex-smoker) and daughter (new smoker) doesn’t get resolved. Can you think of anything the father could say to convince his daughter to stop smoking now?
- This video states that tobacco companies are targeting young people to start smoking. What evidence do you see of this in their advertising? What else do they do to hook people into smoking? How can anti-smoking groups use the same tactics?
- Several segments state that smoking is an addiction that is very difficult to break. The smokers say, “I can quit whenever I want to — no problem.” Who is right? Where can you get information about it?
- One smoker talks about his “all-American right to smoke.” Is this a right people do or should have? Do you agree with anti-smoking laws in work places, restaurants, bars, buses, airplanes, etc.? Think of different reasons on both sides of the issue. Debate the topic, or take a poll of the class.

- The segment with the couple mentions the harmful effects of “secondhand smoke” — breathing the smoke from someone else’s cigarette. What do you do when you’re around people smoking? Do you feel comfortable asking them not to smoke? What if they refuse?
- At the end, we realize that Jim True has been “acting” all along. Does the fact that he is a smoker make his message somewhat hypocritical? Can you trust the people you hear and see on television?

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- As a group, list ten reasons why people smoke. Then talk about different ways people can achieve the same results without cigarettes.
- The audience suggests several remarks to get your friends to quit smoking. Come up with more ‘one-liners’, both funny and serious. Illustrate one or more of these on a poster.
- Design a humorous anti-smoking commercial or a music video for kids. Write a script or a song. Describe the sets and the action. Perhaps you can even make a videotape or sound recording of your production.
- The doctor describes the effects of smoking on the body:
 - nicotine reaches the brain in seven seconds
 - at first the body rejects the smoke by making you cough
 - nicotine runs through the blood stream and tightens every artery in the body
 - the heart pumps faster and works harder to move blood through the tightened arteries
 - the “head rush” you feel is lack of oxygen in the brain.

Illustrate these effects in a skit or an animated video or a poster.

- Look for ads for cigars or chewing tobacco. How do advertisers present their product? Make a poster showing the ads and the facts about the harmful effects of these other tobacco products.
- Humor can take many forms: irony, satire, sarcasm, slapstick, “black humor.” What forms did you see in this video? Invent some “talk-show segments” of your own, using each form of humor.
- Find several cigarette ads — in print or video. “Read between the lines” of the ads. How do they try to convince you to buy their product? What age groups are the tobacco companies appealing to?
- Conduct a survey of people who smoke. When did they start? Have they ever tried to quit? Do they want to quit — now or in the future? How do they choose their brand of cigarettes? Does advertising have anything to do with their choice? Can you draw any conclusions from your survey? (Remember, a survey is not a scientific study; it is only a collection of opinions and behaviors.)
- The U.S. government provides money for anti-smoking education and health research. It also gives subsidy payments to tobacco farmers. Do some research on all these programs. How much money is given to each program. Find out how Congress members voted on these programs. Write to your Congress persons or your school newspaper to give your opinion on your findings.

This study guide and the Tobacco Facts can be downloaded from our website — search our online catalog for “Smokers and The People Who Smell Them” — www.pyramidmedia.com

TOBACCO FACTS

3000 young people become regular smokers every day.*

A pack a day smoker spends \$912.50 a year based on a \$2.50 per pack.*

90% of current smokers began smoking before the age of 21.**

Children are beginning to use tobacco at an earlier age. The average age of first use is now 11-15 years of age.**

The younger the person is when she or he begins smoking, the less likely she or he will be able to quit later.**

Nicotine, which is found in all tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), is a highly addictive drug.*

Chewing tobacco is NOT a safe alternative to smoking. It contains 10 times the amount of nitrosamines, the same cancer-causing substance found in cigarettes.*

Tobacco is responsible for about 30% of all cancer deaths in the United States. Cigarette smoking causes about 87% of lung cancer deaths.*

BE SMART, DON’T START

*American Cancer Society **National Institute on Drug Abuse