

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

Warning: Vaping Teens Becoming a New Generation of Nicotine Addicts

E-cigarettes might help adults quit smoking, but don't ignore that 'juuling' is going viral in high schools

Source: USAToday.com, April 8, 2018

Note: This is an opinion piece, not a news story.

The jury is still out on whether e-cigarettes will be a savior to smokers who want to quit, the gateway to addiction for a new generation, or both. But teenagers are not waiting for the answer. E-cigarettes — especially sleek new products that look nothing like traditional smokes, are easily concealed, and produce less noticeable plumes — have taken off in high schools from Maine to California.

In Sutton, Mass., where Sophia Diana was a high school senior last year, vaping is banned but it was common “in the library and on the bus,” and students would exhale into “their shirt or sleeves to hide it,” she says. In Milwaukee and Placerville, Calif., vaping in the bathrooms is the latest fad.

In suburban Detroit, Lynn Gillon, the mother of a high school junior, says she was blindsided when she found vaping paraphernalia in her son’s backpacks. He’s now attending a peer counseling group to kick his habit. And in Maine, according to *The New York Times*, a student caught vaping three times at Cape Elizabeth High School told the vice principal, “I can’t stop.”

And that’s the heart of the problem: Teenagers becoming nicotine addicts.

The good news about e-cigarettes—essentially battery-operated nicotine inhalers—is that they do not produce cancer-causing tobacco smoke and might help the nation’s nearly 38 million smokers quit.

The bad news? Just about everything else.

Nicotine, contained in varying amounts in e-cigarettes, can rival the addictiveness of heroin and cocaine. For young people, whose brains are not fully developed, it can be particularly dangerous, leading to reduced impulse control, deficits in attention and cognition, and mood disorders.

There’s “substantial evidence” that e-cigarette use among youth and young adults increases the risk of smoking traditional cigarettes in the future, according to a report in January by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. And just as smoking has dropped to historic lows among teenagers, teens are turning to vaping. About 11% of high school seniors vaped nicotine in 2017; about a quarter of those seniors say they vape 20 or more times a month.

There are also many troubling unknowns about e-cigarettes. It took decades for the devastating effects of cigarettes to emerge, and e-cigarettes have only been on the market since 2006. The National Academies report concluded that e-cigarettes are a safer alternative to

burning tobacco, but “there is conclusive evidence that ... most e-cigarette products contain and emit numerous potentially toxic substances.”

Meanwhile, teenagers, who ignored warnings about cigarettes for decades, are now ignoring warnings about e-cigarettes. The products come in a wide variety of flavors, appearance and potency. Many are sold in sweet, fruity flavors, reminiscent of candy. Juul, which resembles a USB drive and came on the market in 2015, contains nicotine approximately equivalent to a “pack of cigarettes or 200 puffs,” according to the company’s website.

Juul's popularity has soared, capturing more than 50% of e-cigarette retail sales during the first quarter of this year. (Sales are banned to anyone younger than 18, but underage students say they have little trouble getting the devices.)

A Juul spokesman says the nicotine content, like everything else about Juul, is specifically intended to help adult smokers quit, adding that the company has made “myriad efforts to combat underage use of Juul.”

That hasn't stopped the product from becoming so popular that some students have turned it into a verb and talk about “juuling.”

So where is the federal government in all this? Not where it needs to be.

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration delayed until 2022 a requirement that makers of most e-cigarettes go through a rigorous government approval process. Once before, the government let an addictive product get by with little regulation. It shouldn't repeat that mistake.

Possible Response Questions:

- Do you think vaping is a big problem with teenagers? Explain.
- This is an opinion piece. What counterarguments might there be? What is not said in this article? What is left out? Discuss.
- Pick a word/line/passage from the article and respond to it.