

Persuasive Assignment:

Choose an audience connected to the issue you are researching. You can argue for the audience to change their perspective on the issue or that they re-approach the way they themselves engage with the issue. Write an essay or letter directly to that audience, explaining how and why you are asking them to change. 3 pages. MLA format.

Persuasive Essay

First Draft

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 17.8% of Americans smoke cigarettes. That's despite knowing that smoking will kill you. Smoking is linked to many terrible, life threatening diseases. It's not just cancer. The CDC also states that smoking is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the U.S. "Smoking causes more deaths each year than the following causes combined: Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, firearm-related incidents"

(http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking).

The CDC also states that smoking accounts for "nearly 1 in 5 deaths" each year in the U.S.

Clearly, smokers don't care about their own health. So what is going to make people quit smoking? What is going to prevent so many people from smoking in the future? How can we get rid of smoking in the United States?

Smokers need to understand that their smoking doesn't just affect them. It has terrible health consequences for other people, often people love. Most people know about secondhand smoke. But there's also thirdhand smoke. Americans for Nonsmokers Rights explains that thirdhand smoke is "a relatively new term used to describe the residual contamination from tobacco smoke that lingers in rooms long after smoking stops and remains on our clothes after we leave a smoky place. It may seem like an offensive smell, but it is also indicative of the presence of tobacco toxins" (<http://www.no-smoke.org/learnmore.php?id=671>). Studies are finding that thirdhand smoke has health consequences for smokers and nonsmokers. Mohamad Sleiman, Lara A. Gundel, James F. Pankow, Peyton Jacob III, Brett C. Siner, and Hugo Destailats found through their study of thirdhand smoke: "Given the rapid sorbtion and persistence of

high levels of nicotine on indoor surfaces—including clothing and human skin—this recently identified process represents an unappreciated health hazard through dermal exposure, dust inhalation, and ingestion” (<http://www.pnas.org/content/107/15/6576.full.pdf>). So smoking is even more of a risk for other than we knew before.

Also, smokers need to start realizing that their smoking costs the health care system massive amounts of money. It’s not just their own health and the people around them they are risking. They put a lot of strain on the health care system so that it doesn’t work effectively for the people who don’t need it for a problem they caused themselves. A Reuters article by Madeline Kennedy states, “Of every \$10 spent on healthcare in the U.S., almost 90 cents is due to smoking...” (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-healthcare-costs-smoking-idUSKBN0JX2BE20141219>) The study she is writing about shows that “9.6 percent of Medicare spending, 15.2 percent of Medicaid spending and 32.8 percent of other government healthcare spending by sources such as the Veterans Affairs department, Tricare and the Indian Health Service, were attributable to smoking.” Those are just government funded programs—private insurance and hospitals are effected by the cost of smoking, too. The study found that around \$170 billion is spent annually on smoking related health care. The article quotes Kenneth Warner from the University of Michigan School of Public Health, who says, “This study shows that, in addition to the human misery it inflicts, (smoking) imposes a substantial burden on the nation’s health care institutions, especially those funded by the public’s tax dollars.” The article ends by saying that since the Surgeon Generals 1964 report on the health effects of smoking, there have been many programs to encourage people to quit or never start smoking. But clearly, they’re not working.

Some of my friends who smoke say, “It’s my choice. Why do you care if I get cancer?” But smokers need to understand that they aren’t just harming themselves. They are impacting everyone around them, whether through second and thirdhand smoke or the costs to the healthcare system. Maybe knowing these things will change their attitudes and finally help them to stop smoking.