

8th GRADE WRITING PROMPT
ARGUMENTATIVE

Everyone knows that smoking cigarettes is bad, and a lot of people have found success by replacing the habit with e-cigarettes. Whether or not the method is completely safe is up in the air, even though it has helped people put down the actual cigarettes. After reading “Two Cheers for E-Cigarettes” and “L.A. Bans E-Cigarettes,” write an argumentative essay in which you argue for or against electronic cigarettes. Support your position with evidence from **both** passages and address both your position and the opposing argument.

Two Cheers for E-Cigarettes

By: Joe Nocera – New York Times

December 6, 2013

- 1 Imagine a product — a legal but lethal one — that kills 400,000 Americans a year. Public health advocates have been trying for decades to persuade Americans not to use it. The industry has been sued and sued again, but it is still operating profitably. One out of every five Americans is addicted to the product.
- 2 Now imagine that an alternative comes to the market, an innovative device that can help people wean themselves from the deadly product. It has the same look and feel as the lethal product; indeed, that’s a large part of its appeal. It, too, is addictive. But the ingredients that kill people are absent.
- 3 This, of course, is no imaginary scenario. The lethal product is cigarettes, which use nicotine to addict and combustible tobacco to kill. And the alternative is electronic cigarettes, which deliver nicotine without the tobacco, and emit a vapor that almost instantly evaporates. Yes, users can be hooked on nicotine, which is a stimulant. But people who “vape” are not going to die, at least not from inhaling their cigarette.
- 4 You’d think that the public health community would be cheering at the introduction of electronic cigarettes. We all know how hard it is to quit smoking. We also know that nicotine replacement therapies, like the patch, [haven’t worked especially well](#). The electronic cigarette is the first harm-reduction product to gain serious traction among American smokers.
- 5 Yet the public health community is not cheering. Far from it: groups like [the American Lung Association](#), [the American Heart Association](#) and [the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#) are united in their opposition to e-cigarettes. They want to see them stigmatized — like tobacco cigarettes. They want to see them regulated like cigarettes, too, which essentially means limited marketing and a ban on their use wherever tobacco cigarettes are banned.
- 6 Thomas Farley, New York City’s health commissioner trotted out most of the rationales against e-cigarettes the other day at [a City Council hearing](#). (The City Council is considering a bill, strongly supported by the Bloomberg administration, that would forbid the use of an e-cigarette anywhere that cigarettes are banned.) E-cigarettes, he said, “are so new we know very little about them.” Thanks to e-cigarettes, smoking is becoming glamorous again, and could become

socially acceptable. The number of high school students who have tried electronic cigarettes doubled from 2011 to 2012. He made a particular point of showing how closely e-cigarettes resembled old-fashioned tobacco cigarettes.

- 7 The reason to fear this resemblance, say opponents of electronic cigarettes, is that “vaping” could wind up acting as a gateway to smoking. Yet, so far, the evidence suggests just the opposite. Several recent studies have strongly suggested that the majority of e-cigarette users are [people who are trying to quit](#) their tobacco habit. The number of people who have done the opposite — gone from e-cigarettes to cigarettes — is minuscule. “What the data is showing is that virtually all the experimentation with e-cigarettes is happening among people who are already smokers,” says Michael Siegel, a professor at the Boston University School of Health.
- 8 Siegel is a fierce critic of tobacco companies, but he’s also not afraid to criticize the anti-tobacco advocates when they stretch the truth. When we got to talking about the opposition to e-cigarettes in the public health community, he said, “The antismoking movement is so opposed to the idea of smoking it has transcended the science, and become a moral crusade. I think there is an ideological mind-set in which anything that looks like smoking is bad. That mind-set has trounced the science.”
- 9 Another person who considers e-cigarettes promising is David Abrams, the executive director of the Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies. “It’s a disruptive technology,” he said, “that might give cigarettes a run for their money.” In his view, the anti-tobacco advocates had spent so many years arguing from “a total abstinence framework,” that they haven’t been able to move from that position. Yet, he noted, the country has long tolerated many similar harm reduction strategies, including needle exchanges and methadone maintenance.
- 10 None of this is to say that electronic cigarettes should be free of regulation. But they should be regulated for what they are — a pharmaceutical product that delivers nicotine, not a conduit for tobacco poison. Let them make health claims — which they can’t now do — so long as they are backed up with real science. And, most of all, use e-cigarettes to help make “real” cigarettes obsolete.
- 11 At that recent New York City Council meeting, one of the fiercest critics to testify was Kevin O’Flaherty of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “If it walks like a duck and it talks like a duck and it sounds like a duck and it looks like a duck, it is a duck,” he said.
- 12 Is this what passes for science when you oppose electronic cigarettes?

L.A. Bans E-Cigarettes in Parks, Restaurants and Workplaces

By: David Zahniser and Marisa Gerger, Los Angeles Times
March 14, 2014

- 13 E-cigarettes have been promoted as a safer alternative to cancer-causing tobacco products that can wean heavy smokers off their habit.
- 14 But on Tuesday, Los Angeles officials joined a growing list of cities that treat e-cigarettes just the same as regular cigarettes, banning their use in parks, restaurants and most workplaces.
- 15 The decision came after an impassioned and at times highly personal debate at the City Council that highlighted the backlash the smokeless cigarettes have generated as their popularity grows.
- 16 Critics warn that the electronic devices, which produce a nicotine-laced vapor inhaled by users, could pave the way for a resurgence in tobacco use among young adults.

17 Dr. Jonathan Fielding, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, said the growing acceptance of "vaping"— as e-cigarette use is known — threatens to undermine decades of public education efforts aimed at stigmatizing smoking. Other e-cigarette opponents said they do not want to risk the possibility that the secondhand vapor will be found to be harmful.

18 "We have a right to ... choose to breathe clean air," Councilwoman Nury Martinez told her colleagues. "And if this device turns out to be safe, then we can always undo the ordinance. But if this device proves not to be safe, we cannot undo the harm this will create on the public health."

19 Five states and the District of Columbia have already included e-cigarettes in anti-smoking bans or moved to restrict where they can be used. Last year, New York City passed an ordinance applying traditional anti-smoking rules to e-cigarettes and Chicago recently moved to prohibit vaping in bars, restaurants and most indoor public places.

20 The e-cigarette crackdown has come "much faster than what happened with smoke-free ordinances," said Tim McAfee, director of the federal Centers for Disease Control's Office on Smoking and Health, which has yet to release data on the potential harm of secondhand vapors.

21 Los Angeles' decision means that within weeks, e-cigarettes users will have to camp out with smokers relegated to sidewalks outside their jobs and smoking porches at bars and nightclubs. The devices will be permitted in vaping lounges, where customers can sample flavored e-cigarette liquids. But they will be outlawed in outdoor dining areas of restaurants and at city-sponsored farmers' markets.

22 Geraldine Monroy, who works at Downtown Vape, said she doesn't use e-cigarettes in restaurants out of respect for other customers. But she voiced dismay that vaping will be outlawed in bars.

23 If e-cigarette users are forced outside, "you leave your friends, you leave the excitement," she said. "Regulating them would take away a lot of the enjoyment we have in smoking them."

24 Cities are acting but, at the federal level, e-cigarettes are still treated far differently than tobacco products. Americans haven't seen a cigarette ad on TV for decades. But e-cigarette manufacturer NJOY — which hired lobbyists to influence the outcome of Tuesday's council vote has run spots during the Super Bowl, one of the most watched television events of the year.

25 "You know what the most amazing thing about this cigarette is?" says the narrator in one NJOY ad. "It isn't one."

26 That is the argument made by Jeff Stier, a senior fellow with the National Center for Public Policy Research, a conservative think tank focused on free market policies. The push by cities to restrict e-cigarettes limits access to an alternative to smoking — and could have the unintended effect of slowing progress on public efforts to combat harmful tobacco use, he said.

27 "Within a decade, e-cigarette sales will outpace cigarette sales," he said. "I think that's a victory for public health that we should not get in the way of."

28 The long-term health effect of vapor on those who are in close proximity to e-cigarette user's remains unclear. The lack of federal data on the question has given ammunition to supporters of e-cigarettes who assert that the council is acting prematurely.

29 Tuesday's City Hall debate quickly turned personal. Councilman Mitch O'Farrell, who pushed for the new restrictions, recalled his days breathing secondhand smoke as a waiter in a downtown restaurant. Martinez, who sided with O'Farrell, described her husband's unsuccessful battle to quit smoking.

30 Councilman Joe Buscaino led an unsuccessful attempt to exempt bars and nightclubs from the
ban, a measure sought by lobbyists for the e-cigarette industry. He too invoked a family member
while making his arguments.

31 E-cigarettes "are not tobacco," he said. "I don't think they should be regulated exactly the same
way. And I've heard from so many people, including my cousin Anthony, that they've stopped
smoking from the help of e-cigarettes."

32 Buscaino's bid to allow the devices in 21-and-older establishments was supported by five other
council members: Bob Blumenfield, Mitchell Englander, Felipe Fuentes, Curren Price and Paul
Krekorian.

33 But Council President Herb Wesson balked at the exemption, telling lawmakers that he has been
hooked on cigarettes for nearly 40 years—and will probably die because of them.

34 Calling himself "the council's No. 1 smoker." Wesson said he took up the habit as a 20-year old
factory worker because he wanted to be "cool."

35 "I'm telling you, the high percentage of kids that smoke, smoke because it's cool. And when
you're 15 you want to be cool," he said. "I will not support anything—anything that might
attract one new smoker."

36 Some council members expressed frustration at the lack of research on the effects of e-cigarette
vapor. Manuel Suarez, Jr. owner of Golden State Vape Shop, said fear about the devices is
based on misunderstanding.

37 "We cater to people who've been smoking for over 20 years," he said. "We're here to help
them quit."