

1. Review the facts in the teacher sheet **“Smoking and Cancer.”**
2. Tell students that 30% of cancer deaths are caused by smoking cigarettes and that if people stopped smoking today, thousands of lives would be saved.
3. Ask students, “If you were in a position to help people stop smoking or not to start, would you?” Say that today they’re going to practice doing that.
4. Distribute the work sheet, **“What Can You Say?”**
5. Have students select one situation and write a speech that persuades the person in the story to stop smoking.
6. Tell students to put themselves in the place of the person in the situation. Think about how the other person will react to it. They will need to be sincere, believable and successful. They may want to make an outline of their speech before writing.
7. If time allows, after students finish their speeches, have them deliver the speeches to the rest of the class.
8. Use the teacher sheet, **“Rubric for ‘What Can You Say?’ Speech,”** to assess students’ understanding.

Tobacco use, particularly cigarette smoking, is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. Cigarette smoking alone is directly responsible for approximately 30 percent of all cancer deaths annually in the United States. Cigarette smoking also causes chronic lung disease (emphysema and chronic bronchitis), cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cataracts. Smoking during pregnancy can cause stillbirth, low birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and other serious pregnancy complications. Quitting smoking greatly reduces a person's risk of developing the diseases mentioned and can limit adverse health effects on the developing child.

1. WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CIGARETTE SMOKING ON CANCER RATES?

Cigarette smoking causes 87 percent of lung cancer deaths. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in both men and women. Smoking is also responsible for most cancers of the larynx, oral cavity and pharynx, esophagus and bladder. In addition, it is a cause of kidney, pancreatic, cervical and stomach cancers, as well as acute myeloid leukemia.

2. ARE THERE ANY HEALTH RISKS FOR NONSMOKERS?

The health risks caused by cigarette smoking are not limited to smokers. Exposure to secondhand smoke, or environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), significantly increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease in nonsmokers, as well as several respiratory illnesses in young children. (Secondhand smoke is a combination of the smoke that is released from the end of a burning cigarette and the smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Institute of Environmental Health Science's National Toxicology Program and the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have all classified secondhand smoke as a known human carcinogen—a category reserved for agents for which there is sufficient scientific evidence that they cause cancer. The U.S. EPA has estimated that exposure to secondhand smoke causes about 3,000 lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers and is responsible for up to 300,000 cases of lower respiratory tract infections in children up to 18 months of age in the United States each year.

3. WHAT HARMFUL CHEMICALS ARE FOUND IN CIGARETTE SMOKE?

Cigarette smoke contains about 4,000 chemical agents, including over 60 carcinogens. In addition, many of these substances, such as carbon monoxide, tar, arsenic, and lead, are poisonous and toxic to the human body. Nicotine is a drug that is naturally present in the tobacco plant and is primarily responsible for a person's addiction to tobacco products, including cigarettes. During smoking, nicotine is absorbed quickly into the bloodstream and travels to the brain in a matter of seconds. Nicotine causes addiction to cigarettes and other tobacco products that is similar to the addiction produced by using heroin and cocaine.

4. HOW DOES EXPOSURE TO TOBACCO SMOKE AFFECT THE CIGARETTE SMOKER?

Smoking harms nearly every major organ of the body. The risk of developing smoking-related diseases, such as lung and other cancers, heart disease, stroke, and respiratory illnesses, increases with total lifetime exposure to cigarette smoke. This includes the number of cigarettes a person smokes each day, the intensity of smoking (i.e., the size and frequency of puffs), the age at which smoking began, the number of years a person has smoked, and a smoker's secondhand smoke exposure.

5. HOW WOULD QUITTING SMOKING AFFECT THE RISK OF DEVELOPING CANCER AND OTHER DISEASES?

Smoking cessation has major and immediate health benefits for men and women of all ages. Quitting smoking decreases the risk of lung and other cancers, heart attack, stroke and chronic lung disease. The earlier a person quits, the greater the health benefit. For example, research has shown that people who quit before age 50 reduce their risk of dying in the next 15 years by half compared with those who continue to smoke. Smoking low-yield cigarettes, as compared to cigarettes with higher tar and nicotine, provides no clear benefit to health.

—from the National Cancer Institute, cancer.gov

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ON WHICH TO WRITE A SPEECH:

You watch baseball on TV a lot, and you're getting sick of so many ballplayers chewing and spitting tobacco. Not only does it look disgusting, but you feel that it sets a terrible example for young people. You decide to write a letter to the Commissioner of Baseball telling him that he should ban chewing tobacco in the major leagues. You want to show him why it's in his own best interests to listen to your arguments. What can you say?

Your brother is now 17, and you see him lighting up a cigarette behind your house with some of his friends. You really don't want him to start smoking; you've heard how unhealthy tobacco is and how hard it is to quit. Those might be good arguments against smoking, but then again your brother might say, "Oh, that's just what they teach you in school; I know plenty of people who smoked and then quit." You want to be cool but still come across as caring. What can you say?

You've always been bothered that your favorite grocery store—the one that has the potato chips you really like—sells cigarettes. It's not that anyone under age buys them there; it's just that you don't understand why it's necessary to sell something that harms people. You want to tell the manager of the store, whom you know, not to sell cigarettes anymore, even if they make money for the store. You want to make a good, convincing case about why the manager should give up selling cigarettes. What can you say?

Your mother smokes. You've always hated it, but until now you never thought you could approach her about it. This entire weekend, though, you're going to be alone with her on a long drive into the country to visit some former neighbors who moved away. You don't want to ruin what could be a great weekend, and you've never had a really serious conversation with her before. But you're concerned about her health, as well as the health of everyone else in the house. You want her to quit, period. What can you say?

Rubric for "What Can You Say?" Speech

"NEEDLESS DEATHS"
TEACHER SHEET

If you wish, assign weight to each criterion. Determine what other criteria, if any, you want to use to assess students' speeches.

PURPOSE

Is the speech persuasive?

CREATIVITY

Does the speech take a novel approach to the issue?

CONTENT

Does the speech reflect accurate information?

MECHANICS

Does the writing follow rules of grammar and spelling?

REALITY

Does the speech reflect what someone might actually say?

FEELING

Does the speech reflect genuine emotions?

EXTRA

Is the speech written legibly? Does the speech reflect effort?