

The Speech Writer L O W L E V E L 4
A

He used to smoke didn't he?
A session for teens who want to quit smoking.

Speaker: A former student and ex-smoker

Audience: The intended audience is adolescents who smoke or are thinking about smoking. The audience already knows smoking is unhealthy. They are interested in the effects of smoking, and what others think on the topic.

Location: This speech will be delivered in the school gym – a location which seats several hundred people. The target audience, students, will be easily able to attend.

Time: 3:00-4:00

Refreshments will be provided.

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Smoking is disgusting! (*Emphasis*)

Did you know that there are more than 20 separate diseases that you can develop from smoking? This is because cigarettes contain more than 30 harmful chemicals that will enter your body. You don't even have to smoke for these chemicals to poison you; you just have to be around someone who does. That's pretty disgusting! (*emphasis*) Studies show that it can take just one cigarette to become addicted to smoking, and not be able to stop.

When you start to smoke you become addicted to a chemical called nicotine, which is in every cigarette. Smokers become addicted to nicotine just as fast as heroin addicts become addicted to heroin, or cocaine addicts become addicted to crack. At some point in time the nicotine in cigarettes will have an effect on the person smoking them. Nicotine can cause headaches (*touch head*), abdominal pain (*touch stomach*), diarrhea, sweating (*wipe forehead*), and nausea and vomiting. Nicotine overdose can have even more serious effects, like feeling dizzy, weakness and confusion, and low blood pressure; people might even go into convulsions, then fall into a coma.

When you start to smoke it is usually "just to try it" (*air quotes*). This of course does not seem harmful. But the nicotine from one cigarette will stimulate a rapid flow of signals in the brain that unleashes a craving for another, an unending cycle of addiction. After one has started to smoke, he or she will usually tell himself or herself "I am not addicted, I can quit whenever I want to" (*air quotes*). In most situations this is not the case. You tell yourself this because you actually believe it, but if you think about it, why would anyone smoke if they know it causes diseases, hurts other people, and it's disgusting? You

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become addicted (*in a rambling voice*). A smoker would tell you “because it feels good” (*air quotes*). That’s the nicotine talking: it feels good because you are addicted. So what you have just said is contradicting what you said before about not being addicted.

In every cigarette there are more than 30 poisonous chemicals. Some of these are alkaline, ammonia, arsenic, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, formaldehyde, nicotine, etc. To most of you these words are nothing but fancy terms for things that you have never heard of, which means they can’t be that bad. Well, I’ll explain some of them to you. Formaldehyde is something used to preserve dead bodies for certain purposes so they last and can’t rot. Most of you have in your homes a small box that beeps if it detects a certain chemical that causes massive headaches, or even death. That’s a carbon monoxide detector – just another one of the many chemicals that come from cigarettes. It can’t be harmful – only one of every two households has something to protect against it (*sarcastic tone*).

Nicotine is another chemical, as you know from before, that you become badly addicted to. There are over 10 carcinogens, which are cancer-causing chemicals, in cigarettes. There are over twenty diseases caused by smoking. Three main ones that affect your heart are coronary heart disease, Artherosclerosis, which are fat deposits in the arteries, and lastly Buerger’s disease, which leads to gangrene. There are twelve types of cancer you can develop from smoking, including lung, mouth, nose, throat, larynx, pancreas, bladder, stomach, kidney ... I could go on. You can also develop peptic ulcers, tobacco amblyopia, which is defective vision, bronchitis, and aneurysms (*emphasis*). In Australia, they counted how many organs were removed in one year because of cancers

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from smoking, and over 521 lungs have been removed, as well as 148 gullets, 71 tongues, 221 voice boxes, 82 stomachs, 40 pancreases, 68 wombs, 85 bladders, 115 kidneys, and 161 other miscellaneous body parts (*increase speed of speaking*). This is just something to think about next time you go to light up. Every cigarette is one step closer to having one of these body parts removed.

Financially, smoking is stupid. (*loud*)

If you smoke one pack of cigarettes a day for forty years of your life, you have spent about \$67,000 on cigarettes; this is enough to buy a new C6 Corvette. So maybe you don’t smoke that much. If you smoke ½ a pack of cigarettes a day you have still spent \$33,600 in 40 years. This is only half of the average American life (well, not if you smoke). Studies have been done, and in Australia, in one day school kids spend over \$82,000 a day on cigarettes. That’s thirty million dollars a year (*slow, emphasis*). One other thing that you have to look at is not only what it is costing you to smoke, but what it is costing the rest of us. Every year over 50 million dollars of our tax money is spent on smokers who are in the hospital. Our money is paying for their mistakes. It could be going to charity or helping people who have been born with a disease or for any better cause. Instead it’s for smokers who screwed up.

After hearing all of this information, you need to WAKE UP (*loud*) and realize that smoking is bad, nothing else. It harms your body, it harms the bodies of others, it’s a waste of time, a waste of your money, everyone else’s money, and it smells. Over 80% of smokers want to quit just do it, don’t think so much. Over 25% of smokers believe it is harmless. COME ON (*loud*). You have to be able to admit and commit to be able to

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quit. So you don't think you will die from smoking. That's a bonus, as long as you don't mind breathing through a tube in your throat. Why do we study history? The answer to that question is we study history to learn from our mistakes. So smokers, look at all the statistics, studies, and stories from the past and learn from them. Don't smoke (*emphasis*). All of the non-smokers pat yourselves on the back. You have passed the hardest part. You have been pressured to smoke or to continue smoking, but you didn't. Keep it that way because SMOKING IS DISGUSTING (*emphasis*).

What can YOU do?

First – don't start smoking. Discourage your younger brothers and sisters and their friends from starting to smoke – they look up to you.

If you smoke now, try to understand why you are smoking – are you already addicted? Does it relax you? Make you feel cool? Or is it just because your friends smoke? If you're a girl, maybe you smoke because it helps you stay thin. That's great as long as you don't mind bad breath, smelly clothes, and wrinkled skin. Whatever the reason, you need to understand why you smoke, so that you can change the behaviors that contribute to your addiction.

Ask your friends to support you, and not encourage you to smoke with them. If you smoke because you are stressed, start to work out instead. If you smoke at certain times or in certain situations, change those situations. Chew gum. Talk to your family doctor if you think you are already addicted.

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I hope that you think about this today and try to help yourself and help your friends. Wouldn't it great, if in 50 years – we ALL came back to our high school reunion? Don't be that one person who can't make it – the one person that the rest of us remember – “Did you hear about poor, yeah, he smoked didn't he”? (*talk as if you were someone else*)

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Bibliography

1. <http://www.nhma.org.au>
2. <http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk>
3. Hamilton Spectator, 08/05/02. Front page.

Teacher's Notes**Knowledge/Understanding**

- The student demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the facts surrounding the chosen issue. The student gives evidence of a clear understanding of the causes and the nature of smoking addiction (e.g., “the nicotine from one cigarette will stimulate a rapid flow of signals in the brain that unleashes a craving for another, an unending cycle of addiction”; “That’s the nicotine talking: it feels good because you are addicted”). The toxic chemicals in cigarettes, the damaging effects of smoking on health, and the financial costs of smoking are described in some detail.

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student supports the perspective taken using ideas that are of considerable relevance to the purpose and audience. To support the position that students should quit smoking, the student builds up evidence to prove the opening statement that “Smoking is disgusting”, providing numerous, often graphic, details about the toxicity of the chemicals in cigarettes, the kinds of diseases smoking can cause, and the economic wastefulness of smoking. The student effectively summarizes the argument in an admonition to students to recognize the full impact of the effects of smoking: “It harms your body, it harms the bodies of others, it’s a waste of time, a waste of your money, everyone else’s money, and it smells”. The use of Australian data detracts somewhat from the relevance of the information for the audience of Canadian teens.

Communication

- The student organizes information and ideas with considerable appropriateness. The student provides an engaging introduction that starts with an emphatic statement and a provocative question (i.e., “Smoking is disgusting! Did you know that there are more than 20 separate diseases that you can develop from smoking?”). The student organizes his or her material in an introduction, body, and conclusion, but tends to repeat information unnecessarily (e.g., makes references to nicotine in paragraphs 4 and 5, after

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having focused on it in paragraphs 2 and 3) and introduces some information about addiction and the effects of smoking too late in the speech (e.g., “as long as you don’t mind bad breath, smelly clothes, and wrinkled skin”).

- The student uses language and a voice that are highly appropriate. The student establishes and maintains a tone of conviction and of determination to make an impact on his or her audience throughout the speech. In a manner fully appropriate to the persona of a former student trying to discourage adolescents from smoking, the speaker appeals to the audience directly and forcefully (e.g., “WAKE UP”; “Discourage your younger brothers and sisters and their friends from starting to smoke – they look up to you”). The student uses casual language to connect with the audience (e.g., “That’s pretty disgusting!”), but uses and explains appropriate technical terms when imparting information (e.g., “carcinogens, which are cancer-causing chemicals”).

Application

- The student uses oral presentation techniques with a high degree of effectiveness. Among the techniques used are rhetorical questions, emphatic statements, shocking facts and graphic information (e.g., the tally of organs removed in a year), sarcasm (e.g., “So you don’t think you will die from smoking. That’s a bonus, as long as you don’t mind breathing through a tube in your throat”), repetition (e.g., of the statement “Smoking is disgusting!”), and a scenario (i.e., the person missing at the high school reunion).
- The student builds in speaker notes with a high degree of effectiveness, covering tone of voice, pacing, body language, and emphasis, and providing direction in appropriate places in the speech.
- The student predicts resolutions to the issue that are highly realistic and effective (e.g., recommends that students examine their motivations for smoking, enlist the help of friends to stop smoking, disrupt routines, and discourage younger people from starting to smoke).

Comments

This work is representative of a low level-4 performance. The student demonstrates a high degree of achievement of the expectations in the Knowledge/Understanding and Application categories of knowledge and skills, as well as in the second criterion in the Communication category. However, in the Thinking/Inquiry category and in the first Communication criterion, the student demonstrates a considerable degree of achievement – i.e., achievement that is more characteristic of level 3.

The result is a very effective speech on the effects of smoking that relies a little too heavily on research findings from a non-Canadian source.

Next Steps

In order to improve his or her performance, the student needs to:

- research North American sources to provide information more relevant to Canadian teens;
- review the speech to improve the organization of information;
- proofread to correct occasional errors in spelling (e.g., “Artherosclerosis” should be “atherosclerosis”) and grammar (e.g., “That’s a carbon monoxide detector, – just another one of many chemicals ...”), as well as careless errors (e.g., “Over 80% of smokers want to quit just do it, ...”; “Wouldn’t it great ...”).