E-Cigarettes: What You Need to Know

Electronic cigarettes—which deliver nicotine (a highly addictive drug) without smoking—have emerged in the past decade as a popular alternative to tobacco cigarettes. They may offer benefits to some smokers already addicted to nicotine. However, e-cigarettes also deliver a set of risks and unknowns—especially for teens. In fact, recent research suggests a link between teen use of e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes. We urge you to share this timely article with your students.

Critical-Thinking Questions:

**Grades 6–8:**
- a. How are e-cigarettes similar to tobacco cigarettes, and how are they different?
- b. What are some of the risks of e-cigarettes to teens?

**Grades 9–10:**
- a. Compare and contrast e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes.
- b. How might e-cigarettes negatively affect teens?

**Grades 11–12:**
- a. Analyze the ways in which e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes differ, as well as the traits they share.
- b. Articulate the risks e-cigarettes pose to teens.

Writing Prompts:
Instruct students to use evidence from the article in their responses to the writing prompts.

- **Grades 6–8:** Why is it important for scientists to research e-cigarettes?
- **Grades 9–10:** Should e-cigarettes be illegal for teens?
- **Grades 11–12:** Evaluate the appropriateness of laws that mandate that e-cigarette users be at least 18, and discuss how scientists might aid lawmakers in setting policy.

Paired Reading:

- **Grades 6–12:** “The Deadly Effects of Tobacco Addiction,” headsup.scholastic.com/articles/deadly-effects-of-tobacco-addiction
- **Grades 6–12:** “The Science of Nicotine Addiction,” headsup.scholastic.com/articles/the-science-of-nicotine-addiction
- **Grades 6–12:** “Marijuana: Breaking Down the Buzz,” scholastic.com/headsup/breaking-down-marijuana/article

Additional Sources:

- **Video:** “NIDA TV Spotlight on Electronic Cigarettes,” www.drugabuse.gov/e-cigarette-tv
- **Website:** “Drug Facts: Electronic Cigarettes,” www.drugabuse.gov/e-cigarette-facts
- **Website:** “Electronic Cigarettes (e-Cigarettes),” fda.gov/newsevents/publichealthfocus/ucm172906.htm

**STUDENT WORK SHEET:** The work sheet takes the form of a media literacy evaluation, encouraging students to analyze strategies used in marketing e-cigarettes and how they might influence teens, reinforcing and expanding on the article. Additional critical-thinking questions help students evaluate the information contained in ads.
E-Cigarettes: Behind the Marketing

You may have noticed that marketing for e-cigarettes seems to be more common than advertising for tobacco cigarettes. That’s because many types of ads for tobacco products are banned, but e-cigarettes don’t yet fall under the same rules. Marketers for e-cigarettes may use sophisticated tactics to grab viewers’ attention and transmit obvious and not-so-obvious messages.

Below are some features you may see used in e-cigarette ads. Analyze each feature and answer the questions that follow.

Think It Through (Write your answers on a separate piece of paper.)

Use information from the images above and the article “E-Cigarettes: What You Need to Know” in your responses.

1. **a.** Overall, what messages about e-cigarettes do the advertising features above imply?
   
   **b.** How could these messages be dangerous for teens?
   
   **c.** How can teens protect themselves from being influenced by messages that may be dangerous?

2. Why might e-cigarette ads be an unreliable source of information about health and safety?

3. Tobacco advertisements are required by law to contain a warning regarding harmful health effects.
   
   **a.** What information could be useful to include in a warning on an e-cigarette ad?
   
   **b.** In your opinion, should the rules about cigarette advertising also apply to e-cigarettes? Why or why not?