

9th grade English
Research Report/Expository Essay Unit
2006-2007

Aya Allen
The Effects of Marijuana
Grade 9
2 weeks

Overview of unit: This unit is a response to a non-fiction article. Students will read an article about the effects of Marijuana on teens and write an expository essay that reports some of these effects. Students will use the article as their only source. This unit is designed to help students form an idea of the basic structure of an expository essay without given them the challenge of also having to collect, analyze, and interpret many sources.

Essential question(s): What are the effects of Marijuana on teens?

Connection to these standards:

Writing Applications - 1,500 words or more

2.3 Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports:

- a. Marshal evidence in support of a thesis and related claims, including information on all relevant perspectives.
- b. Convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently.
- c. Make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts, and ideas.
- d. Include visual aids by employing appropriate technology to organize and record information on charts, maps, and graphs.
- e. Anticipate and address readers' potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.
- f. Use technical terms and notations accurately.

Writing Strategies

Students write coherent and focused essays that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

1.1 Establish a controlling impression or **coherent thesis** that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a **consistent tone** and **focus** throughout the piece of writing.

1.2 Use **precise language**, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.

- 1.3 Use **clear research questions** and suitable research methods (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- 1.4 Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting **evidence** (e.g., scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, definitions).
- 1.5 Synthesize information from **multiple sources** and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g., almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).
- 1.6 **Integrate quotations and citations** into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.
- 1.7 Use appropriate **conventions** for documentation in the text, notes, and bibliographies by adhering to those in style manuals (e.g., *Modern Language Association Handbook*, *The Chicago Manual of Style*).
- 1.8 Design and publish documents by using advanced publishing software and graphic programs.
- 1.9 **Revise** writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective, the precision of word choice, and the tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context.

Unit or lesson plan content:

Overview Calendar:

Day 1: -review concrete detail and commentary	Day 2: -read "Marijuana and Teens" -practice writing concrete detail	Day 3: -review thesis -develop thesis	Day 4: -reread article -gather concrete details	Day 5: -review commentary -practice writing commentary
Day 6: -essay structure -begin outline	Day 7: -continue outline	Day 8: -finish outline -essay example	Day 9: -begin first draft -conferencing	Day 10: -finish first draft -conferencing

Daily Lesson Plans:

Day 1:

Objective: Students will be able to define concrete detail and commentary. Also, students will be able to understand CD and CM's purpose in writing.

Materials needed: overhead projector, notes for concrete details and commentary written on transparencies, index cards.

Lesson Steps:

1. Project notes for concrete detail and commentary. Have students copy it in their binders.
2. Go over each term, calling on students to read a section to the rest of the class. Answer any clarifying questions.
3. Pass out nine index cards (or cut up pieces of paper) to each student. Have students write words on front and definitions on back of newly learned terms, e.g. front-"concrete detail," back-"information from a source."
4. Have students get into groups of four. Demonstrate how to study (read definitions, say it out loud, turn it away and try to recall it). Have students study and quiz each other in groups. Tell students they must know these definitions by tomorrow.

Day 2:

Objective: Students will be able to define concrete detail and write concrete details in several ways.

Materials: Overhead projector, transparency of concrete details from "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet," class set of "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet."

Lesson Steps:

1. Give students a short quiz on concrete details in which they must define the term and list the types reviewed in class (optional).
2. Have students switch papers and go over terms by calling on students to give answers. Have students pass quizzes back and correct their mistakes.
3. Pass out "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet." Read aloud (teacher read, pop-corn, call on students)
4. Explain to students that everything on the sheet is a concrete detail.
5. Show students the concrete detail from the sheet written in four different ways (quotation, paraphrase, example, statement of fact). Go over each one, showing how they are similar and different.
6. Have students choose a different fact and as a class, write it in four different ways.
7. Have students choose their own and write it in four different ways.

Day 3:

Objective: Students will be able define thesis and choose a thesis that they will write about.

Materials needed: Overhead projector, notes on transparency for thesis, "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet."

Lesson Steps:

1. Project notes for thesis on overhead projector. Have students copy it in their binders.
2. Go over definition, calling on students to read a section to the rest of the class. Answer any clarifying questions.
3. Write for students two theses that can be used to answer the prompt: What are the effects of Marijuana on teens? Each thesis should correspond with a section of the article (see example thesis for more details).
4. As a class, have the students come up with three more theses. Write these on the overhead projector. Have each student write them down.
5. Go over what effects of marijuana can be discussed for each thesis. Have students choose one thesis to use as their own.

Day 4:

Objective: Students will be able to collect data needed from an article to use in an essay.

Materials Needed: Overhead projector, class set of article "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet"

Lesson Steps:

1. Explain to students that now that they have chosen a thesis, they need to collect information from a source that will back up their claim (or prove their thesis).
2. Have students rewrite their thesis they chose the day before.
3. Reread the "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet" aloud as a class. Stop at the end of each section to point out information that can be used for each thesis written down the day before.
4. Write an example thesis on the overhead. Write down one concrete detail from the article that backs up the thesis.

5. As a class, have students come up with two more concrete details that can back up the thesis.
6. Have students find three concrete details that will back up their own thesis.
7. Remind students of what commentary is and tell them that they will need to know it for the next day.

Day 5:

Objective: Students will be able to define commentary and write commentary in different ways.

Materials Needed: Overhead projector, transparency of example commentary written for concrete details from "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet," class set of "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet"

Lesson Steps:

1. Give students a short quiz on commentary in which they must define the term and list the types reviewed in class (optional).
2. Have students switch papers and go over terms by calling on students to give answers. Have students pass quizzes back and correct their mistakes. Explain to students that everything on the sheet is a concrete detail.
3. Show students the commentary overhead for concrete detail from the article written in three different ways (explanation, opinion, inference). Go over each one, showing how they are similar and different.
4. Have students choose a different fact and as a class, write commentary in three different ways.
5. Have students choose one of their concrete details chosen the day before and write a commentary in three different ways.

Day 6:

Objective: Students will be able to identify the structure of an essay and use a guided outline to plan their essay.

Materials Needed: Overhead projector, notes on the structure of an essay, copies of the guided outline.

Lesson Steps:

1. Project notes for essay structure. Have students copy it in their binders.
2. Go over each term, calling on students to read a section to the rest of the class. Answer any clarifying questions.
3. Project guided outline. As a class fill in the outline with information that was decided on as a class (thesis, concrete details, commentary).
4. Pass out copies of the outline. Have students fill in their outline with information that they decided on own their own.

Day 7:

Objective: Students will be able to use a guided outline to help plan their essay.

Materials Needed: copies of guided outline

Lesson Steps:

1. Allow students time in class to finish completing their outline
2. Walk around to check outlines and help students individually.

Day 8:

Objective: Students will be able to identify essay structure in a sample essay

Materials Needed: Overhead projector, overhead markers in four different colors, highlighters in the same four colors, transparency of sample essay, copies of sample essay for students.

Lesson Steps:

1. Establish which color marker will be used to identify a different part of the essay. Ex: blue-topic sentence, green-concrete detail, red/pink- commentary, yellow- thesis. Write this color code on the board for students.
2. Go over with the class what each color stands for. Tell students that you will read a sample essay and identify these four things in the essay.

3. Read the sample essay aloud to the class (teacher read, pop-corn, call on students, etc.). Read it all the way through.
4. Go back and reread the essay stopping after each paragraph to give students time to identify the thesis first, then the topic sentence, concrete detail, and commentary for each additional paragraph. Identify additional concrete details and commentary that is used in the introduction and conclusion.
5. Explain to students that their essay should have a similar format (similar color shading) as the sample essay.

Day 9:

Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay using a guided outline and example essay.

Materials Needed: Sample essays

Lesson Steps:

1. Quickly review the structure of the essay and tell students that they will write an essay that includes these elements (introduction, thesis, body paragraphs with concrete detail and commentary, and conclusion). Tell students that their essay will use the information written on their guided outline.
2. As students write their essay in class, walk around to check progress, answer questions, and meet with students individually about their writing.

Day 10:

Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay using a guided outline and example essay.

Materials Needed: Example Essay

Lesson Steps:

1. Have students continue working on essay (should be completed today).
2. Continue to walk around and help students individually.

Concluding assignment: Students will write an expository essay that answers the prompt: What are the effects of marijuana on teens?

Evaluation: 4-point holistic

Student work: Cannot reproduce electronically

Teacher commentary and reflection:

Since students work at different pace, this lesson requires the teacher to judge when the majority of students have completed each task before moving on to the next. Some students will finish early so students will need to be told what they can do while they wait for other students. Also, students who take longer to complete task can either be given less task (two concrete details instead of three) or asked to move on and can return to it during the writing process when the teacher has time to meet with them individually.

In addition, during the writing process, student needs can be overwhelming because in a large class there will be many students who need individual help. I create board space where students can sign up for help. I have two list: students who need help right away (cannot write a thing without speaking to me), and students who need guidance (can begin the work but wants to check with teacher to make sure they are doing it correctly). This way I can prioritize which students to see first.

Resources used to develop lessons and activities:

- Marijuana and Teens article
- Sample Essay
- Jane Shaffer's definitions of concrete detail and commentary
- Kate Kinsella's list of transition words and phrase

Concrete detail and commentary definitions

Concrete Detail- description of facts from a piece of literature or other source

What can be used as a concrete detail?

- Quotations (words from a book, article, etc.)
- Examples (a specific description of something that happened in real life)
- Paraphrase (description of a specific event that takes place in literature)
- Facts (something that is known by everyone to be true and can be proven)

Commentary- Explanation of the concrete detail

What can be used as commentary?

- Reflection/Opinion (feelings, emotions, what you've learned, why this happened)
- Explanation (give definition, tell the meaning of the concrete detail)
- Inferences (What you think the authors meaning is, what the author implies)

Quotation

Teens who had parents who disapproved of marijuana use "only 5.5 percent had used marijuana in the past month."

Paraphrase

Teens with parents who disapprove of marijuana use were only a small number that use marijuana in that past month.

Example

Teens are less likely to use marijuana if their parents disapprove. For example, only 5.5 percent used it in the past month.

Fact/Evidence

5.5 percent of teens with parents who disapprove of marijuana used it in the past month.

Commentary Examples

Of teens who had parents who disapproved of marijuana use "only 5.5 percent had used marijuana in the past month." The small number of users demonstrates that teens are less likely to use marijuana if their parents do not want them to.

Of teens who had parents who disapproved of marijuana use "5.5 percent had used marijuana in the past month." Most teens probably didn't want to disappoint their parents. I wouldn't use marijuana either because I wouldn't want my parents to be upset at me.

Of teens who had parents who disapproved of marijuana use "5.5 percent had used marijuana in the past month." If more parents would express their disapproval of marijuana, less teens will use it. Parents can have a great influence on teens.

Thesis:

- Controlling idea
- Main topic of essay
- Point you are trying to prove
- An opinion based on research
- An argument to prove

Example Thesis:

Your thesis should have an assumption and a reason.

Something is _____ because _____

Marijuana is bad for teens because it is addictive.

Marijuana is

Marijuana is

Marijuana is

Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Fill in the information for each section of the outline.

I. Introduction- Your introduction should explain why this information is important for people to read.

A. Topic Sentence- Start your essay with a sentence that explains what you are going to talk about. (hint: the topic is marijuana)

B. Problem– fill in reasons why smoking marijuana is a problem, think about who uses it and how it affects them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. Thesis Statement – Write your opinion Statement about marijuana.

II. 1st Body Paragraph

A. Topic Sentence- Write a sentence describing your 1st concrete detail in your own words.

B. Concrete Detail.

C. Commentary for concrete detail: How does this prove your opinion?

III. 2nd Body Paragraph

A. Topic Sentence- Write a sentence describing your 2nd concrete detail.

B. Concrete Detail.

C. Commentary for concrete detail: How does this prove your opinion?

IV. 3rd Body Paragraph

A. Topic Sentence- Write a sentence describing your 3rd concrete detail.

B. Concrete detail.

C. Commentary for concrete detail: How does this prove your opinion?

V. Conclusion

A. Restate thesis or opinion (using different words)

B. Sum up the problem you discussed in your body paragraphs.

C. State Significance: Why is this something that people should do with this information? Why is it important?

The Effects of Marijuana on Learning

Marijuana use is on the rise among teens. In the past few years, marijuana use of eighth graders rose from one in ten to one in five ("Marijuana and Teens"). More than half of all marijuana users are teenagers ("Marijuana and Teens"). With so many adolescent marijuana smokers, there is a need to inform them about the negative affects that it could cause. Marijuana affects performance in school. Doing well in school can ensure job stability and set a foundation for higher education. When students smoke marijuana, it could possibly keep them from getting a good education. This problem affects the 67% of marijuana users that are teens. Marijuana is bad for teens because it negatively affects learning and academic achievement.

Students who smoke marijuana are "more than twice as likely to cut class than those who do not smoke" ("Marijuana and Teens"). In other words, when a student smokes marijuana, he or she has more of a chance of deciding to not go to class than a student who doesn't smoke. Part of the students' academic grade comes from going to class regularly. When students miss school, they do not learn the material that was taught that day. If students miss class time after time, they will miss a lot of material that was taught throughout the year. Also, smoking marijuana could lead to health problems can keep students from coming to school ("Marijuana and Teens"). Absences like this, as a result of marijuana use, will cause students' grades to lower because they are missing valuable instruction time.

Even if students who smoke come to class, smoking can still have a negative affect on the students' learning. According to "Marijuana and Teens: Fact Sheet" smoking can "impair the ability of young people to concentrate and retain information". This means that if a teacher is speaking, the students who smoked marijuana will have a more difficult time paying attention. Furthermore, if that student does listen and gain some information, he or she will have a difficult time keeping that information in their head or remembering it. This will make doing well on a test challenging, which takes concentration and retention of information that marijuana hinders.

In addition to marijuana affecting students' access to academic material, it also affects students' understanding of academic concepts. This is because smoking marijuana "has been shown to be associated with cognitive deficits" ("Marijuana and teens"). A cognitive deficit is when the mind is unable to think and doesn't make connections. So, information does not make sense. Therefore, if a student who is under the influence of marijuana is given new material to learn, he or she will be unable to process the lesson and figure out what it is that he or she is learning.

Example Essay

Marijuana has so many negative effects on learning that it is a major setback for teenagers who smoke it. It affects students' attendance to school by making students ill more often and giving students a reason to cut class. It also affects how well students pay attention in class. Most importantly, marijuana use impairs students' ability to understand new things that are required for learning. Overall, marijuana is very bad for teens that need to and should try to do well in school. Teenagers should consider the effects that marijuana has on learning and use it as motivation to stay away from it. For better academic success, smoking marijuana is a bad idea.