

Student Sample: Grade 6, Argument

This argument was written as homework after a class in which grade 6 students viewed a movie titled *Benchwarmers* and discussed how movie writers and producers promote smoking. The letter is addressed to the producer of a film in which smoking appears.

Dear Mr. Sandler,

Did you know that every cigarette a person smokes takes seven minutes off their life? I mentioned this because I just watched the movie, *Benchwarmers*, and I noticed that Carlos smoked. Why did you feel the need to have one of the characters smoke? Did you think that would make him look cool? Did you think that would make him look older? It did neither of those things. As a matter of fact, I think it made him look stupid and not very cool. Especially when he put out a cigarette on his tongue.

If I were producing a movie, I would want my characters to be strong, healthy and smart. I would not have any smokers in my movies for many reasons. The first reason is it sets a bad example for children. An estimated 450,000 Americans die each year from tobacco related disease. In fact, tobacco use causes many different types of cancers such as lung, throat, mouth, and tongue. Another reason not to promote smoking is it ages and wrinkles your skin. Who wants to look 75 if you are only 60? It turns your teeth yellow and may lead to gum disease and tooth decay. Lastly, smoking is a very expensive habit. A heavy smoker spends thousands of dollars a year on cigarettes. I can think of better things to spend money on.

So Mr. Sandler, I urge you to take smoking out of all future movies you produce. Instead of having your characters smoke have them do healthy things. That will set a positive influence for children instead of poisoning their minds. Thanks for reading my letter. I hope you agree with my opinion.

Sincerely, _____

P.S. I love your Chanukah song.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a claim.**
 - *I would not have any smokers in my movies for many reasons.*
- **organizes the reasons and evidence clearly.**
 - *The first reason is it sets a bad example for children.*
 - *Another reason not to promote smoking is it ages and wrinkles your skin.*
 - *It turns your teeth yellow and may lead to gum disease and tooth decay.*
- **supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic.**
 - *Lastly, smoking is a very expensive habit. A heavy smoker spends thousands of dollars a year on cigarettes.*
- **uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationship between the claim and reasons.**
 - *The first reason . . . Another reason . . . Lastly . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style (except for the postscript).**
 - *Dear Mr. Sandler . . . Thanks for reading my letter. I hope you agree with my opinion . . . Sincerely . . .*
- **provides a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented.**

- *Instead of having your characters smoke have them do healthy things. That will set a positive influence for children instead of poisoning their minds.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**