

# ESCAPE THE EXPERIMENT

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use the following questions to help generate discussion and consolidate student learning upon completing the in-person Escape the Experiment game. Most answers are covered in the game or build on information provided in the grade 7 & 8 lesson plans. We also encourage you to explore [NotAnExperiment.ca](http://NotAnExperiment.ca) with students.

Discussion Questions:

1. Are the below statements True or False? (*Key messages from the game*)
    - Vaping has long-term health effects.
    - E-liquid contains nicotine which is highly addictive.
    - Nicotine can change the teenage brain and affect memory and concentration.
    - If you vape you may be more likely to start smoking cigarettes.
    - Vaping can make feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression worse.
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2. One of the game's key messages is that vaping has long-term health effects. What are some of these health effects?

Possible answers might include:

- Vape aerosol contains small particles and chemicals that can damage the lungs.
- Nicotine affects the cardiovascular system by constricting blood vessels. This raises blood pressure, which is hard on your heart.
- Nicotine changes how the teenage brain develops.
- High levels of nicotine in e-liquids can increase the risk of nicotine poisoning.

\*\*Check out [NotAnExperiment.ca/Health Effects](http://NotAnExperiment.ca/Health_Effects) for more information.

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3. The game taught us that the nicotine in vapes is highly addictive. What do you know about nicotine addiction?

- Vaping nicotine causes the brain to release dopamine (a feel-good chemical).
- The more you vape, the more your brain becomes used to the nicotine. This means you'll need more to get the same effect which can lead to nicotine addiction.
- Some feelings and side effects of addiction include:
  - Feeling a strong urge to vape.
  - Feeling mad, experiencing headaches or restlessness when you can't vape.
  - Trouble focusing and remembering things.
  - Having a hard time sleeping or waking up in the night to vape.
  - Constantly thinking about vaping.
  - Using vaping to cope with other things like stressful situations or thinking you need it to calm down.
  - Relying on vaping to relax.
  - Choosing vaping over other activities you enjoy.

\*\*Check out [NotAnExperiment.ca/quitting](https://NotAnExperiment.ca/quitting) for quit information and support.

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4. Do you think vaping increases the chances that that person will start smoking?

Answer: Yes, someone is 3-4 times more likely to start smoking cigarettes if they vape.

Probe: *What are your ideas about why this is true?*

- Nicotine is nicotine, whether it's from a vape or a cigarette.
  - Once a person is addicted to nicotine from vaping, the urge to get more nicotine can become very strong.
  - Withdrawal symptoms don't feel good, so the person is motivated to make them go away by getting more nicotine, even if it means using cigarettes.
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5. Before this activity, did you know vaping can make some feelings worse instead of better. What feelings does vaping make worse?
- Nicotine causes the body to release the same hormones that are released when you naturally feel stress.
  - Having stress hormones released every time you vape (several times a day or hour) can cause the same health problems that come from unmanaged stress (low mood, headaches, sleep problems etc.).
  - Once addicted to nicotine, your brain will go through withdrawal whenever it isn't getting enough which also causes feelings of stress.

*Probe: Does this surprise you? Do you think your friends understand how vaping affects mental health?*

\*\*Check out [NotAnExperiment.ca/Mental Health](https://NotAnExperiment.ca/MentalHealth) for more information.

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6. Other than using fruit and candy flavoured e-liquid like we learned in the game, what are ways the industry makes e-cigarettes (vapes) appealing to youth?
- Ads that make vaping look fun and harmless.
  - Bright colours and fun looking labels.
  - Cartoon characters or animals.
  - Youth friendly advertising shows young, healthy people having fun.
  - Celebrity endorsements and influencers on social media.
  - Making products that are techy and sleek looking.

*Probe: How do you feel about the fact that the industry targets youth with their marketing?*

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If time permits, the following questions can be used to further explore industry marketing tactics and some of the laws surrounding vaping.

1. Why do you think tobacco companies became interested in e-cigarette companies and continue to design new nicotine products?

- Many e-cigarette companies such as Juul, have been bought by cigarette companies.
  - Many cigarette companies are also making their own brand of e-cigarettes (e.g. Vuse, NJOY).
  - Tobacco companies are losing money because people understand the dangers of smoking.
  - With less people smoking, tobacco companies are losing customers and money, so they are looking for new customers and ways to continue to make money.
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2. How much nicotine is in a vape?

- A legal vape in Canada has 20 mg/mL of nicotine. The amount of nicotine absorbed when vaping varies however...
- Vapes that hold 2 mL of e-liquid with 20 mg/mL of nicotine give about the same amount of nicotine as smoking 40 cigarettes.
- Devices that hold more than 2 mL of e-liquid can deliver as much nicotine as smoking 300 cigarettes.
- E-liquids with illegal amounts of nicotine (upwards of 50 mg/mL) used in vapes with large tanks can deliver as much nicotine as smoking 500 cigarettes.

*Probe: Why do you think the industry makes vape products with such high levels of nicotine?*

- Nicotine is addictive.
  - The industry needs people to get addicted whether it's from a cigarette or from an e-cigarette, so that people will continue to buy their products.
  - The industry isn't concerned about people's health or if their products are safe; they are concerned about their profits and creating products they can convince people to buy.
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3. What could happen if you share a vape with someone under 19?
- It is against the law to share, sell or give anyone tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or e-liquid to anyone under 19.
  - This includes underage friends sharing or parents giving products to their kids.
  - Breaking this law could result in being fined \$490.00
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4. Where can you vape at school?
- You can't use vape products inside or outside within 20m of school property.
  - This law is in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - People can be fined \$305.00 for vaping on school property.

Probe: *Why do you think it's illegal to vape on school property?*

- To protect the health of everyone.
  - Secondhand vapour is not harmless. It contains nicotine and other toxic particles.
  - For people trying to quit, seeing others vape can make them want to vape too.
  - To let people know vaping is harmful and that not everyone is doing it. It's a drug addiction.
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5. After all we've talked about today, do you think using nicotine products like vapes is harmless?
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