

Course: Chemistry	Grade Level: 10 and 11
Type: Argumentative	Structure: Analysis
Teaching Task 2: Should energy drink purchase and consumption be regulated by government agencies? After reading a selection of texts provided by the teacher, write a persuasive letter to an FDA regulator that addresses the question, using evidence from the texts to support your opinion. L2 Be sure to acknowledge opposing views concerning the need for regulation. L3 Give examples from past or current products that the FDA has regulated and those it appears not to regulate.	
Performance Level: Meets Expectations	

FDA

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To whom it may concern,

After reading through the articles addressing the health affects of energy drinks, I have come to the conclusion that the purchase and consumption of said beverages should be regulated. I took both the pros and cons of energy drinks into consideration, but the con side overwhelmingly outweighed the few positives. One of the views concerning the need for regulation pertains to the lack of age restrictions when buying energy drinks. Also the ingredients in these drinks may have adverse affects on those who decide to drink them. The FDA regulates medication, artificial sweetener, and even soda so why shouldn't there be limitations on energy drinks?

The fact that children have easy accessibility to such high dosages of sugar and caffeine is frightening: "According to the review, self-report surveys indicate that energy drinks are regularly consumed by 30% to 50% of children, adolescents, and young adults" (Hitt). Companies are marketing their products towards the younger generation. The drinks are packaged in bright and enticing cans that appeal to children or teenagers. Though there is a warning label printed on the can, most people fail to read or recognize the danger that energy drinks can have. The warning label is simply not enough: "In mid-March, four middle school students in Broward Country, Fla., were taken to the hospital via ambulance with their hearts racking and their bodies dripping with sweat after consuming energy drinks" (Rohrig). If there had been an age restriction, these children could have spared a trip to the ER. "In adolescents, caffeine consumption has been associated with an increase in blood pressure. It is not recommended that children or adolescents consume energy drinks" many doctors have strongly advised for young children not to intake foods or beverages with high caffeine, yet there's still no restriction prohibiting them from purchasing energy drinks.

Energy drinks contain harmful ingredients that pose as a risk for the people who consume them. Red bull has made claims to “vitalize the body, and the mind, increase performance, increase concentration and reaction speed, improve vigilance, improve emotional status and stimulate metabolism” (Ayala). Scientists have yet to find any evidence that backs up these promises, but they have found evidence that shows the dangerous nature of energy drinks. Energy drinks have as much as 400mg of caffeine, and they also have additional sugars. Caffeine is shown to have a negative effect as it may increase blood pressure and disturb sleep. It also causes headaches, and interferes with calcium absorption. Because energy drinks are classified as “dietary supplements,” they surpass the usual FDA regulations: “dietary supplements require no testing, warning levels or restrictions” (Ayala).

Energy drinks serve as a potential threat to the younger generation. If “energy” is what people are truly seeking then they should resort to a healthy diet, and good sleep. The combination of sugar and caffeine will only have a detrimental effect on your body in the long run. The FDA should start regulating the consumption and purchase of energy drinks to protect the younger generation.

Sincerely,

High School Student

Annotation		
Focus	3.5	The letter addresses all aspects of the prompt. The writer addresses the prompt by effectively arguing that the ingredients in energy drinks “ <i>may have adverse affects on those who decide to drink them.</i> ” The writer maintains focus throughout the paper; however, the argument lacks the strength of details and powerful language.
Reading/Research	3	The writer provides detailed explanations and examples to validate the writer’s argument: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>In mid-March, four middle school students in Broward County, Fla., were taken to the hospital via ambulance with their hearts racing and their bodies dripping with sweat after consuming energy drinks.</i>” • <i>Energy drinks have as much as 400mg of caffeine, and they also have additional sugars.</i>
Controlling Idea	3	The writer’s thesis is stated clearly: <i>the purchase and consumption of [energy drinks] should be regulated; the ingredients in these drinks may have adverse affects on those who decide to drink them.</i> With each successive paragraph, the writer continues to strengthen the thesis: <i>Energy drinks contain harmful ingredients that pose as a risk for the people who consume them.</i> The writer develops the claim and counter claims fairly (L2); however, the writer does not develop responses to all counter claims thoroughly (e.g., paragraph 2- the writer attempts to address the warning label counter claim)
Development	3	The writer presents substantive evidence in order to support and strengthen the thesis: <i>Caffeine is shown to have a negative effect as it may increase blood pressure and disturb sleep. It also causes headaches, and interferes with calcium absorption.</i> The writer makes relevant connections (L3) that provide insight into the argument and justifies the reasoning. (e.g., paragraph 3 strongly demonstrates an understanding of the negative impacts of energy drinks and how companies circumvent FDA regulations).
Organization	4	The writer effectively uses a logical organizational structure. The paragraphs are cohesive, and the writer utilizes effective transitions to guide the reader through the argument: <i>many doctors have strongly advised for young children not to intake foods or beverages with high caffeine, yet there’s still no restriction prohibiting them from purchasing energy drinks.</i> The conclusion paragraph clearly reemphasizes the thesis statement, pulling together the reason and logic of the argument.
Conventions	3	The writer demonstrates a command of standard English. There are a few errors that, while not detracting from readability, should be noted. Use of vocabulary and appropriate tone is impressive in places. Minor capitalization, spelling, and punctuation errors are evident, it is lacking in others (e.g., <i>affect</i> /effect, <i>there’s</i> /there is). Most evidence is cited. The tone of the letter is clearly argumentative: <i>I took both the pros and cons of energy drinks into consideration.</i> Citations are attempted, and a bibliography is provided but there is some inconsistency in citing information.
Content Understanding	3	The writer accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with explanations that demonstrate understanding. The writer highlights various health issues associated with the consumption of caffeine and cites evidence that caffeine is not recommended for young children.

This writer would benefit from feedback, discussion, and/or instruction in the following areas:

- Proofreading (e.g., commas, citation of quotes, commonly misspelled words).