

Cannabis Debate Points

Question 1: Is 19 a suitable age to purchase and consume cannabis?

YES

- It is the same age as the legal age for alcohol consumption making it a safe age to use these types of substances
- If the legal age is set any higher, or if it is different from the legal age for alcohol, it would result in underage youth purchasing illegally
- Students will have already graduated from high school and will not be allowed to distribute it in schools

NO

- Since the brain is still developing until the age of 25, regular use of cannabis during adolescence can have serious effects on brain development and functioning
- THC in cannabis affects the same biological system in the brain that directs brain development
- Cannabis use that begins early and that continues over time has been associated with increased risk of harms—some may not be fully reversible
- It is estimated that 1 in 11 cannabis users will develop an addiction—this rises to 1 in 6 for people who started using cannabis as a teenager
 - o Youth are especially vulnerable to addiction as their brains are still developing. Half the people who receive treatment for marijuana use are under the age of 25

Question 2: Should cannabis be legal?

YES

- People will consume cannabis whether it is legal or not
- Legalizing the drug will allow it to be sold in a safer and more controlled environment
- Cannabis is less harmful than alcohol and tobacco, both are legal
- Legalizing cannabis regulates how cannabis is grown and produced—making it safer
- If people are purchasing cannabis from a reliable source, it reduces the chance of it being laced with other drugs
- Legalizing cannabis reduces cannabis drug related crime and eliminates the black market, therefore freeing up law enforcement to focus efforts elsewhere
- Legalizing cannabis provides a good source of tax revenue for federal and provincial governments that can be used to fund important programs
- Legalizing cannabis results in job creation
- The government should not control what individuals can and can't do (nanny state argument)

NO

- Cannabis is a psychoactive drug that has many harmful consequences
- Legalizing the drug will lead people to think it is harmless
- Legalizing cannabis could lead to more car accidents and injuries as people think it is safe to use cannabis and drive
- Legalizing cannabis normalizes cannabis use—just like tobacco
- Cannabis could be a gateway drug to other more harmful substances
- If price of legalized cannabis is not at par with black market—could still cause users to purchase illegal, unregulated cannabis
- Indoor growing of cannabis uses a lot of electricity- resulting in greenhouse gas emissions
- Health effects from living in proximity to large legal cannabis grow facilities is unknown (facilities give off odour emissions that could be harmful to health)

Question 3: Does the legalization of cannabis lead to increased use among youth?

YES

- The legalization of cannabis may lead to youth thinking it is safe and less risky, thus reducing any fear surrounding the drug
- Legalizing cannabis will normalize cannabis use, youth will see cannabis stores next to regular stores and people smoking cannabis on the street and think it is normal and safe
- When edibles become legal—may be more appealing to youth, even those that had no intention of smoking cannabis
- The legalization of cannabis also legalizes the growing of up to 4 cannabis plants—youth may see this at home and think cannabis is safe to use as it originates from a plant (plants are seen as healthy)

NO

- Youth who have never tried cannabis and have no interest in trying likely have valid reasoning behind their choices and would not use it whether it is legal or not
- Those interested in trying it would try it regardless of it being legal