

**Table A.** How pupils in the five different age groups from 11+ to 15+ described themselves as 'smokers'. The figures are in percentages.

Age of pupils	Never started		Given up		Like to stop		Don't want to stop		Number in sample	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Year 1 (11+) . . . .	82.1	85.0	12.2	11.0	3.5	3.1	2.1	0.7	1243	1030
Year 2 (12+) . . . .	76.3	74.9	16.2	17.2	4.6	5.5	2.6	2.4	1361	1178
Year 3 (13+) . . . .	63.5	61.8	23.2	23.1	8.6	10.8	4.7	4.3	2558	2395
Year 4 (14+) . . . .	58.3	53.8	20.6	22.0	13.0	16.3	8.0	7.9	4549	3602
Year 5 (15+) . . . .	57.1	55.2	18.4	20.1	14.9	16.5	9.5	8.1	1259	1199

# A comment on 'smoking' education

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It is interesting to examine the results from one of our data banks, representing a total of 20,000 pupils between the ages of 11+ and 15+ who answered Version 8 of the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire during the years 1982-84. Since the great majority of schools using our service are comprehensives, we are confident that our sample of abilities and social backgrounds is a fairly representative one. To present the same information for pupils older than this age range would be difficult; few schools have used the Questionnaire in the O-Level/CSE year, and schooling or training for young people of 17 and over is highly selective.

To the question on smoking habits, boys and girls answered as shown in Table A, which gives the percentage of each year group who put themselves into the four different categories when asked to describe how they saw themselves as a smoker. Table B divides the year groups more simply, into non-smokers and smokers.

It will be noticed that the percentage increase in smokers between Years 2 and 3, and between Years 3 and 4, is much larger than between Years 4 and 5. On the basis of these figures, it is tempting to suppose that the responses to this question from a similar sample of school-leavers (16-year-olds) would not show the one-third of smokers quoted in the article, although the percentage is still substantial.

It will also be seen that the girl smokers to some extent 'set the pace', although by the 5th year the two sexes in the sample contain similar numbers of smokers. Please note that this is not a longitudinal study and it is possible to question the assumption that the behaviours of the different year groups resemble those that would be exhibited by a single group growing older; however, *within a school* each year group contains different individuals of different ages, and teaching strategies are planned accordingly!

Age of pupils	Non-smokers		Smokers	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Year 1 (11+)	94.3	96.0	5.6	3.8
Year 2 (12+)	92.5	92.1	7.2	7.9
Year 3 (13+)	86.7	84.9	13.3	15.1
Year 4 (14+)	78.9	75.8	21.0	24.2
Year 5 (15+)	75.5	75.3	24.4	24.6

**Table B.** The same pupils recorded in Table A, divided into non-smokers and smokers (Percentages.)