

Student says:

After reviewing the lessons in this area of the OWL, I realize that I really need to start thinking seriously about how I might approach my topic. I have been thinking I would take the side of legalization of marijuana, but I'm still not sure.

Our professor has taught us how to use readings to get ideas about what we might want to write about, so I found several articles exploring the pros and cons of legalizing marijuana.

This first source, "Consequences of Legalizing Marijuana," really makes me unsure about what angle I might take here. According to this study, children and young adults between the ages of 12 and 20 were 5 to 6 percent more likely to try marijuana for the first time when medical marijuana was legalized. If this is the case, I would have a hard time pursuing the argument to legalize marijuana, as people don't want children trying a mind altering drug, and I wouldn't either.

However, this second source actually contradicts the first source. This study found no increase in use among teens when medical marijuana was legal. This source also cites 20 years' worth of data and mentions this study lines up with those other studies.

Clearly, I am going to have to look into this more, but I feel like I might at least have a central idea for my work. Whether I am for or against the legalization of marijuana, I need to look closely at what the effects would be.

Of course, I am not sure about which angle I would take, and I would like to get a better idea about this before I proceed.

I have read eight articles so far, and based on that, I thought I might try some listing as a prewriting strategy.

Here, I made a list of the pros and cons of legalizing Marijuana, and I'm just wrapping up the cons list, and my last point in the con is that it "is already legal for medicinal purposes" in many states. So, if I were arguing the medical benefits it might not be as strong because it is already legal for the medical benefits in many cases. But seeing this list really helps me make some decisions.

Pros

Money from taxes

Better regulation

Number of people in jail for marijuana

Used to be legal

Has been shown to have some positive benefits

Doesn't increase usage among teens??

Cons

Difficult to regulate

Has been illegal for a long time, hard to bring about change

Is a mind-altering drug

Affects people differently

Is already legal in many state for medicinal purposes

After looking at this, I feel like the list of things I have in my "pros" list are just more important to me. I feel like the revenue from taxes that could go toward things like schools and infrastructure is just really significant. Also, I know we have the highest number of people in our prison systems in the world, so if legalizing marijuana might cut down on that, I would like to explore that.

I think my angle for now is still going to be to argue for legalization, but I'll have to make a really detailed plan for how it could be regulated. Otherwise, as I can see from my cons list, my audience may not be willing to agree with what I have to say.