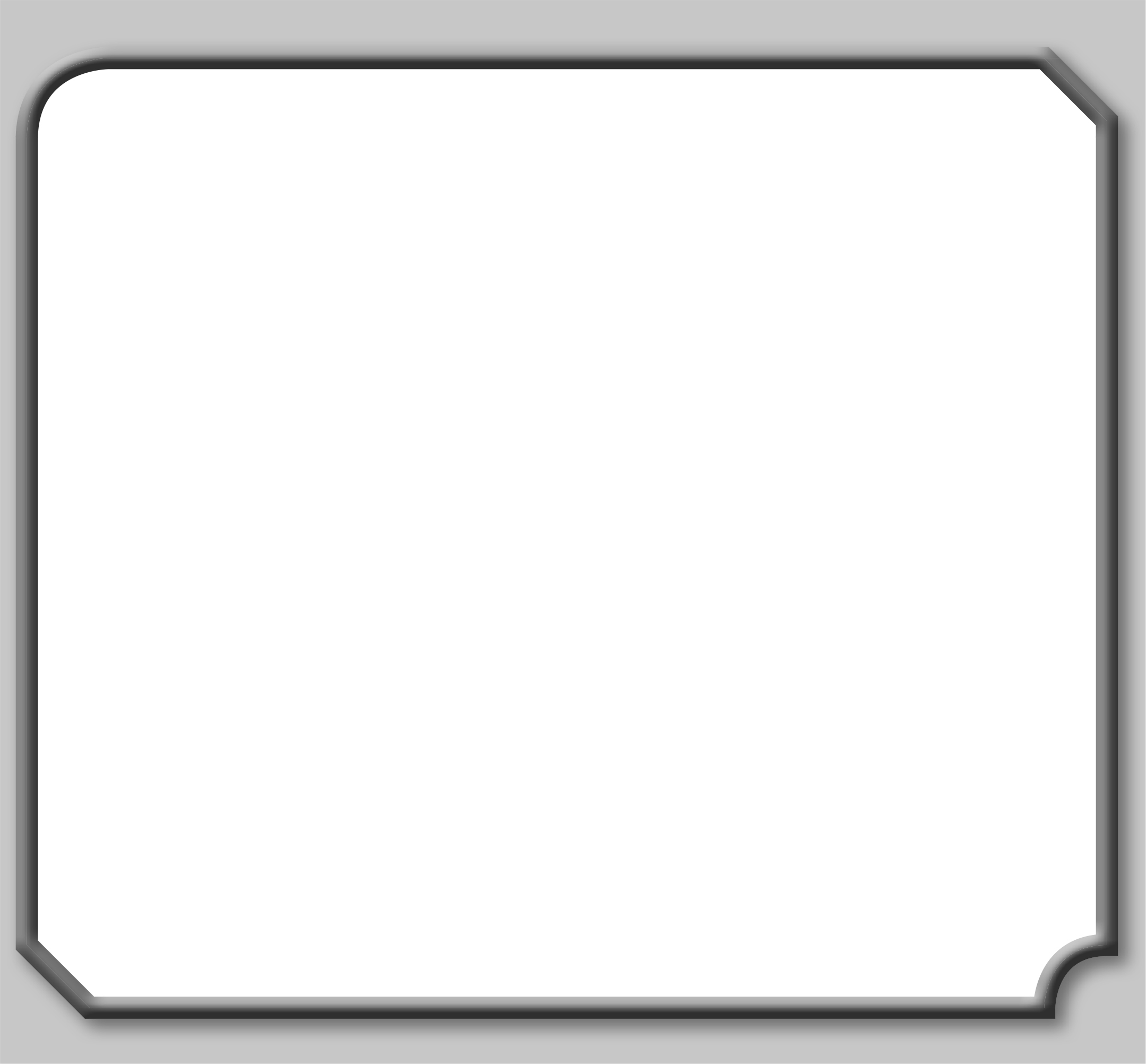
SMOKING: MY STORY

Read this letter from a young girl who has recently felt forced to try smoking.

Talk to a partner or small group about how it would feel if it were you. What advice might you give her?

Think about the scientific facts you could use to help.



Dear Cyber Aunt Sally,

My name is Alice and I am 11 years old. I have recently started secondary school. On the way home from school, I usually go to the park with my friends, but recently my friend sneaked out some cigarettes and a lighter from her older sister’s handbag. Then she lit up and smoked in front of me and my other close friends. She called me names, saying I was a chicken and a wimp for not trying it. This made me feel low and depressed, as I don’t like being called names, and we have known each other for such a long time. So one day, just to shut her up, I tried just one puff. I hated it. I felt so disappointed with myself and I knew I shouldn’t have done it. The next day, I spoke to my form tutor because I could hardly sleep. She talked to me about peer pressure and standing up for myself, but now Iam thinking of every excuse under the sun to avoid going to the park with my friend again. And she has started hanging round with some other, older girls. Please help, I feel so lonely and I don’t know who to talk to.

What advice would you give Alice? Write back to her as Cyber Aunt Sally. Make sure you include the health risks of smoking, short and long term, and ideas for Alice to use to help her stand up to her friends.