the front-plug 102 defines a substantially circular through-hole 103 allowing through-access to a heating element of an aerosol-generating device. The heating element can pass through the front-plug 102 with minimal insertion force required. The circular shape of the hole 103 means that there is no special orientation relationship required between the smoking article 100 and the heating element in order to engage the smoking article 100 with the aerosol-generating device.

In use, the front-plug 102 of the smoking article 100 acts in the same way as described above to prevent egress of an aerosol-forming substrate from the smoking article 100.

A third embodiment of a smoking article 300 is illustrated in Figure 3B (end view only). The smoking article 300 of Figure 3B is identical to the smoking article 1 of the first embodiment described above apart from the configuration of the front-plug 302. The front-plug 302 is formed from cellulose acetate and is assembled in contact with a cigarette paper 5, but the front-plug defines a star-shaped hole 303 allowing through-access to a heating element of an aerosol-generating device. The hole 303 lowers the insertion force required to insert a heating element into the smoking article 300. The star-shape of the hole 303 allows the heating element to engage with the front-plug 302 of the smoking article 300 and prevent rotation of the smoking article 300 while it is being consumed.

In use, the front-plug 302 of the smoking article 300 acts in the same way as described above to prevent egress of an aerosol-forming substrate from the article.

~~The exemplary embodiments described above are not limiting. In view of the above discussed exemplary embodiments, other embodiments consistent with the above exemplary embodiments will now be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art.~~

CLAIMS:

1. A smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ comprising a plurality of elements, including a front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~ and an aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~, in which the front-plug defines a hole ~~(103, 303)~~ or slit ~~(23)~~ through which a heating element ~~(8)~~ may be inserted, and in which the front-plug is substantially cylindrical and has a diameter of 5 mm or greater and a length of at least 2 mm.

2. A smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ according to claim 1 comprising a rod ~~(15)~~ having a mouth end ~~(20)~~ and a distal end ~~(30)~~ upstream from the mouth end ~~(20)~~, the front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~ being located upstream of the aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~ within the rod ~~(15)~~.

3. A smoking article ~~(1, 100,300)~~ according to claim 2 in which the front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~ and the aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~ are located within the rod ~~(15)~~ such that a heating element ~~(8)~~ inserted into the smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ through the hole ~~(103, 303)~~ or slit ~~(23)~~ contacts the aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~.

4. A smoking article ~~(1)~~ according to any preceding claim in which the front-plug ~~(2)~~ defines a slit ~~(23)~~, and in which the slit ~~(23)~~ is dimensioned to wipe a surface of the heating element ~~(8)~~ when the heating element ~~(8)~~ is withdrawn from the front-plug ~~(2)~~.

5. A smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ according to any of claims 2 to 4 further comprising a filter ~~(3)~~ located at a mouth end ~~(20)~~ of the rod ~~(15)~~.

6. A smoking article according ~~(1)~~ to any preceding claim in which the front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~ comprises a filter material such that air can be drawn through the front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~.

7. A smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ according to any preceding claim in which the aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~ comprises processed tobacco.

8. A smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ according to any preceding claim in which the front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~ is configured to prevent egress of the aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~ as the heating element ~~(8)~~ is withdrawn from the smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~.

9. A method of using a smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ comprising a plurality of elements, including a front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~ and an aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~, in which the front-plug is substantially cylindrical and has a diameter of 5 mm or greater and a length of at least 2 mm, the method comprising the steps of:

inserting a heating element ~~(8)~~ into the smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~ through a hole ~~(103, 303)~~ or slit ~~(23)~~ defined through the front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~;

raising the temperature of the heating element ~~(8)~~ to heat the aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~ sufficiently to form an aerosol; and

withdrawing the heating element ~~(8)~~ from the smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~.

10. A method according to claim 9 in which the heating element ~~(8)~~ is inserted through a slit ~~(23)~~ defined through the front-plug ~~(2)~~ and the heating element ~~(8)~~ is wiped by the front-plug ~~(2)~~ as it is withdrawn from the smoking article ~~(1)~~.

11. A method according to claim 9 or 10 in which the front-plug ~~(2, 102, 302)~~ prevents egress of the aerosol-forming substrate ~~(7)~~ when the heating element ~~(8)~~ is removed from the smoking article ~~(1, 100, 300)~~.