

TEACHER NOTES - ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE - HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ALCOHOL?

The decision on whether to drink or not, PSHE 11 - 14 (accompanying notes for pictorial worksheet)

Ask students to write down their answers on post-it notes or pieces of paper for class discussion. Begin the session by asking

Do you know what alcohol is?

Alcohol is produced from the sugar contained in fruits, vegetables, cereals and plants, by a process called fermentation. Yeast converts the sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide – a natural process.

The amount of alcohol in drinks can be increased by a boiling process called distillation. This makes spirits such as gin, vodka, whisky and rum, which usually contain about 40% pure alcohol. (For more information see '[Commonly asked questions](#)').

Alcohol is a legal drug. A drug is defined by the UN as something you take that changes how you think feel or act. Alcohol is a depressant, in that it slows down your nervous system and alters your mood, behaviour, judgement and reactions. If abused, it can lead to dependency or addiction.

What is your general attitude towards alcohol?

Good (e.g. celebration, relaxation, sociable, etc.)

Bad (e.g. health risks, personal risks such as accidents, violence and disorder, addiction).

Think about how much, with whom and where.

Have you ever come into contact with alcohol?

(e.g. had some, seen adverts, seen it in the shops, parents drink at home, etc.)

Who do you listen to in alcohol-related issues?

(e.g. parents, siblings, friends, adults, peers, etc.)

What do you know about the dangers of alcohol, especially when underage?

(e.g. alcohol poisoning, accidents, becoming violent, underage sex, in trouble with police and parents).

Statements

For younger students:

You've seen adverts for alcohol on TV
You can name 5 different kinds of alcohol
You can name 5 different brands of alcohol
You can describe what a pub looks like inside
You know someone who has tried alcohol
You've read seen articles or features on binge drinking or drink drive?
You know what a hangover is
You've seen health adverts on the dangers of drinking too much
You know someone who has been drunk in the last month
You feel confident in resisting peer pressure around drinking

For older students you may wish to add in some of the following statements to assess experience and understanding:

You've been to a house party with alcohol there
You have been to, or are planning to go to a festival
Regular heavy drinking can effect long term health
Drinking too much can affect school work and chances of getting good grades
There is the same amount of alcohol in a pint of beer, a double shot of vodka and a medium glass of wine
You feel confident in resisting peer pressure around drinking
You know of someone your age who's been drunk in the last month
It's against the law for an adult to a buy alcohol on your behalf of someone who is under 18 years old
You know someone who's needed help to get home safely when they have had too much to drink

The decision on whether to drink (answers for pictorial worksheet)

We advise you to download or photocopy [the decision on whether to drink or not blank sheet](#), and ask pupils to write down or say what they think. You can draw a spidergram as a class or in small groups and then compare answers with the [completed answer sheet](#).

You will notice that the answers given on the answer sheet are subtly different from what will be written down by the class, this is to encourage your pupils to think beyond the obvious motivations for drinking.

Activity

If you just ask 'Why do people drink?' most students will write down some of the following:

to celebrate, to have fun, to feel grown up, to fit in – it's difficult to say no, to rebel, to get a buzz, nothing else to do, to feel cool (bravado – especially among boys), to relax and unwind, its sociable, to get plastered, it stops me feeling stressed/ I feel more relaxed, it gives you confidence.

Instead we recommend that you:

- o Divide the class into groups and ask each group to think about one of the questions below.
- o Ask them to rank the reasons as high or low risk. You can ask pupils to use post-it notes, and then to come up and place them on a low/ medium/ high risk continuum.
- o Discuss these motivations.
- o Introduce the notion of how the decision to consume alcohol is associated with different reasons: where you drink (safety issues – home re secretly), speed of drinking (with food, pacing with soft drinks).
The answer sheet will help you expand some of the motives to extend the discussion beyond the more positive reasons your students will give for drinking or not.
- o Summarise the feedback from the class, note areas where they have confused ideas, are curious, accurate or have the wrong impressions and use this detail to tailor the approach of your future lessons.

Question 1: Why do you think most 11 - 15 year-olds choose not to drink?

Answers might include: my religion, don't like the taste, don't feel the need, health reasons, scared parents will find out, might lose control and do something stupid, wait 'til old enough to handle it, it's fattening, it's against the law, know that if you get caught drinking underage you can get a police record (can't go to the US, can't get affordable insurance etc.)

Question 2: Do teenagers give different reasons for drinking to adults

Example answers: rebel, feel grown up, cool, peer pressure, curiosity - Talk about why this could be risky.

Adults drink for some of the same reasons (e.g. to relax, socialise, stress, confidence).

Alcohol consumption and age

Those 13 - 14 year-olds who drink do so out of curiosity and to feel what it's like to be drunk. It becomes an exciting game – planning how to get hold of alcohol, hiding it from parents, drinking on the sly and then discussing and commenting on everything that happens.

For 17 - 18 year-olds, drinking is more of a social activity, part of going out and meeting friends.

Question 3: Why do many adults choose to drink?

Answers may include: to relax, be sociable, unwind, forget worries, stress, to feel more confident to cope.

Question 4: Where do people choose to drink?

At this point you can use the risk continuum, whereby you ask children to rank the reasons for drinking and places where people might drink as high risk, medium risk or low risk. Hence drinking in the park might be chosen as 'high risk', whereas drinking as an adult to relax might be categorised as 'low risk'. The class can discuss why a child has opted for a particular choice and you can help lead the discussion and debate.

Expanded answers to questions that may arise

Calories?

Alcohol is fat free but high in calories. A standard half litre of beer has approximately 130 calories, as does a 150ml glass of dry wine. Alcohol can also make someone feel hungry, it stimulates the appetite while reducing self-control, so someone is more likely to binge eat if they binge drink.

Allergy?

Some people, especially Asians lack the gene that breaks down alcohol, which makes alcohol consumption lead to feeling very sick and facial flushing.

Supply?

For anyone is under 18, it is illegal to buy or be served alcohol. It is also illegal for an adult to buy alcohol for someone who is under age and doing so can result in getting a criminal record. In the family home, under parental supervision, it is legal to have an alcoholic drink from the age of 5.

Stress?

A little alcohol will help someone feel relaxed and unwind, but more than that and it has a depressing effect. Lots of alcohol can cause an irregular heart beat and lead to feelings of panic and increased stress.

TEACHER NOTES

Emoji Quiz

Target age group: 11 - 14 year-olds

Structure: 1 lesson

Preparation: Download/photocopy **Emoji quiz questions** and **answers**.

Access to the Internet: talkaboutalcohol.com

Objectives

- o To consider some of the myths and frequently asked questions about alcohol.

Notes

This could be done in small groups or as a whole class with people calling their answers and inviting challenges from others.

Alternatively, **the quiz**, could be a good way of getting students to research the answers by looking at the information in Online Learning Zone, talkaboutalcohol.com.

How well do you know your age group? (PSHE 14 - 16 worksheet 5)

Target age group: 14 - 16 year-olds

Structure: 1 lesson

Preparation: Download/photocopy **How well do you know your age group?** sheet and **accompanying answers**.

Objectives

- o To dispel myths about alcohol and young people.
- o To allow young people to compare their own behaviour with the norm.
- o To encourage young people to understand that they are not in the minority if they choose not to drink.

Notes

Young people often think that most of their peer group drink more alcohol than they actually do, perhaps because people tend to exaggerate how much they drink when telling others. By looking at the results as a class and not just individual's answers, it will reinforce for students what normal behaviour actually is and highlight whether they have unrepresentative notions of alcohol consumption. It may also help them feel more comfortable about drinking less or not drinking at all.

**How much do you know?
Quiz**



TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL

Alcohol Education Trust
Keeping young people safe around alcohol