

Five million ecstasy tablets seized (Sat 16 Apr, 2005)

WARM-UPS

CHAT: Talk in pairs or groups about: soft drugs / hard drugs / ecstasy / Australia / discos / clubbing / dancing / great happiness ... For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

ECSTASY BRAINSTORM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the drug ecstasy. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

DRUGS: Look at the list of drugs below. In pairs / groups, write down as many dangers as you can think of for each drug. When you have finished, change partners / groups and add new ideas to your list of dangers. Continue changing partners until you have a large list, or have spoken to everyone. With your original partner / group, compare which drugs have the most dangers. Make three conclusions from your findings to report to the class.

- ecstasy
- cocaine
- nicotine
- cannabis / marijuana
- alcohol
- heroin
- other

COMMENTS ON DRUGS: Read the following comments made about drugs and agree or disagree with them with your partner / group:

- a. All drugs are dangerous, drugs increase crime and people should go to prison for taking them. That's my view.
- b. I have smoked marijuana. It's not really the scary drug that governments say it is.
- c. Alcohol is the world's most dangerous drug. It leads to domestic violence, hooliganism and road deaths by drunk drivers. I don't understand why it is so socially acceptable.
- d. I know so little about drugs. I wish we had been told more at school.
- e. Nicotine is the world's worst drug. It's very addictive and kills millions of people every year.
- f. Marijuana should be legalized.
- g. It's wrong that my government says I cannot take drugs if I want to.
- h. Drug addicts should talk about their experiences on television so everyone knows how dangerous drugs can be.
- i. Schoolchildren are now taking drugs. The world has gone crazy.
- j. I want to try but I'm afraid.
- k. In Malaysia, they hang people who are caught with drugs. That's the best thing to do.

PRE-READING IDEAS

WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'drug' and 'ecstasy'.

TRUE FALSE: Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. Australian police are looking for five million missing ecstasy tablets. T / F
- b. Five million ecstasy tablets weigh 1,000 kg. T / F
- c. The street value of the drugs is ten million dollars. T / F
- d. The drug smugglers could be sentenced in court to life imprisonment. T / F
- e. An Australian politician said the drugs could have wreaked havoc. T / F
- f. Ecstasy has ability to provide lots of energy while dancing. T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| (a) uncovered | cache |
| (b) find | worth |
| (c) incredible | created |
| (d) value | manufactured |
| (e) undercover | amazing |
| (f) made | outlawed |
| (g) illegal | found |
| (h) wreaked | chaos |
| (i) havoc | secret |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) the world's largest | at the scene |
| (b) an estimated street | operation |
| (c) undercover | drugs |
| (d) hidden | havoc |
| (e) Two men were arrested | ever find of the drug ecstasy |
| (f) illegal | value of 195 million US dollars |
| (g) sentenced in court to life | in wooden boxes |
| (h) wreaked | imprisonment |

SYNONYM FILL:

There are six gaps in the article. There are six groups of synonyms below the article. Place the number of the synonym group in the correct gap (It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap).

Five million ecstasy tablets seized

BNE: Australian police have _____ the world's largest ever find of the drug ecstasy. An incredible one ton (1,000 kg) of the tiny, paper-thin tablets was discovered in Melbourne, Australia. The drugs have an estimated street value of 195 million US dollars. An _____ operation by the Australian police found the five million ecstasy tablets _____ in wooden boxes on a ship that came from Italy. The drugs were probably made in Holland, one of the world's biggest production centres for ecstasy. Two men were arrested at the scene for trying to import the _____ drugs. Police are currently looking for twelve other members of the drug gang. Anyone who is arrested could be sentenced in court to life imprisonment. An Australian government spokesperson, Senator Ellison, said the international attempt to smuggle such a large amount of ecstasy into Australia "could have wreaked _____". Ecstasy is a popular drug with young people who dance at night clubs and discos. People say it has the ability to provide lots of energy while dancing and feelings of great _____.

1
havoc
pandemonium
chaos
mayhem

2
hidden
secreted
concealed
tucked away

3
undercover
covert
hush-hush
secret

4
happiness
bliss
euphoria
ecstasy

5
uncovered
found
discovered
unearthed

6
illegal
outlawed
illicit
banned

DISCUSSION:

- a. Did you like this article?
- b. Was there anything in this article that surprised you?
- c. What are your feelings about the drugs find?
- d. What do you think of international drug smuggling?
- e. What do you know about the drug ecstasy?
- f. Have you ever been to a dance club where people were taking or selling ecstasy?
- g. Are you interested in drugs?
- h. Is there anything fashionable or trendy about drugs?
- i. Is there anything scary about drugs?
- j. What are the differences between alcohol, marijuana, ecstasy and cocaine?
- k. Do you have a good or bad image of people who take drugs?
- l. Do you have a different impression of people who take drugs if they are famous (for example rock stars, actors and politicians)?
- m. Former US President Bill Clinton kind of admitted to smoking marijuana. What do you think of a US president taking drugs?
- n. What would you do if your brother, sister, mother or father suddenly told you they use marijuana?
- o. Is it wrong for young people who go dancing to take ecstasy to have a great time?
- p. Do you think alcohol is a dangerous drug?
- q. Nicotine leads to millions of deaths every year. Should it become an illegal drug?
- r. Should the same penalties be given to drug users, drug dealers and drug traffickers?
- s. Don't you think if soft drugs like marijuana were legalized, crime would go down?
- t. Did you like this discussion?
- u. Teacher / Student additional questions.

HOMEWORK:

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information on the drug ecstasy. Share your findings with your class next lesson.
- 3. ALTERNATIVES:** Write an article outlining some of the things people could do to relax or have fun instead of taking drugs. Read it to your class in your next lesson.
- 4. DRUG PENALTIES:** You are the drugs czar of your country. Choose five different drugs. Decide if they are legal or illegal. For the illegal ones decide on a penalty for using the drug and selling it. Talk about your decisions in your next class.

SYNONYM FILL ANSWERS:

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