

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

### WARM-UPS

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about: soft drugs / hard drugs / ecstasy / Australia / clubbing / dancing / euphoria... 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 claim it to be.
- c. Alcohol is one of the world's most destructive drugs. It leads to domestic violence, hooliganism, road deaths by drunk drivers and severe health problems. 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 highly addictive and kills millions each year.
- f. The Rastafarian religion believes all natural things were placed on earth by God for our enjoyment (I think!). Marijuana should be legalized.
- g. It's wrong that my government says I cannot take a certain drug if I want to.
- h. More publicity should be given about how addictive and deadly hard drugs are. Drug addicts should talk about their experiences on prime time TV.
- 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 policy.

## 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. The world's largest ever seizure of ecstasy was made in Australia. T / F
- b. Five million ecstasy tablets weigh 1,000 kg. T / F
- c. The estimated street value of the drugs is ten million dollars. T / F
- d. The drugs were made in Italy. T / F
- e. Holland is one of the world's major production centres for ecstasy. T / F
- f. The smugglers could face up to 10 years in prison in Australia. T / F
- g. An Australian politician said the drugs would have caused little social harm. T / F
- h. Ecstasy provides rushes of energy and feelings of euphoria. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| (a) seizure             | ecstasy      |
| (b) amphetamine         | capture      |
| (c) undercover          | hidden       |
| (d) cache               | confiscation |
| (e) secreted            | pandemonium  |
| (f) aiding and abetting | speed        |
| (g) apprehend           | stash        |
| (h) wreaked             | assisting    |
| (i) havoc               | created      |
| (j) euphoria            | covert       |

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

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) the world's largest   | container                       |
| (b) MDMA, better known as | havoc                           |
| (c) an undercover         | ecstasy                         |
| (d) an estimated street   | abetting                        |
| (e) shipping              | value of 195 million US dollars |
| (f) arrested              | ever seizure                    |
| (g) aiding and            | imprisonment                    |
| (h) face up to life       | operation                       |
| (i) wreaked               | euphoria                        |
| (j) feelings of           | at the scene                    |

## 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 made the world's largest ever \_\_\_\_\_ of the amphetamine type drug MDMA, better known as ecstasy. An incredible one ton (1,000 kg) of the tiny, paper- thin tablets was discovered in Melbourne in an \_\_\_\_\_ operation by the Australian police and customs officers. The cache consisted of five million ecstasy tablets, with an estimated street value of 195 million US dollars. The pills were \_\_\_\_\_ in cavities around wooden crates of ceramic tiles in a shipping container. The ship originated from Italy, but the drugs are believed to have been manufactured in Holland, one of the world's major production centres for ecstasy. Two men were arrested at the scene for aiding and \_\_\_\_\_ the import of an illegal substance and twelve search warrants were issued to apprehend other members of the gang. Those arrested could face up to life imprisonment. A government spokesman, Senator Ellison, warned the "elaborate international attempt" to smuggle such a large amount of ecstasy into Australia "could have wreaked \_\_\_\_\_". Ecstasy is a popular drug with clubbers for its ability to provide rushes of energy while dancing and feelings of \_\_\_\_\_.

**1**

havoc  
pandemonium  
chaos  
mayhem

**2**

abetting  
supporting  
encouraging  
condoning

**3**

undercover  
covert  
hush-hush  
secret

**4**

euphoria  
bliss  
delirium  
ecstasy

**5**

seizure  
confiscation  
bust  
capture

**6**

secreted  
hidden  
concealed  
tucked away

## 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 bust?
- 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 impression 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 be added to the list of banned substances?
- r. Should the same penalties be given to drug users, dealers and traffickers?
- s. Humans have used drugs for thousands of years. Isn't it pointless to keep trying to ban them?
- t. Don't you think if soft drugs like marijuana were legalized, crime would go down?
- u. Did you like this discussion?
- v. 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:

### Five million ecstasy tablets seized

**BNE:** Australian police have made the world's largest ever -----**5**----- of the amphetamine type drug MDMA, better known as ecstasy. An incredible one ton (1,000 kg) of the tiny, paper- thin tablets was discovered in Melbourne in an -----**3**----- operation by the Australian police and customs officers. The cache consisted of five million ecstasy tablets, with an estimated street value of 195 million US dollars. The pills were -----**6**----- in cavities around wooden crates of ceramic tiles in a shipping container. The ship originated from Italy, but the drugs are believed to have been manufactured in Holland, one of the world's major production centres for ecstasy. Two men were arrested at the scene for aiding and -----**2**----- the import of an illegal substance and twelve search warrants were issued to apprehend other members of the gang. Those arrested could face up to life imprisonment. A government spokesman, Senator Ellison, warned the "elaborate international attempt" to smuggle such a large amount of ecstasy into Australia "could have wreaked -----**1**-----". Ecstasy is a popular drug with clubbers for its ability to provide rushes of energy while dancing and feelings of -----**4**-----.