

www.Breaking News English.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

The Breaking News English.com Resource Book

"1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers"

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

Study says alcohol more harmful than marijuana

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0703/070324-alcohol.html>

Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Language Work	10
Homework	11
Answers	12

24th March, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Study says alcohol more harmful than marijuana

A major new study into drugs, published in the British medical journal [The Lancet](#), has concluded that alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than many highly illegal drugs. They are listed in the top 10 most dangerous substances in the study. Researchers believe British law should classify alcohol and tobacco the same as hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Head researcher Professor David Nutt of Britain's Bristol University suggested a new classification of harmful substances. He said it needed to be based on the actual risks posed to society. Professor Nutt said the new system was necessary in Britain as the existing one was out of date: "The current drug system is ill thought-out and arbitrary," he said. He added there was no scientific basis for excluding alcohol and tobacco as serious drugs.

Professor Nutt and his colleagues used three factors to find out how harmful a drug is: the physical harm to the user, how addictive the drug is, and the impact it has on society. The researchers were experts in drug addiction, lawyers and police officers with scientific or medical backgrounds and doctors. All of them agreed on the dangers of alcohol and tobacco. They ranked alcohol as the fifth and tobacco as the ninth most harmful drugs. Heroin and cocaine finished top, while marijuana was eleventh and Ecstasy finished last in the list of 20 drugs. The latter two are illegal in Britain and America, while alcohol and tobacco are legal. Tobacco causes 40 percent of all hospital illnesses, while alcohol is blamed for more than half of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. They also harm society in other ways. They damage families and stretch police services.

WARM-UPS

1. ADDICTION: Choose (imagine) one thing you are addicted to – It could be chocolate, love, English grammar, jogging, etc. Walk around the class and talk to other students to find out their addictions. Which ones do you share?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

drugs / alcohol / tobacco / researchers / heroin / cocaine / risks to society / colleagues / physical harm / addiction / hospital emergency rooms / police

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. WORLD RIVERS: With your partner(s), talk about these drugs. What is your image of them? What do you know of them? Change partners and share your findings.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| • alcohol | • heroin |
| • tobacco | • caffeine |
| • ecstasy | • cocaine |
| • marijuana | • other _____ |

4. ALCOHOL OPINIONS: Talk about each of these opinions. Do you think they are true for your country / other countries?

- alcohol is an important part of our culture
- alcohol causes too many road accidents and domestic violence
- marijuana is a lot more harmful than alcohol
- society would function better without alcohol and tobacco
- alcohol is for people who cannot enjoy themselves unaided
- alcohol should be made illegal
- society would never accept alcohol and tobacco being illegal
- people would live longer without alcohol and tobacco

5. QUICK DEBATE: Have this fun quick debate with your partner(s). Students A think alcohol should be classed as a harmful drug; students B think alcohol is not harmful and should remain legal. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

6. DRUGS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with drugs. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A study reports alcohol is more dangerous than many illegal drugs. | T / F |
| b. The report said alcohol should be in the same category as heroin. | T / F |
| c. A professor praised Britain's up-to-date drug classification. | T / F |
| d. Many scientific facts show alcohol is not a serious drug. | T / F |
| e. The research considered the harm a drug does to society. | T / F |
| f. Some of the researchers were drug addicts hooked on heroin. | T / F |
| g. The research says alcohol is more harmful than marijuana. | T / F |
| h. Alcohol is behind 40 % of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| a. major | group |
| b. highly | drain |
| c. classify | illogical |
| d. arbitrary | specialists |
| e. basis | important |
| f. factors | last-mentioned |
| g. impact | aspects |
| h. experts | grounds |
| i. latter | effect |
| j. stretch | very |

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

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| a. A major new study | out and arbitrary |
| b. classify alcohol and tobacco | on the dangers of alcohol |
| c. based on the actual risks | the user |
| d. The current drug system is ill thought- | the same as hard drugs |
| e. there was no scientific basis for | it has on society |
| f. the physical harm to | into drugs |
| g. the impact | stretch police services |
| h. All of them agreed | excluding alcohol |
| i. The latter | posed to society |
| j. They damage families and | two are illegal in Britain |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Study says alcohol more harmful than marijuana

A major new study into drugs, _____ in the British medical journal The Lancet, has _____ that alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than many highly illegal drugs. They are _____ in the top 10 most dangerous substances in the study. Researchers believe British law should classify alcohol and tobacco the same as hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Head researcher Professor David Nutt of Britain's Bristol University _____ a new classification of harmful substances. He said it _____ to be _____ on the actual risks _____ to society. Professor Nutt said the new system was necessary in Britain as the existing one was out of date: "The current drug system is ill thought-out and arbitrary," he said. He _____ there was no scientific basis for excluding alcohol and tobacco as serious drugs.

suggested

posed

listed

based

published

needed

added

concluded

Professor Nutt and his colleagues used three _____ to find out how harmful a drug is: the physical harm to the user, how addictive the drug is, and the _____ it has on society. The researchers were experts in drug addiction, lawyers and police officers with _____ or medical backgrounds and doctors. All of them _____ on the dangers of alcohol and tobacco. They ranked alcohol as the fifth and tobacco as the ninth most harmful drugs. Heroin and cocaine _____ top, while marijuana was eleventh and Ecstasy finished last in the list of 20 drugs. The latter two are illegal in Britain and America, while alcohol and tobacco are _____. Tobacco causes 40 percent of all hospital illnesses, while alcohol is _____ for more than half of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. They also harm society in other ways. They damage families and _____ police services.

agreed

stretch

impact

finished

blamed

factors

scientific

legal

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Study says alcohol more harmful than marijuana

A major new _____, published in the British medical journal The Lancet, _____ alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than many highly illegal drugs. They are _____ 10 most dangerous substances in the study. Researchers believe British law should classify alcohol and tobacco the same _____ heroin and cocaine. Head researcher Professor David Nutt of Britain's Bristol University suggested a new classification of harmful substances. He said it _____ actual risks posed to society. Professor Nutt said the new system was necessary in Britain as the existing one was out of date: "The current drug system _____ arbitrary," he said. He added there was _____ excluding alcohol and tobacco as serious drugs.

Professor Nutt and his colleagues used three factors _____ harmful a drug is: the physical harm to the user, how addictive the drug is, and the impact _____. The researchers were experts in drug addiction, lawyers and police officers with scientific or medical backgrounds and doctors. _____ the dangers of alcohol and tobacco. They ranked alcohol as the fifth and tobacco as the ninth most harmful drugs. Heroin and cocaine finished top, while marijuana was eleventh and Ecstasy finished _____ 20 drugs. The latter two are illegal in Britain and America, while alcohol and tobacco are legal. Tobacco causes 40 percent of all hospital illnesses, while alcohol is _____ half of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. They also harm society _____. They damage families and stretch police services.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "DRUGS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about drugs, alcohol, tobacco and society.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• major• highly• classify• new• out of date• basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• physical• experts• agreed• last• 40 percent• stretch
---	---

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) Do you think alcohol is harmful?
- c) Do you agree with the report that alcohol is more harmful than drugs like marijuana?
- d) Would your life change if tobacco and alcohol were illegal?
- e) In what ways is alcohol harmful to society?
- f) Do you think alcohol and tobacco are real drugs?
- g) Do you agree alcohol is OK because it is an important part of some country's cultures?
- h) If scientific research says alcohol is very harmful, should governments act and ban it?
- i) Why do you think it has taken so long for a study to say alcohol is as harmful as many hard drugs?
- j) Would life in your country without alcohol and tobacco?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think all addictive drugs (including caffeine) should be banned?
- c) Are you surprised by any of the rankings in the study?
- d) Do you think governments should now make marijuana legal?
- e) What is your opinion of people who drink too much alcohol?
- f) What is your opinion of people who smoke marijuana?
- g) Do you think hospital patients should pay higher fees if they drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes?
- h) Would your government be popular if it banned alcohol and tobacco?
- i) Should alcohol and tobacco be banned or more heavily taxed?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY:

A discussion about drugs and society.

Team up with classmates who have the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins. Introduce yourself to the other role players. Discuss your roles after the role play ends.

Role A – Professor Nutt

You are sure that many governments wrongly think alcohol and tobacco are harmless. Your study shows they do a lot of harm to society. You believe they cause more harm than many drugs that are already illegal. You want alcohol and tobacco made illegal.

- Think of more reasons why alcohol and tobacco should be illegal.

Role B – Smoker and drinker

You think tobacco and alcohol are normal parts of your culture. People have been smoking and drinking for thousands of years. It is your right to drink. You enjoy it. Alcohol has never harmed your family, health or life.

- Think of more reasons why Professor Nutt is wrong.

Role C – Addicted smoker and alcoholic

Cigarettes and alcohol have ruined your life. You are in very poor health. Your family life is in ruins because you cannot stop drinking. You lost many jobs because of hangovers. You are angry with tobacco and alcohol companies for glamorizing cigarettes and alcohol.

- Think of more reasons why alcohol and tobacco should be illegal.

Role D – Doctor

You have seen hundreds of tragic traffic accidents where drivers have been drunk. You think alcohol is OK but governments should be stricter. You believe there should be very heavy punishments for any crime committed when a person is drunk.

- Think of more reasons why the government should be stricter.

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Study says alcohol more harmful than marijuana

A major new study (1) _____ drugs, published in the British medical journal The Lancet, has concluded that alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than many (2) _____ illegal drugs. They are listed in the top 10 most dangerous substances in the study. Researchers believe British law should (3) _____ alcohol and tobacco the same as hard drugs (4) _____ as heroin and cocaine. Head researcher Professor David Nutt of Britain's Bristol University suggested a new classification of harmful substances. He said it needed to be based on the actual risks (5) _____ to society. Professor Nutt said the new system was necessary in Britain as the existing one was out of date: "The current drug system is (6) _____ thought-out and arbitrary," he said. He added there was no scientific basis for excluding alcohol and tobacco as serious drugs.

Professor Nutt and his colleagues used three factors to find out how harmful a drug is: the physical harm (7) _____ the user, how addictive the drug is, and the impact it has on society. The researchers were experts (8) _____ drug addiction, lawyers and police officers with scientific or medical backgrounds and doctors. All of them agreed (9) _____ the dangers of alcohol and tobacco. They ranked alcohol as the fifth and tobacco as the ninth most harmful drugs. Heroin and cocaine finished top, while marijuana was eleventh and Ecstasy finished (10) _____ in the list of 20 drugs. The latter two are illegal in Britain and America, while alcohol and tobacco are legal. Tobacco causes 40 percent of all hospital illnesses, (11) _____ alcohol is blamed (12) _____ more than half of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. They also harm society in other ways. They damage families and stretch police services.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) unto | (b) out | (c) into | (d) onto |
| 2. | (a) highly | (b) high | (c) lowly | (d) low |
| 3. | (a) classed | (b) classy | (c) classified | (d) classify |
| 4. | (a) as | (b) such | (c) so | (d) with |
| 5. | (a) composed | (b) imposed | (c) posed | (d) supposed |
| 6. | (a) unwell | (b) painful | (c) ill | (d) sick |
| 7. | (a) in | (b) to | (c) with | (d) at |
| 8. | (a) in | (b) on | (c) an | (d) and |
| 9. | (a) on | (b) in | (c) with | (d) an |
| 10. | (a) lastly | (b) last | (c) lasts | (d) lasted |
| 11. | (a) whatever | (b) whom | (c) which | (d) while |
| 12. | (a) further | (b) for | (c) from | (d) fro |

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 more information about the effects of alcohol on society. What are the laws in different countries? Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. DRUGS POSTER: Make a poster about different kinds of drugs and the harm they do to our bodies, lives and societies. Include drugs we do not normally think are dangerous. Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the effects of alcohol and tobacco on your society. Discuss what society would be like with and without these two drugs. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the leader of your country. Tell him/her what he/she has to do to make sure alcohol and tobacco do not harm your society. Ask him/her three questions. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. F e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| a. major | important |
| b. highly | very |
| c. classify | group |
| d. arbitrary | illogical |
| e. basis | grounds |
| f. factors | aspects |
| g. impact | effect |
| h. experts | specialists |
| i. latter | last-mentioned |
| j. stretch | drain |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| a. A major new study | into drugs |
| b. classify alcohol and tobacco | the same as hard drugs |
| c. based on the actual risks | posed to society |
| d. The current drug system is ill thought- | out and arbitrary |
| e. there was no scientific basis for | excluding alcohol |
| f. the physical harm to | the user |
| g. the impact | it has on society |
| h. All of them agreed | on the dangers of alcohol |
| i. The latter | two are illegal in Britain |
| j. They damage families and | stretch police services |

GAP FILL:

Study says alcohol more harmful than marijuana

A major new study into drugs, **published** in the British medical journal The Lancet, has **concluded** that alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than many highly illegal drugs. They are **listed** in the top 10 most dangerous substances in the study. Researchers believe British law should classify alcohol and tobacco the same as hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Head researcher Professor David Nutt of Britain's Bristol University **suggested** a new classification of harmful substances. He said it **needed** to be **based** on the actual risks **posed** to society. Professor Nutt said the new system was necessary in Britain as the existing one was out of date: "The current drug system is ill thought-out and arbitrary," he said. He **added** there was no scientific basis for excluding alcohol and tobacco as serious drugs.

Professor Nutt and his colleagues used three **factors** to find out how harmful a drug is: the physical harm to the user, how addictive the drug is, and the **impact** it has on society. The researchers were experts in drug addiction, lawyers and police officers with **scientific** or medical backgrounds and doctors. All of them **agreed** on the dangers of alcohol and tobacco. They ranked alcohol as the fifth and tobacco as the ninth most harmful drugs. Heroin and cocaine **finished** top, while marijuana was eleventh and Ecstasy finished last in the list of 20 drugs. The latter two are illegal in Britain and America, while alcohol and tobacco are **legal**. Tobacco causes 40 percent of all hospital illnesses, while alcohol is **blamed** for more than half of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. They also harm society in other ways. They damage families and **stretch** police services.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - c 2 - a 3 - d 4 - b 5 - c 6 - c 7 - b 8 - a 9 - a 10 - b 11 - d 12 - b