

SECTION 6

RESOURCES SUITABLE FOR OLDER STUDENTS (16+)

As teenagers get older, they lead more independent lives and may learn to drive. It becomes increasingly important that they are aware of the long term consequences of breaking the law and know how to enjoy themselves responsibly in pubs and clubs while staying safe as they approach the age of 18.

This section, which should be used in conjunction with the fact sheets in the sections on 'Units and guidelines' and 'Alcohol and the law', includes:

- o A fact sheet on drinking, driving and blood alcohol laws
- o An A5 flyer to be photocopied as a handout on top tips for staying safe
- o A quiz on myths and facts about 16 - 24 year-olds drinking in the UK
- o A peer to peer questionnaire and example report written by a sixth former.

There is also a full colour leaflet, **Alcohol and you** for those aged 15+ available to order from kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org or it can be downloaded from the resources page of our website alcoholeducationtrust.org/teacher-area/overview-core-resources/.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DRINKING AND DRIVING



Some of you may be thinking of taking to the roads soon, on a moped and later driving. As alcohol affects our reaction times, our vision and coordination, there is a legal drink drive limit, which is based on your BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC).

What is BAC?

The amount of alcohol in your bloodstream is called your Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC. Your BAC depends on how much you drink. The more you drink, the higher your BAC. But there are also many other factors that affect your BAC.

How is BAC measured?

BAC can be measured with a breathalyser or by analysing a sample of blood. It is measured by the number of grams of alcohol in 100ml of blood. For example, a BAC of .08, the UK legal limit for driving, means you have .08 grams of alcohol in every 100ml of blood. The limit is now .05 in Scotland.

Drinking and eating

Having food in your stomach does not stop you from getting drunk, but it does slow down the rate at which alcohol passes into the bloodstream.

Lots of different factors can affect your BAC including:

- o whether you're male or female
- o if you are drinking on an empty stomach
- o if you are drinking quickly
- o individual differences (size, weight, metabolism)
- o the percentage of alcohol in the drink
- o the type of alcohol you are drinking (fizzy drinks are absorbed more quickly)
- o the container size (you may think you're having one drink, but how many units are you having?)
- o the amount of time since your last drink (the body can only break down about one unit an hour, your BAC can still be rising because alcohol takes time to be absorbed).



think.direct.gov.uk/

More about individual differences

You may have a higher or lower BAC than someone who has drunk the same as you due to variables such as:

- o whether you are of small or larger build
- o whether you are female or male
- o your proportion of body fat (body fat does not absorb alcohol)
- o your metabolic rate (affected by diet, digestion, fitness, emotional state, hormonal cycle, time of day, year etc).

The use of other drugs won't affect BAC, but may 'mask' the effect of alcohol, making you feel more sober than you really are.

A number of factors can lead to a woman having a higher BAC than a man, even if she has had the same number of drinks; women's bodies have less water and more fatty tissue than men's, so the alcohol in the water in their system is more concentrated. Men make more of a protective enzyme that breaks down alcohol than women.

Thinking distance

Alcohol's effect on the brain slows down a person's reaction times - they take longer to respond to hazards. So, if a cat ran in front of a car or motorbike, the delay between you seeing it and putting your foot on the brake is greater after drinking. The extra distance travelled in that time is called your 'thinking distance'. Each drink can increase the 'thinking distance' by 20%.

Driving

The risk of someone being in an accident increases by:

- o two times for drivers with a BAC of .05
- o four times for drivers with a BAC of .08
- o twenty times for drivers with a BAC of .15.

Drivers who have been drinking underestimate the distance and speed of other vehicles on the road. Their vision is affected, slowing reaction times further. Drivers who've been drinking overestimate their ability.

Don't be tempted

If you exceed the legal limit, you face a fine of up to £5,000, six months in prison and having your licence taken away for a year. Causing a serious accident or death through drink drive means up to 14 years in jail and a two year driving ban!

Did you know, that if you've got a criminal record, you can't go to the US?

Never mind the law, you'd never forgive yourself if you injured someone seriously – and try getting car insurance or a good job if you've got a driving conviction – no chance.

Finally... don't ever accept a lift from someone you suspect is over the drink drive limit. Do everything you can to persuade them not to drive – you could be saving their life or someone else's.

If it all goes wrong

Drinking very large amounts in one session can lead to alcohol poisoning, unconsciousness, coma or even death. If it all goes wrong, it's essential to get emergency help...

If someone loses consciousness after drinking too much, here's what to do:

- keep them on their side with their head turned to the side (the recovery position).
- make sure they're breathing and their mouth and airways are clear.
- if they stop breathing, start mouth to mouth resuscitation.
- loosen any tight clothing that might restrict their breathing.
- keep them warm (but not too hot) - with blankets or a coat.
- call an ambulance but don't leave them... ask someone reliable to phone the ambulance.

If someone vomits you should:

- try to keep them sitting up
- if they must lie down, make sure they're in the recovery position and that their mouth and airway are clear
- if they begin to choke, get help immediately
- don't leave them even if you can't bear the sight or smell of someone vomiting.

Alcohol poisoning is extremely dangerous. It can lead to a coma and in extreme cases, death. The amount of alcohol it takes to cause alcohol poisoning depends on many factors, including size, weight, age and so on. Teenagers and inexperienced drinkers are particularly vulnerable.

Someone may have alcohol poisoning if:

- they are breathing less than twelve times a minute or stop breathing for periods of ten seconds or more
 - they're asleep and you can't wake them up
 - their skin is cold, clammy, pale and bluish in colour
- if you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning, treat it as a medical emergency - call an ambulance and stay with the person until help arrives.

Is it worth it?

You're far more likely to be involved in an accident, a fight, be robbed or assaulted or to get in trouble with the police if you get drunk. If you end up with a criminal record, it affects your chances of a good career and you could lose your driving licence through letting things get out of hand.

Even drinking to get drunk occasionally can have serious consequences. It affects your judgement and can increase risky behaviour, which could result in:

- injuries and accidents
- unsafe sex, which could result in sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies
- you being robbed or going home with a stranger
- fights, arguments and relationship problems
- getting into trouble with the police and getting a criminal record.



Top Tips for staying safe if you plan to drink



Here are some tips to help you stay in control and have a good time.

Units and mixing

The amount of alcohol in drinks varies a lot, so check the label to find the alcohol content of your drink. Many drinks now carry unit icons on the packaging or back labels.

For example, a standard glass (175ml) of wine at 12% alcohol will contain 2 units, the same as a double vodka or whisky, or a pint of traditional beer at 3.5%. Premium beers will be 4.5% or above, increasing your intake by a unit a pint, and a large glass of wine at 14% will be nearly 4 units.

Know your limits

This bottle contains 6 glasses

Units of alcohol per 125ml glass and 75cl bottle:



Home pours of drinks are usually much bigger than pub measures, so with spirits have a long mixer and plenty of ice. Also watch out for 'top ups' - you can kid yourself that you're still on the same drink - finish your glass first before having another drink, so it's easier to keep track of units.

Pace yourself

If you are going to be drinking over several hours - either out on the town or at friends', you could drink much more than you realise. A great way to stay on top is either not to drink at all or to alternate soft drinks or water with each alcoholic drink. Alcohol is dehydrating, so water or long refreshing pacers make a big difference - especially if you're dancing and using energy!

A quick bite
It's very tempting, especially if you're going out straight from college or work, not to eat. Having a quick sandwich or bowl of cereal before you go out will slow the absorption of alcohol into the blood stream.

Try and limit rounds of drinks to 2 or 3 friends as otherwise each time someone buys a round you'll be tempted to say yes to get your money's worth! If you are in a big group and others are drinking faster - or more than you want - skip a round, go and sit down, have a dance or opt out.

Look out for each other

Surveys show that over 30% of us have taken risks or got into an uncomfortable situation by either going home after a night out on our own or with a stranger. Don't risk it! Also, never leave your drink unattended in bars and clubs or accept drinks from complete strangers. Look out for your mates and make sure they look out for you.



Plan how you're going to get home before you go out

If you haven't got a designated driver or an arranged lift, make sure you've got the number for a reliable taxi or know the times of public transport and keep aside enough money to get home safely. If you have to walk home, don't walk through unlit or unsafe areas and never walk home on your own. Make sure your phone is fully charged and that someone at home knows where you are going.

Party planning

When you're having a party, you want your friends to have a great time, naturally. However, you want to be a responsible host too, so here are some simple tips to make sure you all have a good time without things getting out of hand.

- If alcohol is served, keep an eye on the size of measures – don't be too generous and try to stick to pub measures and smaller glasses.
- Offer plenty of water and alcohol free alternatives.
- Serve food - it really helps to soak up the alcohol.
- Watch the strength of mix in home made cocktails – use plenty of ice and mixers.
- If people have had a bit too much to drink, encourage them (very nicely) to

have a soft drink. Tell a 'white lie' – like the beer has run out!

- Keep a special eye out for young people and make sure they're OK.
- Make sure everyone can get home safely, using a designated driver, public transport, or taxi.
- Have taxi phone numbers available and if at all possible pre-book.
- As host, make sure you set a good example and drink in moderation.

Safer Summer Holidays

If you're going away for sun, sea and fun, have a great time - just try and remember these simple tips.

- If you travel by air, especially on long flights don't be tempted to drink too much, even if it is free! Water and soft drinks are a better choice as both alcohol and altitude dehydrate you.
- Because alcohol dehydrates you, and the heat of the sun makes it worse, drink at least a litre of water a day.
- Don't let drink lead you into risky situations, with strangers, swimming pools or unknown places.
- Mixing drink with sports, from volleyball to rock climbing, can lead to injuries. So play it safe. Likewise, midnight swimming and drinking is never advisable.
- If you're going out in the car, decide beforehand who's going to be your designated driver. It's their job to make sure you all get home safely.
- Bars abroad often serve larger measures of spirits than at home so just two vodkas could be the same as four or five at home.
- When you're relaxing in a beer garden, on the beach, or at a BBQ, lather on the

sun lotion. A combination of hangover and sunburn is enough to spoil anyone's holiday.

- In some countries, alcohol is restricted or banned. Consult your guidebook or travel agent before you go, and respect local laws and customs. Apart from being common courtesy, ignoring advice can lead to serious punishment.
- When waiting for your flight at the airport don't drink too much as you may not be allowed to travel.
- Many insurance companies won't pay up if you have an accident after drinking too much.
- It is important to check drink drive limits when abroad as they may be lower. Most of Europe has a BAC limit of 0.05 (Sweden 0.02 and Hungary zero) – and in the US it is illegal to have any alcohol in your blood if you're under 21 and driving.
- Don't risk spending your holiday behind bars – nominate one amongst the group to be the designated driver before you go out, book a taxi, or use public transport.

Festivals

- Make sure you go with friends you can rely on - stick together and have regular meet up times during the day and evening. Take plenty of sun cream, wellies, waterproof and a hat
- Food and drinks can be expensive, so take light things like cereal bars, dried fruit, frozen water and milk (keeps your stuff cool for a while). Don't take anything valuable - take a cheap phone with a long battery life and a wind up or solar charger.



- Just because you're in a party atmosphere, don't trust people you don't know well or be tempted to try things they may offer you.

Top tips for the morning after

If in spite of your best intentions you end up drinking more than you should, there are a few things you can do to ease the morning after.

- Drink as much water as you can before going to sleep, and put some beside the bed too.
- Take an antacid to settle your stomach.
- Alcohol is a depressant, so tea or coffee can perk you up (but they can also dehydrate you, so keep up the water as well). Drinking lowers your blood sugar level, so eat as soon as you can. Bananas, cereal, or egg on toast are all good morning-after snacks.
- Never ever do hair of the dog - you'll just prolong the agony.
- Have 48 hours without alcohol if it was a heavy session.
- And next time, either refrain from drinking or set a clear limit before the party and stick to recommended guidelines. Follow our top tips and you won't suffer again.



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR AGE GROUP? QUIZ

Are all teenagers out on the booze? - A look at National and International statistics

Most 16 - 24 year-olds go out and get drunk most weekends – fact or fiction? Teenagers are drinking more than 10 years ago – true or false? Britain is the binge drinking capital of Europe - right or wrong?

Try out the questions below to see if what you think about your age group is true or not.

- 1) **What percentage of 16 year-olds have drunk alcohol over the last month?**
a) 82% b) 65% c) 74%
- 2) **How many 16 – 24 year-olds binge drink (that is more than 6 units for women and 8 for men) in the UK?**
a) 19% b) 35% c) 28%
- 3) **How many 16 year-olds have been drunk in the last month in the UK?**
a) 46% b) 54% c) 26%
- 4) **Boys get drunk more than girls, true or false?**
a) True b) False
- 5) **English teenagers drink more than most other teenagers across Europe, yes or no?**
a) Yes b) No
- 6) **Young people are drinking more than they were five or ten years ago, true or false?**
a) True b) False

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR AGE GROUP?**ANSWERS****1) What percentage of 16 year-olds have drunk alcohol over the last month?**

a) 65%

65% of 16 year-olds have drunk some alcohol over the last 30 days. This is about the same as 16 year-olds in France (67%) and Italy (63%) – less than in Denmark (76%) and the Czech Republic (79%).

2) How many 16 – 24 year-olds binge drink (that is more than 6 units for women and 8 for men) in Great Britain?

a) 19%

21% of young men and 16% of young women say they drink at these high levels when they go out - probably far fewer than you thought. In this age group, a worrying minority, 4% of men, drink more than 50 units a week and 4% of women drink more than 35 units a week. So most young adults go out to have a good time with their mates and don't go out to get drunk.

3) How many 16 year-olds have been drunk in the last month in the UK?

c) 26%

Most British 16 year-olds (74%), go out to have a good time and not to get drunk – in fact 19% of 16 - 24 year-olds in Great Britain say they generally don't drink or never drink alcohol (ONS 2013).

4) Boys get drunk more than girls, true or false?

b) False

More 16 year-olds girls (29%) than boys (24%) said they got drunk over the last 30 days when asked (ESPAD), which is partly due to the fact that boys prefer lower alcohol drinks such as beer and cider, while girls drink more spirits. Also girls are generally smaller, have less body water and have less of the enzyme (ADH) that breaks down alcohol - meaning alcohol affects them more than boys.

In 2013, the amount of alcohol consumed in the past week by was similar - 8.4 units for boys versus 7.2 for girls. The number of days per week on which girls and boys drank was also the same (1.4 days), although more underage girls than boys end up in hospital because of drinking.

5) English teenagers drink more than most other teenagers across Europe, yes or no?

a) Yes

The EU average for 16 year-olds getting drunk in the last 30 days is 17%, so although we're not the teenage

binge drinking capital at 26% (in Denmark it's 37% and in Spain it's 32% of 16 year-olds who get drunk monthly) we get drunk more than most other EU countries such as Italy and Greece at 13% and France at 20%).

6) Young people are drinking more than they were five or ten years ago, true or false?

b) False

Underage drinking is falling rapidly across the UK, as is binge drinking among 16 - 24 year-olds. 15 year-olds who drink alcohol at least once a week in England has fallen from 38% of girls and 41% of boys in 2005/6 to 10% for both girls and boys in 2014 (HSCIC) and just 2% of 13 year-olds drink weekly (falling from 15% of girls and 19% of boys in 2011).

Among 16 - 24 year-olds those drinking more than twice the daily guidelines on occasion fell from 31% of men in 2006 to 28% in 2013 and among 16 – 24 year old women fell from 28% to 16% - so young adults today still drink as part of going out and having a good time, but far less go out to get drunk than five or ten years ago.

In England, alcohol related hospital admissions for the period 2011/12- 2013/14 were 13,725, down 41% compared to 2006/7-2008/09.

For discussion:

Were you surprised by the figures?

Will it change your views or behaviour when you go out?

Do you think the media represents young people fairly?

What do you think about girls getting drunk more often and ending up in hospital more than boys? Think about type of drinks, eating before drinking and how alcohol is broken down by the body.

The law has changed in the UK, meaning you can't blame alcohol for criminal behaviour – This makes you responsible for your actions what ever state of drunkenness you are in - What do you think about this?

Sources:

ESPAD European school survey project on alcohol and other drugs (published 2012), a survey carried out every 4 years of 15 and 16 year-olds across the EU

HBSC Health behaviour in school-aged children study: 2013/14 report (published 2015) following the behaviours of 11-15 year-olds across Europe.

HSCIC Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England 2014 (published 2015)

ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, Drinking Habits amongst Adults, 2013 ons.gov.uk

HSCIC Health Survey for England, 2014 (published 2015).