



Goal and Rationale

The goal of this video, “What is Alcohol”, from our teens series is to teach teens what alcohol is, how alcohol can be dangerous, and how they can make the right choices when it comes to identifying and rejecting alcohol.

By the end of this activity, we hope that teens will be able to:

- ✓ Define what alcohol is.
- ✓ Discuss how alcohol can be dangerous.
- ✓ Theorize the short and long-term effects that alcohol can have on people.
- ✓ Evaluate the different ways that alcohol can impact them and their bodies.
- ✓ Come up with a plan for rejecting alcohol if necessary.

Suggested Procedure for Educators

This video is seven minutes and fifty seconds long, as you show the video to your students, **pause the video at the 4:00** point to ask students the following questions:

1. What is alcohol made of? (0:57)

Answer: Alcohol is made from different fruits, vegetables and cereal. The sugar in barley makes beer, the sugar in grapes makes wine, and the sugar in potatoes makes vodka.

2. What is the process that makes people drunk? (1:07)

Answer: The reason why alcohol makes people drunk is because of a process called fermentation. Fermentation is a natural process through which microorganisms like yeast and bacteria convert sugar into alcohol, called Ethanol. Ethanol is the key ingredient in alcohol and the active component that gets you drunk.



3. What happens when you drink and urinate a lot? (3:01)

Answer: Alcohol dilates your blood vessels. Your brain releases serotonin and dopamine to make you feel good. That feeling is very temporary. Your kidneys make and release a whole bunch of urine. This decreases the water content in your body, increasing the alcohol concentration. Alcohol vapor diffuses from your blood into your lungs. Your liver breaks alcohol down into water and carbon dioxide, making you feel less drunk.

4. Explain what happens to your mind when you drink. (3:41)

Answer: When people drink alcohol, after their first drink, they often feel more relaxed, but that feeling wears off pretty fast, whether they drink more or not. After, some people will feel down, others will feel anxious. The more you drink, the more amplified these side effects will be, and they'll last longer.

After discussing these questions with your students, resume the video. When the video ends, have students answer the following questions:

5. Why do people act weird when they drink? (5:25)

Answer: Alcohol alters your perception of the real world. It removes your inhibitions, but also strips away your control. This is why people might fight and argue, usually for stupid things. The decisions they make are usually off because of the way they perceive reality. So, they'll take their car and endanger themselves and others. They might do something foolish like sending embarrassing tweets or texts.

6. What should you do if you don't want to drink and don't want to look foolish? (4:18)

Answer: A piece of advice, just prepare a good reason so you won't freeze and won't look like a fool. Between you and I, if your friend thinks you're chicken or "not cool" because you don't want to drink, I wouldn't necessarily call them a good friend.



7. What happens when you mix alcohol and meds? (5:56)

Answer: Taking alcohol with meds minimizes the effects of the meds you're taking. If it's something important that your body needs, it can have severe consequences. Another thing to note is that mixing alcohol with cocaine creates what's called "Cocaethylene". It increases toxicity for the heart, liver, and other major organs. It's very dangerous.

8. Why shouldn't teens drink alcohol? (6:28)

Answer: The reason why alcohol is not good for you or any teen under 15 is that the organs in your body are not fully formed. That doesn't mean you should drink if you're 15 or older. No matter your age, it's not good for your grades. It's also important to remember that you can be arrested if you drink in a public area.

Once your students have answered questions 1-8, proceed to a large group discussion using the thematic questions below. Depending on the grade level or age group of your students, you can expect this entire activity including the video to take between 20-30 minutes.

Discussion questions

Note: the sample answers below represent potential correct answers and can be used to facilitate deeper discussion with your students.

9. What is the narrator trying to tell us about alcohol?

Answers will vary but could include: that alcohol is a drug that harms our bodies, and that we shouldn't be using it as teenagers because it can impact our future in a negative way. Alcohol is not good for you or any teen under 15 is that the organs in your body are not fully formed.



- 10. How does the video explain the role that peer pressure plays in alcohol use and abuse?**

Answers will vary but could include: the video tells us that one of the main people start drinking is peer pressure, not wanting to look foolish or like an outcast, and suggests having a plan for rejecting the offer. It is important to remember that good friends should want the best for you and respect your decisions.

- 11. What emotions did you feel while watching this video? Explain your answer.**

Answers will vary but could include: curiosity, fear, anxiety, determination, confusion, doubt, sadness, uncertainty, pride, excitement, and/or hope.

- 12. What lessons can we learn about alcohol from this video? Explain your answer.**

Answers will vary but could include: that alcohol can make medicines we take work less effectively, and that it can harm our progress in school as well as other areas of our lives.

- 13. How has this video informed and/or changed your opinion about alcohol? Explain your answer.**

Answers will vary but could include: that alcohol is a dangerous drug, and we can't let peer pressure or trying to fit in influence our decision-making.

Note: Teachers, please have your students share their feedback with us using the form linked at the end of this curriculum's web page, we want to continue to make our message stronger and more effective. Thanks!