

Alcohol: Teacher's notes and tips – upper intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a You could start the lesson by producing a small bottle of water, white vinegar, perfume and alcohol (a spirit not beer) and ask students to identify what they all have in common. After some guesses hand out the task sheet.

Tip: use realia

Students will be much more interested if you can bring in little bottles of distilled liquids.

- b (or) hand out one copy of the task sheet to each student and ask them individually to do the four parts to question 1, and then compare with another student.
- c Feedback:
a *The dirty water is heated / to the boiling point and thus vaporizes / (becomes steam), while other substances remain in solid state, in the boiler. / Steam is then directed into a cooler / where it cools down and returns to liquid water / and the end result is a water, purified of additional substances found in it before the process began.*
b *distillation* **c** *to purify a liquid or to obtain a liquid* **d** *e.g. fresh water can be distilled from sea water, perfume from flowers, some alcohols (beer isn't, whisky is), some vinegar etc* (NB Alcohol is made by fermentation, distillation purifies the liquid and makes it stronger and more palatable).
- d Students do the matching task in the second question, checking with another student when they have finished. No feedback.

Tip: react to the students' level of interest

If students seem keen on the subject, get them to suggest other drinks and the countries that are associated with them. If they haven't a clue tell them not to worry – they'll get the answers now.

2 First reading tasks

- a Put the students in pairs. Hand out one copy of the reading to every pair and ask them to read as quickly as possible together to check that the matching exercise has been done correctly.

Tip: encourage different reading skills

There are a lot of words here, but the texts can be scanned quickly to get the answers.

- b Get the answers from the students. Rum is not mentioned but they can work that out through elimination.

3 Second reading tasks

- a Each paragraph has the name of the drink. Ask students to read them again and to make up a suitable heading to summarize the paragraph and to write this by the name of the drink. Suggest that students share ideas and write the heading they think is most appropriate.

Tip: do an example first

Even at this level students need inspiration and guidance. Ask everyone to read the paragraph about gin and to volunteer suitable headings. Then let students continue working in pairs.

- b Let students compare their ideas and decide which ones are the best.

Tip: provide reading tasks that start with the overall meaning

Summarizing a text by writing a heading is a good way to get students to look at gist rather than worrying about individual words.

4 Post-reading tasks – vocabulary

- a Ask each student in their pairs to choose one of the sheets so they have three 'drinks' each. Students read again and underline a maximum of six words or phrases they don't understand on their page. Suggest they don't choose words such as *agave* which are explained in the text! *It's a Mexican plant.*
- b Once chosen ask students to show their words / phrases to their partner – can they help in guessing what the meanings are?
- c Then provide dictionaries (not before!) and get students to look up their words – they need to record both the words and the meanings.

Tip: consider not pre-teaching vocabulary

By letting students choose the words / phrases to look up after having read the text a couple of times first is much more useful than pre-teaching vocabulary before a reading. Some words they don't know will become clear in context, some can be guessed at, others can be safely ignored.

4 Post-reading tasks – structure

- a Ask students to look at the three sentences about gin on their handout. Then ask them to find the sentences with the same meaning in the text – what is the difference? *The subject (gin) is now in the middle of the sentence, the word 'and' is no longer necessary and there is only one verb.*
- b Explain to students that learners of English tend to use more verbs than native speakers when writing and this is one way of reducing the verbs and making more sophisticated sentences. Without looking at the texts ask students to rewrite the other four sentences and then compare with another student.
- c Students can self-check by comparing their sentences with those in the text.

Tip: use reading to improve students' writing skills

The more students read the better readers they become, the more vocabulary they learn and the more grammar they are exposed to. Help is often needed though to help students notice different structures. Refer to this exercise the next time they have a writing task.

- d Don't forget to recycle the new vocabulary in a later lesson.