

A 'heathenish liquor'? A cure for cancer? The history of coffee is full of surprises

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The article describes the history of coffee and how attitudes towards it have changed over the years. It also discusses the potential health benefits of drinking coffee.

Time: 45–60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Vocabulary

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

7. leaflet
8. proprietor
9. drowsiness
10. win over
11. abominable
12. gaslight
13. correlation
14. undoubted

3. Comprehension check

- a. a. The answers given are only suggested, and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g., in item 4, they may say, 'It stops drowsiness' or similar. Note that the text mentions the people of Ethiopia foraging for coffee berries but does not mention them drinking coffee, so the answer to item 2 is Yemen.

Key:

1. that coffee affects the way people function
2. Yemen
3. in London in the 1650s
4. that it prevents people from feeling sleepy
5. drinking beer
6. to promote his company's drink
7. He was a coffee drinker himself.
8. People also smoked when they drank coffee.
9. the dietary fibre present in coffee
10. because the concentrations of the carcinogenic compound detected in coffee were too low to cause cancer

1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to introduce the topic of coffee drinking. This is a general-knowledge activity, which may encourage some discussion, even argument, among students. Brazil (which produces 2,652,000 metric tonnes of coffee a year) is certainly in the first place, but the order of the other five countries is more debatable.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Brazil | 4. Indonesia |
| 2. Vietnam | 5. Honduras |
| 3. Colombia | 6. Ethiopia |

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Note that both 'beneficial' and 'detrimental' are followed by 'to' as in 'detrimental to your health'. The word beverage is a formal word for drink and may often be seen in notices, as in 'Hot beverages are served until 9 pm.' In addition to its meanings of 'strange' or 'unusual', outlandish has negative connotations, as in "I find his comments outlandish."

Key:

1. bowel
2. beneficial
3. detrimental
4. beverage
5. forage
6. outlandish

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Note that you can also protest about something, but 'about' is not one of the options here.

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9. *the dietary fibre present in coffee*
10. *because the concentrations of the carcinogenic compound detected in coffee were too low to cause cancer*

- b. Students use some of the phrases from the previous task to complete the sentences.

Key:

1. *beyond dispute*
2. *protesting against*
3. *prescribed to*
4. *correlation with*

5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree.

6. In your own words

- a-b. Students should research and discuss coffee in their countries, but you can also encourage them to talk about a drink that is traditional or popular where they live. The task could also be done as homework, and students could then present their findings to the class.