

Why scientific support for alcohol's health benefits is fading

Level 2: Intermediate

Article summary: The article describes how theories about the possible benefits of alcohol consumption have changed over the years.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Vocabulary

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the general topic of drinking. The article discusses the dangers of drinking alcohol but the warmer focuses on alternatives to alcoholic drinks, namely soft drinks.

Key:

1. Argentina
2. the USA
3. Chile
4. Mexico
5. Uruguay
6. Belgium

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Note that *persist* may have negative connotations – in this case, it is a dubious idea that for some reason continues to exist. The word *flaw* is often used in relation to an argument, theory or idea, as in, 'There's a simple flaw in your argument.'

Key:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. abstain | 6. tricky |
| 2. controversial | 7. predisposed |
| 3. contradict | 8. beneficial |
| 4. flaw | 9. persist |
| 5. intake | 10. impact |

- b. Ask students to work in pairs again to complete the sentences using words from the previous exercise.

Key:

1. contradicted
2. abstained
3. flaw
4. advocate
5. controversial

3. Comprehension check

- a. The answers given are only suggested answers and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g., in item 5 they may say, 'It is often incorrect' or similar.

Key:

1. False. Small amounts.
2. False. Some studies support this theory.
3. True
4. True
5. False. It is usually inaccurate.
6. True
7. True
8. False. The drinks industry has done this.

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Encourage them to do the exercise without looking in the text but to check their answers in the text.

Key:

1. c (mortality risk)
2. e (medicinal purposes)
3. f (cardiovascular disease)
4. a (research techniques)
5. d (beneficial effect)
6. b (medicinal flaws)

- b. Students complete the sentences using collocations from task A.

Key:

1. beneficial effect
2. research techniques
3. mortality risk
4. medicinal purposes
5. cardiovascular disease

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5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements from the article and provide reasons for their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

6. In your own words

- a-b. This task can be assigned as homework individually or in pairs. Ask students to do some online research, gather information, and prepare a presentation. They can then present their findings to the class.