

## 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 compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Note that another word for *contentious* is *controversial*. A *flaw* can often be found in a person's argument or in an idea or theory, while *overwhelming* often collocates with words like *majority* or *number*, as in "The overwhelming majority voted against the proposal." Apart from *abstaining* from alcohol in the sense that people do not drink it, you can also *abstain* in a vote. In other words, you do not vote for or against a motion.

**Key:**

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. advocate    | 7. untangle      |
| 2. temperance  | 8. predisposed   |
| 3. booze       | 9. purported     |
| 4. abstain     | 10. clear-cut    |
| 5. contentious | 11. consensus    |
| 6. flaw        | 12. overwhelming |

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

**Key:**

1. contentious
2. abstained
3. purported
4. advocate
5. temperance

#### 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 4, they may say, 'because their response may change over time' or similar.

**Key:**

1. China
2. It suggests that drinking a small amount of alcohol is better than abstaining.
3. It concluded that any amount of drink is bad.
4. because their response is likely to be inaccurate
5. It found that the lowest mortality risk was in people who had never drunk at all.
6. because alcohol affects everyone differently and people drink for different reasons
7. The more you drink, the higher your risk.
8. There are lower rates of some cancers in non-drinkers.
9. They concluded that small amounts of drink could protect against cardiovascular disease.
10. The general scientific view does not agree with this conclusion.

#### 4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs.

**Key:**

1. in (moderation)
2. at (the end of the day)
3. (effect) on
4. (drawn) to
5. (meet) with
6. for (health reasons)

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### Level 3: Advanced

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

**Key:**

1. *in (moderation)*
2. *at (the end of the day)*
3. *(effect) on*
4. *(drawn) to*
5. *(meet) with*
6. *for (health reasons)*

### 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.