

Alcohol

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To be aware of the effects of alcohol on health and well-being
- To understand and apply guidelines on alcohol consumption
- To identify and reflect on personal drinking habits



RESOURCES

- Anagram cards to be devised by teacher (Engage activity, optional)
- Labels from alcoholic drinks (Engage activity)
- Sticky labels or cards (Engage activity)
- Half-pint glass, small wine glass, large wine glass, whisky measure and tumbler, pint glasses (three), concentrated orange juice, teaspoon, water (Engage activity)

- Information leaflets about alcohol (Activity 1)
- Copies of Resources 1, 2 and 4
- Cards prepared from Resources 3A and 3B

RELATED TOPICS

Are you drinking enough fluid? (pages 84–88)

HEALTH SKILLS

Alcohol is socially acceptable in many communities and is enjoyed by many people in moderate amounts. Some people can become dependent on alcohol and this can have life-threatening health implications and also impacts on personal and community safety. This topic aims to raise awareness of health hazards associated with alcohol and to help individuals to consider their own intake and what effect it might be having on their short- and long-term health and safety. It will explore the guidelines given about alcohol intake and ask learners to apply this to their own situations.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

In order to monitor their own alcohol intake, learners need to:

- access and understand information on alcohol intake in written, graphical and numerical format
- apply this information to their own lives.

Functional Skills/Core Curriculum

Activities in this topic will contribute to learning in the following curriculum areas:

- understand the meaning of percentage regarding strength **Maths** L1.13 (N/N2/L1.8)
- work out equivalent units and limits **Maths** E3.17 (N/MSS1/E3.7)
- add up units of alcohol **Maths** E3.7 (N/N1/E2.4)
- understand and use specialist words **English** E3.8 (L/Rw/E3.1) **English** L1.13 (L/Rw/L1.1).

- Ask learners to share ideas about how they socialise and/or relax. Draw the discussion round to the social role of drinking and the fact that, for many people, meeting up with others involves having one or more alcoholic beverages.
- Alcohol is not acceptable at all in some cultures and religions, for example Muslim culture.
- Ask learners what they know of the effects of alcohol and allow for discussion.
- Write anagrams on the flipchart of some familiar alcoholic drinks (e.g. eber, new ride, kywish) and ask learners to guess what the drinks are (beer, red wine, whisky).
- Suggest volunteers write the answers on the flipchart and add one or two of their own in anagram form for others to unscramble. As an alternative, give two sets of cards with scrambled words on one set and the actual words on the other for learners to match.
- Discuss the drinks on the flipchart and how strong learners think they are relation to each other.
- Show some labels from alcoholic drinks and ask learners to find information on the label that indicates how strong the drink is.
- Point out that the 'strength' of a drink is shown on the label as '% vol' (per cent by volume) or '% ABV' (per cent alcohol by volume). They both tell you what portion of the total volume of liquid is alcohol – the higher the percentage, the stronger the drink and the more intense the effects of the alcohol.
- Ask learners what their understanding of 'per cent' is. Point out that it means per 100, so 10 per cent is 10 parts in every 100. If appropriate spend some time working through this concept.
- Discuss with learners what range of strengths they have seen for spirits, wines and beers. (If possible have a selection of labels collected from alcoholic drinks for learners to examine.)
- Write 'whisky 40% vol', 'wine 13%' and 'ordinary strength beer 3.5%' on sticky labels. Discuss the fact that many continental lagers are stronger at around 5%.
- Ask for volunteers to measure 40, 13 and 3.5 teaspoons of concentrated orange juice into three individual pint glasses before filling with water and labelling. Ask learners to put these in order of strength starting with the weakest alcohol content.
- Now pour a 'shot' of the 40% mix into a whisky glass, fill a small wine glass with the 13%, and fill a half-pint glass with the 3.5%. Transfer the labels as necessary.
- Pointing out that there are now different amounts of each drink, ask learners if they can put the drinks in order of alcoholic effect if consumed. Challenge learners to think about whether this is as easy as it first sounds: 'This is a stronger drink but you have less of it. How would people cope with a pint of whisky?'
- Introduce the notion of 'units of alcohol' as a way of comparing different types of alcohol and to monitor alcohol intake.
- Give out Resource 1, which gives the number of units for different alcoholic drinks (e.g. $\frac{1}{2}$ a pint of beer = 1 unit, 1 pint of ordinary strength beer = 2 units, 1 pint of strong beer = 3–4 units), and use as the basis for discussion. Encourage learners to share ideas about anything they find surprising.

How socially acceptable is alcohol among your friends and family?

What are the effects of alcohol short term and long term?

Which drinks are likely to have most effect on people? Why do you think that is?

What are 'units of alcohol'?

- Discuss that many people enjoy drinking and find it a sociable and relaxing thing to do, and normally it does no harm. But there are recommended upper limits for daily alcohol intake. The Chief Medical Officers' guideline for both men and women is that it is safest not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol per week and it is better to spread this evenly over three days or more.
- Discuss weekly limits and the dangers of binge drinking: 'You can't save up units.' The impact of heavy bouts of drinking is more dangerous.
- If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all, to keep risks to your baby to a minimum.
- Point out that in many situations there is a 'zero tolerance' for alcohol. Ask learners to identify situations where it is unacceptable or illegal to consume any alcohol.

Is there a recommended upper limit for a week?

Are there any times when it is really unsafe to have any alcohol?

What do you know about alcohol?

TIP

Give scenarios to illustrate the questions and examples to reinforce the answers.

ACTIVITY 1

Test general knowledge about alcohol

- Give out Resource 2 and invite learners to try the quiz out in pairs or small groups. Provide information leaflets to use as a reference source for the quiz.
- Refer to the answers section and use it to stimulate discussion and raise awareness of health hazards associated with alcohol. Direct the discussion to focus on how to limit alcohol intake, the effects it has on the body and how long this may last, the real physical and health dangers caused by alcohol, etc.
- Make sure that learners clearly mark on the page which items are true and which are false so that they can refer back to the sheet and be clear about the correct answers.
- The answers contain a lot of interesting language. If appropriate, use the opportunity to look up definitions and ask learners to put them into their own words.

Support

- Read the questions for learners. Support them as they find the correct information in leaflets. This may involve directing learners to key headings or words and supporting reading.
- Make sure that learners understand the answers as well as the questions. Read through the answers and use the opportunity to explore and define the language used.
- Make sure that learners understand how to fill in the quiz using a tick to represent 'true' and a cross for 'false'. Go through a couple of answers with them to check they have understood this.

ESOL

- The quiz contains a lot of words that may be new to learners. Try pairing them with native English speakers so that they can discuss the meaning together, e.g. 'sober up', 'recreational drug', 'birth defect'.
- Ask learners to read the cards and discuss the meaning of unfamiliar words and/or look them up in a bilingual dictionary.
- Encourage them to summarise the information in their own words for the group.

ACTIVITY 2

Work out the number of alcohol units in different drinks

- Shuffle and give out the cards from Resource 3A or 3B. Working in pairs, one learner draws out three cards and the other learner says how many units of alcohol these drinks come to.
- Note: there are two versions of the cards. The cards on 3A require the learner to know the unit value of the different drinks or to refer to Resource 1 for this information. The cards on 3B show the 'unit' value of the drinks and can be used to add units or check answers.

How many units of alcohol are there in different drinks?

Support

- Use the cards from Resource 3B. Get learners to highlight the number of units shown on each card.
- Model the activity and support learners as they add the units.

ESOL

Make sure that learners know the meaning of 'ordinary strength', 'strong', 'alcopop', 'small glass', 'large glass', 'pub measure' and 'double'.

ACTIVITY 3

Use a game to calculate drinking limits

- Introduce Resource 4 ('Effects of daily alcohol intake') and have a brief discussion of the key points.
- Introduce and model the following game, working with a volunteer.
- Working in pairs, each learner selects one of the 'effects' cards (i.e. man, woman, pregnant woman).
- Place the cards from Resource 3A face down on the table.
- One learner is the bar tender and hands out cards to the other learner, who chooses to accept or refuse the cards depending on the limits set by the 'effects' card chosen. They then swap roles.
- The aim is to stay within the safe daily drinking limit each day for a week.
- At the end of the activity, bring learners together and discuss how they did and the 'consequences' if these were long-term drinking patterns.

What are the effects of alcohol on your health?

What do you think the long-term consequences would be for the health of a person with a heavy and persistent drinking habit?

Support

- Use the cards from Resource 3B.
- Model the activity with the learner and ask direct questions to support decision making.

ESOL

Before playing the game, check that learners understand the main ideas on the three 'effects' cards by:

- discussing the meaning of words (e.g. 'safe', 'dangerous', 'at risk', 'damage', 'regularly').
- giving learners some statements to discuss and complete (e.g. 'It's safe for a man to drink up to units a day', 'A woman who isn't pregnant starts to put her health at risk if she drinks more than units a day', etc.).

ACTIVITY 4

Find unit equivalents of different alcoholic drinks

Using the cards from Resource 3B, ask learners to find the whisky, wine and ordinary strength beer equivalent of one pint of very strong beer of four units. Repeat for a bottle of alcopop (one and a half units). Point out how deceptive something like an alcopop can be, as it appears to be more like a soft drink than an alcoholic drink.

Support

Support learners with addition if needed.

ESOL

- Write up example sentences for talking about equivalence, e.g. 'Drinking one small glass of white wine is equivalent to drinking half a pint of ordinary strength lager,' or 'Drinking two double whiskies is the same as drinking a pint of very strong beer.'
- Ask learners to write similar sentences.

Are all alcoholic drinks the same in strength?

Action

Learners may practise their skills of calculating with units of alcohol by keeping a log to monitor their own drinking patterns.

How can you find out further information on alcohol?

One unit of alcohol



$\frac{1}{2}$ pint of *ordinary strength* beer,
lager or cider = **1 unit**



1 small glass of wine =
1.5 unit



1 pub measure of brandy
or other spirit = **1 unit**

Two units of alcohol



1 pint of *ordinary strength* beer,
lager or cider = **2 units**



1 large glass of wine =
3 units



1 double measure of brandy
or other spirit = **2 units**

More than two units



1 pint of *strong* beer, lager
or cider = **3–4 units**

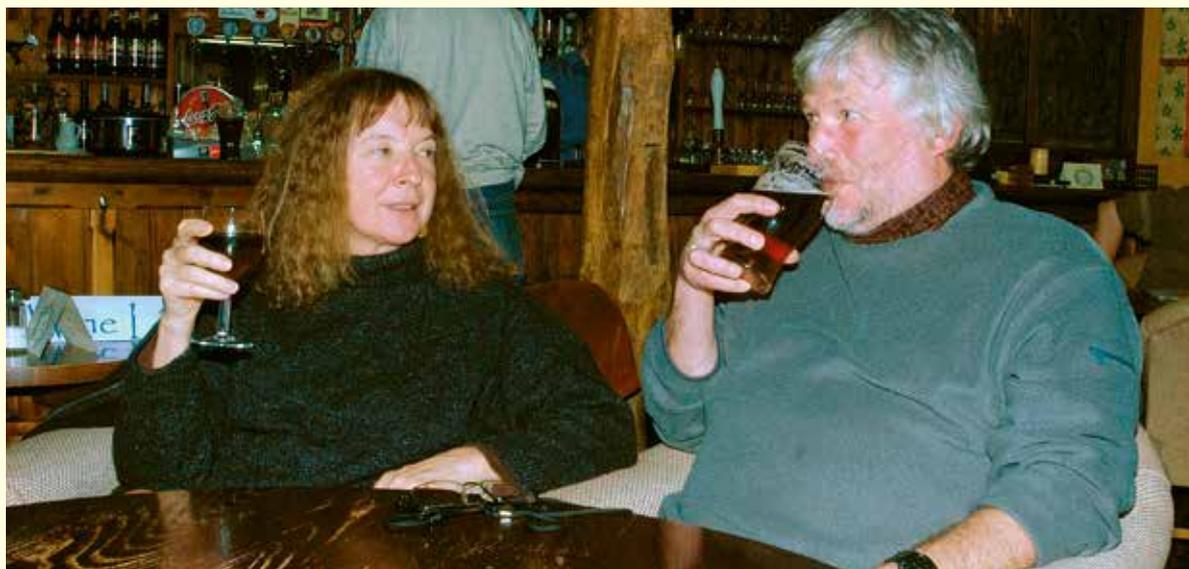


1 bottle of wine =
9 units



1 bottle of alcopop =
1.5 unit

What do you know about **alcohol?**



True ✓ or false ✗?

- 1 Alcohol helps you think more clearly and speeds up your reactions.
- 2 Drinking alcohol helps you to lose weight.
- 3 Black coffee helps you to sober up after drinking too much alcohol.
- 4 If you drink a lot of alcohol in the evening, you can still be over the legal limit for driving next morning.
- 5 Drinking too much alcohol while pregnant can result in birth defects and low birthweight babies.
- 6 Alcohol reacts with 'recreational drugs' but *not* with prescribed medicines.
- 7 Alcohol warms you up in cold weather.
- 8 You're more attractive to the opposite sex after a few drinks.
- 9 Drinking too much alcohol in one drinking session can kill you.
- 10 Smaller people are more affected by alcohol than larger people.
- 11 Alcohol makes you relaxed and friendly.

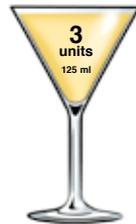
Alcohol

RESOURCE 3A

<p>$\frac{1}{2}$ pint</p>  <p><i>ordinary strength beer</i></p>	<p>$\frac{1}{2}$ pint</p>  <p><i>ordinary strength beer</i></p>	<p>$\frac{1}{2}$ pint</p>  <p><i>ordinary strength beer</i></p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p><i>ordinary strength beer</i></p>
<p>1 pint</p>  <p><i>ordinary strength beer</i></p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p><i>ordinary strength beer</i></p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p><i>strong beer</i></p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p><i>strong beer</i></p>
<p>1 small glass</p>  <p>wine</p>	<p>1 small glass</p>  <p>wine</p>	<p>1 small glass</p>  <p>wine</p>	<p>1 bottle</p>  <p>alcopop</p>
<p>1 large glass</p>  <p>wine</p>	<p>1 large glass</p>  <p>wine</p>	<p>1 large glass</p>  <p>wine</p>	<p>1 bottle</p>  <p>alcopop</p>
<p>1 pub measure</p>  <p>whisky</p>	<p>1 pub measure</p>  <p>whisky</p>	<p>1 double</p>  <p>whisky</p>	<p>1 double</p>  <p>whisky</p>

Alcohol

RESOURCE 3B

<p>$\frac{1}{2}$ pint</p>  <p>1 unit</p> <p>ordinary strength beer</p>	<p>$\frac{1}{2}$ pint</p>  <p>1 unit</p> <p>ordinary strength beer</p>	<p>$\frac{1}{2}$ pint</p>  <p>1 unit</p> <p>ordinary strength beer</p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p>2 units</p> <p>ordinary strength beer</p>
<p>1 pint</p>  <p>2 units</p> <p>ordinary strength beer</p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p>2 units</p> <p>ordinary strength beer</p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p>4 units</p> <p>strong beer</p>	<p>1 pint</p>  <p>4 units</p> <p>strong beer</p>
<p>1 small glass</p>  <p>1.5 units 125 ml</p> <p>wine</p>	<p>1 small glass</p>  <p>1.5 units 125 ml</p> <p>wine</p>	<p>1 small glass</p>  <p>1.5 units 125 ml</p> <p>wine</p>	<p>1 bottle</p>  <p>1.5 unit</p> <p>alcopop</p>
<p>1 large glass</p>  <p>3 units 125 ml</p> <p>wine</p>	<p>1 large glass</p>  <p>3 units 125 ml</p> <p>wine</p>	<p>1 large glass</p>  <p>3 units 125 ml</p> <p>wine</p>	<p>1 bottle</p>  <p>3 units</p> <p>alcopop</p>
<p>1 pub measure</p>  <p>1 unit</p> <p>whisky</p>	<p>1 pub measure</p>  <p>1 unit</p> <p>whisky</p>	<p>1 double</p>  <p>2 units</p> <p>whisky</p>	<p>1 double</p>  <p>2 units</p> <p>whisky</p>

Adults

Effects of daily alcohol intake

1 UNIT	2 UNITS	3 UNITS	4 UNITS	5 UNITS	6 UNITS	7 UNITS	8 UNITS	9 UNITS	10 UNITS
The safest level for most healthy adults			Your health is at risk if you drink this much each day.	Drinking this much regularly is dangerous for your health.	You are badly damaging your body if you drink this much regularly.				

If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all.

There are no audio scripts for this topic.

ACTIVITY 1 / Resource 2

1 Alcohol helps you think more clearly and speeds up your reactions – False.

Alcohol is a depressant, **not** a stimulant. This means it slows down the reactions in your brain, affecting physical coordination and reaction times. It also impairs your judgement and ability to control your emotions.

2 Drinking alcohol helps you to lose weight – False.

Alcohol is high in calories. It has no real food value and may undo your resolve to avoid certain foods.

3 Black coffee helps you to sober up after drinking too much alcohol – False.

It's not possible to speed up the elimination of alcohol from your blood stream. Coffee may keep you awake and make you think you're less impaired, but it doesn't reduce your blood alcohol level. Getting rid of alcohol requires time.

4 If you drink a lot of alcohol in the evening, you can still be over the legal limit for driving next morning – True.

Alcohol is eliminated from the body at a rate of about half a pint of beer an hour. Even after eight hours of sleep, your body will only have removed the alcohol from four pints of ordinary beer.

5 Drinking too much alcohol while pregnant can result in birth defects and low birthweight babies – True.

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can result in low birthweight babies and birth defects. It may also result in fetal alcohol syndrome and increases the risk of miscarriage. Research is still being done on this, and for safety it is best for pregnant women not to drink any alcohol. They should certainly not drink more than one to two units.

6 Alcohol reacts with 'recreational drugs' but not with prescribed medicines – False.

Mixing alcohol with any drugs can be dangerous. This is because alcohol slows down the nervous system which controls heart and breathing rate. When alcohol is combined with other depressant drugs, it can cause the body to shut down altogether. Some asthma and hay fever medicines and even some cold remedies increase the effects of alcohol.

7 Alcohol warms you up in cold weather – False.

Although you may feel warmer as you drink, alcohol widens the blood vessels close to the skin's surface, increasing the loss of body heat. In cold surroundings, this could lead to hypothermia.

8 You're more attractive to the opposite sex after a few drinks – False.

Alcohol may lead to loss of judgement and may make you feel less cautious and could therefore lead to unplanned sex. It may also lead to unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and the breakdown of existing relationships.

9 Drinking too much alcohol in one drinking session can kill you – True.

The stages of intoxication are as follows:

Happy – talkative, social and relaxed

Excited – emotional, uncontrolled behaviour and slowed reactions

Confused – staggering, slurred speech

Stupor – unable to stand or walk

Coma – complete unconsciousness. During this stage, breathing may stop, or a person could choke on their own vomit, resulting in death. This is rare but it does happen. You can also die from an accident caused while drunk.

10 Smaller people are more affected by alcohol than larger people – True.

Small, light people have less water in their bodies than larger people. If the same amount of alcohol is consumed, the blood alcohol level will be more concentrated in the smaller person.

11 Alcohol makes you relaxed and friendly – False.

Initially alcohol may do this; but alcohol is actually closely linked with violence and crime. Alcohol is linked to 70% of domestic violence cases, for example.

ACTIVITY 4 / Resource 3B

1 pint of strong beer (4 units) =

4 single whiskies or 2 double whiskies
4 small glasses of wine or 2 large glasses of wine
2 pints or $4 \times \frac{1}{2}$ pints of ordinary strength beer

1 bottle of alcopop (1.5 units) =

1 single whisky
3 small glasses of wine or 1 large glass and 1 small glass
 $3 \times \frac{1}{2}$ pints or $1 \frac{1}{2}$ pints of ordinary strength beer