

Lesson Plan



Reach Out Now



National Teach-In

Prevent Underage Alcohol Use



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
www.samhsa.gov

**START TALKING
BEFORE THEY
START DRINKING**
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

Lesson Plan in Brief

• What To Know • What To Do • What To Say •

Children and parents need “to know” about alcohol and its effects to make good decisions about drinking. They need to know “what to do” to help combat peer pressure and find alternatives to underage drinking. And, they need to know “what to say” to make sure the right message comes through.

Enclosed you will find a complete 30-minute lesson plan that you may use during your Teach-In event.

The lesson plan has three objectives. Following the lesson, students should be able to explain:

- **What To Know:** Describe some of the effects of alcohol on the brain and body.
- **What To Do:** Identify effective alternatives to using alcohol.
- **What To Say:** Work in groups to develop an effective alcohol prevention message.

This lesson plan contains a number of different activities. You may do one or more of these activities, depending on your time and comfort level with the content. The suggested activities include:

Introduction: Brainstorm Alternatives to Drinking (10 minutes)

• What To Do •

- Guide a discussion on what to say or do if someone pressures a student to take a drink.
- Ask students to complete the sentence “Why drink when we could...”

Discussion (5 minutes)

- Ask students to share reasons why they believe young people drink.
- Have students complete the student handout, “What’s Your Alcohol IQ?” true/false quiz.

Presenting Facts/Evaluating Statements (10 minutes)

• What To Know •

- Distribute the enclosed handout and work as a group to determine answers to the true/false quiz (from Introduction).

Getting the Message Out (5 minutes)

• What To Say •

- Brainstorm with students about the methods they could use to tell others about the risks of underage alcohol use and alternative activities to drinking.

Additional materials (may be sent home for students to work on with parents or used by teachers in additional class periods)

• What To Know • What To Do • What To Say •

- Word-find puzzle, The Dangers of Alcohol
- Fill in the blanks/unscramble the word-find puzzle, The Dangers of Alcohol
- Crossword puzzle, Too Smart To Start
- Word-find puzzle, Too Smart To Start

Alcohol: Why Drink When You Can... A Guided Discussion on Underage Alcohol Consumption

• What To Do •

Introduction: Brainstorm Alternatives to Drinking (10 minutes)

(5 minutes) Guide a brief discussion in which students investigate what to say or do if someone pressures them to take a drink. Use “[Talking Points for Leaders](#)” to help you.

Talking Points for Leaders

Suggested Questions	Possible Responses	Leader's Points
Why do you think some young people who don't want to drink feel pressured to drink?	<p>They want a certain person to like them.</p> <p>They don't want to be different.</p> <p>They don't want to create a big scene.</p>	<p>There are other things to do together that would be fun and don't involve drinking. Try some of those.</p> <p>You can choose not to drink—most young people don't drink!</p> <p>Sometimes it is easier to use a one-liner that allows you to say no without making a big scene.</p>
What are some things to say if someone pressures you?	Students may suggest one or more of the ideas in the next column. Be sure they get a chance to discuss all of them.	<p>Some possible alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No thanks. • I don't feel like it—do you have any soda? • Alcohol's NOT my thing. • Are you talking to me? FORGET it. • Why do you KEEP pressuring me when I've said NO?

(5 minutes) Write the sentence starter “Why drink when we could...” on the chalkboard. Challenge students to suggest a wide variety of alternative choices to complete the sentence, such as:

- “**Why drink when we could** play soccer?”
- “**Why drink when we could** go to the movies?”

Discussion

(3 minutes) In a brief discussion, ask students to share the reasons they believe young people drink. Use [Talking Points for Leaders](#) to help you with the discussion.

Talking Points for Leaders

Suggested Questions	Possible Responses	Leader's Points
<p>Why do you think young people start to drink?</p> <p>Why do you think someone you know would drink?</p>	<p>Peer pressure—some friends and classmates want you to do it.</p> <p>We see our parents or other adults drinking.</p> <p>We want to appear grown up.</p> <p>We see older teens drinking.</p> <p>Alcohol is easy to get—someone always brings it to a party.</p> <p>Ads show young people drinking.</p> <p>We see ads everywhere that make drinking look cool and a way to be popular and have friends.</p> <p>We want to see what it tastes like.</p>	<p>Actually, many studies have shown that a large majority of people your age—most of them—DO NOT drink or get drunk! A recent study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows that more than 80 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 reported they had not drunk alcohol in the past month.</p> <p>The media's glamorous portrayal of alcohol encourages many teens to believe that drinking will make them popular, attractive, happy, and cool.</p> <p>To generate sales, alcohol advertising makes products look appealing.</p>

(2 minutes) Follow the discussion by having students complete the true/false quiz, “[What’s Your Alcohol IQ?](#)” to check their alcohol knowledge. They should save their quizzes for the next activity.

• **What To Know** •

Presenting Facts/Evaluating Statements: Effects of Alcohol on the Brain (10 minutes)

Distribute “Alcohol and Your Brain.” Work with students to find information on this student information sheet to assess the truth of each statement in the quiz, “What’s Your Alcohol IQ?” Make sure each of the 12 statements is addressed in the discussion. The answer key includes information to help you guide this discussion.

• What To Say •

Getting the Message Out (5 minutes)

Brainstorm with students about the methods they could use to tell others about the risks of underage alcohol use and alternative activities to drinking. List their ideas on the chalkboard for teachers to use in another class period. Ideas might include:

- Create posters to put up in classrooms or on community bulletin boards.
- Create brochures to place in the school library.
- Create and perform skits in a school-wide assembly.
- Create a school bulletin board.
- Create a message for a PTA newsletter encouraging parents to talk about this topic with their children.
- Create a message that parents could have inserted into a company newsletter or posted on a company bulletin board.

NOTE: Share these ideas with teachers to help students implement some of them in school or at home.

• What To Know • What To Do • What To Say •

Share With Parents (2 minutes)

Distribute the **Student Puzzle Pages** and invite students to work with their parents and family members to complete the puzzles at home. Tell students to use the information on the puzzles to share what they learned today in class.

What's Your Alcohol IQ? • What To Know •

Directions: Below are a dozen statements about how alcohol affects a person's brain activities. Some of these are misconceptions, or mistaken beliefs. Do you know which are true and which are false? Circle TRUE or FALSE for each statement.

1. Alcohol is a stimulant.

TRUE

FALSE

2. Under the influence of alcohol, everything may appear to be fuzzy; drinkers may slur their words and have difficulty hearing, tasting, and smelling.

TRUE

FALSE

3. Under the influence of alcohol, a drinker's ability to think, speak, and move may slow way down.

TRUE

FALSE

4. Under the influence of alcohol, drinkers are usually calm, thoughtful, and easygoing.

TRUE

FALSE

5. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time may damage a person's self-control and ability to plan, think, and make decisions.

TRUE

FALSE

6. Alcohol does not affect memory.

TRUE

FALSE

7. Alcohol may make it difficult for drinkers to keep their balance or hold on to things.

TRUE

FALSE

8. Under the influence of alcohol, a drinker may be emotional and weepy.

TRUE

FALSE

9. Alcohol will help a person sleep.

TRUE

FALSE

10. Drinking alcohol will help a person lose weight.

TRUE

FALSE

11. People attending a winter football game should drink alcohol to keep warm.

TRUE

FALSE

12. The more alcohol people drink, the hungrier and thirstier they will become.

TRUE

FALSE

Answer Key

What's Your Alcohol IQ? • What To Know •

Directions: Below is the **Answer Key** to the student handout, "What's Your Alcohol IQ?" The answers are in bold type and underlined.

1. Alcohol is a stimulant.

TRUE

FALSE

CEREBRAL CORTEX—Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. It can appear to be a stimulant because, initially, it depresses the part of the brain that controls inhibitions.

2. Under the influence of alcohol, everything may appear to be fuzzy; drinkers may slur their words and have difficulty hearing, tasting, and smelling.

TRUE

FALSE

CEREBRAL CORTEX—Alcohol slows down the cerebral cortex as it works with information from your senses.

3. Under the influence of alcohol, a drinker's ability to think, speak, and move may slow way down.

TRUE

FALSE

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM—When you think of something you want your body to do, the central nervous system—the brain and the spinal cord—sends a signal to that part of the body. Alcohol slows down the central nervous system, making you think, speak, and move slower.

4. Under the influence of alcohol, drinkers are usually calm, thoughtful, and easygoing.

TRUE

FALSE

FRONTAL LOBES—When alcohol affects the frontal lobes of the brain, you may find it hard to control your emotions and urges. You may act without thinking or even become violent. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.

5. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time may damage a person's self-control and ability to plan, think, and make decisions.

TRUE

FALSE

FRONTAL LOBES—The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions, and using self-control. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.

6. Alcohol does not affect memory.

TRUE

FALSE

HIPPOCAMPUS—The hippocampus is the part of the brain where your memories are made.

- When alcohol reaches the hippocampus, you may have trouble remembering something you just learned, such as a name or a phone number. This can happen after just one or two drinks.
- Drinking a lot of alcohol quickly can cause a blackout—not being able to remember entire events, such as what you did last night.
- If alcohol damages the hippocampus, you may find it hard to learn and to hold on to knowledge.

7. Alcohol may make it difficult for drinkers to keep their balance or hold on to things.

TRUE

FALSE

CEREBELLUM—The cerebellum is important for coordination, thinking, and being aware. You may have trouble with these skills when alcohol enters the cerebellum. After drinking alcohol, your hands may be so shaky that you can't touch or grab things normally. You may lose your balance and fall.

8. Under the influence of alcohol, a drinker may be emotional and weepy.

TRUE

FALSE

FRONTAL LOBES—The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions, and using self-control. When alcohol affects the frontal lobes of the brain, you may find it hard to control your emotions and urges. You may act without thinking or even become violent. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.

9. Alcohol will help a person sleep.

TRUE

FALSE

HYPOTHALAMUS—The hypothalamus is a small part of the brain that does an amazing number of your body's housekeeping chores. Alcohol upsets the work of the hypothalamus. After a person drinks alcohol, blood pressure, hunger, thirst, and the urge to urinate increase while body temperature and heart rate decrease.

10. Drinking alcohol will help a person lose weight.

TRUE

FALSE

HYPOTHALAMUS—The hypothalamus is a small part of the brain that does an amazing number of your body's housekeeping chores. Alcohol upsets the work of the hypothalamus. After a person drinks alcohol, blood pressure, hunger, thirst, and the urge to urinate increase while body temperature and heart rate decrease.

11. People attending a winter football game should drink alcohol to keep warm.

TRUE

FALSE

MEDULLA—The medulla controls your body’s automatic actions, such as your heartbeat. It also keeps your body at the right temperature. Alcohol actually chills the body. Drinking a lot of alcohol outdoors in cold weather can cause your body temperature to fall below normal. This dangerous condition is called *hypothermia*.

12. The more alcohol people drink, the hungrier and thirstier they will become.

TRUE

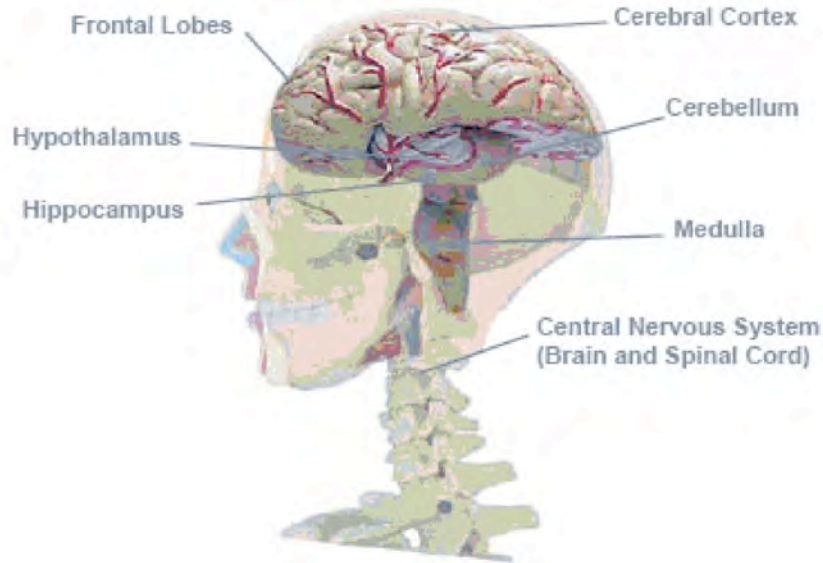
FALSE

HYPOTHALAMUS—The hypothalamus is a small part of the brain that does an amazing number of your body’s housekeeping chores. Alcohol upsets the work of the hypothalamus. After a person drinks alcohol, blood pressure, hunger, thirst, and the urge to urinate increase while body temperature and heart rate decrease.

Student Information Sheet

Alcohol and Your Brain

•What To Know•



Cerebral Cortex

The outer surface of the brain, the cerebral cortex, works with information from your senses.

Your cerebral cortex on alcohol:

- Your inhibitions are lowered due to alcohol's depressing effect. A small amount may make you feel relaxed and confident, but before long you're likely to talk too much, act silly and stupid, or have impaired judgment.
- Your cerebral cortex performs more slowly.
- Your vision may get blurry, you may slur your words, and you could have decreased hearing and trouble smelling and tasting.

Central Nervous System

When you think of something you want your body to do, the central nervous system—the brain and the spinal cord—sends a signal to that part of the body.

Your central nervous system on alcohol:

- Alcohol slows down the central nervous system.
- You will think, speak, and move slower.

Frontal Lobes

The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions, and using self-control. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.

Your frontal lobes on alcohol:

- You may find it hard to control your emotions and urges.
- You may become violent or act without thinking.

Hippocampus

Your memories are made in the hippocampus. A damaged hippocampus makes it harder to learn and hold on to knowledge.

Your hippocampus on alcohol:

- You may have trouble remembering something you just learned (e.g., a name or phone number). This can happen after just one or two drinks.
- You could experience a blackout—not being able to remember entire events, such as what you did last night—from drinking a lot of alcohol quickly.

Cerebellum

The cerebellum is important for coordination, thinking, and being aware.

Your cerebellum on alcohol:

- Your hands may be so shaky that you can't touch or grab things normally.
- You may lose your balance and fall.
- You may not know where you are.

Hypothalamus

The hypothalamus is a small part of the brain that does an amazing number of your body's housekeeping chores. Alcohol upsets the hypothalamus's work.

Your hypothalamus on alcohol:

- Blood pressure, hunger, thirst, and the urge to urinate increase.
- Body temperature and heart rate decrease.

Medulla

The medulla is your body's automatic pilot. It keeps your heart beating, lets you breathe without thinking about it, and keeps your body at the right temperature. People sometimes drink alcohol in an effort to keep warm. Drinking alcohol can **seem** like it makes you warmer, but alcohol actually chills the body. Drinking a lot of alcohol outdoors in cold weather can cause your body temperature to fall below normal. This dangerous condition is called *hypothermia*.

Your medulla on alcohol:

- Breathing and heart rate slow.
- Your body temperature lowers.
- Drinking a lot of alcohol in a short time could shut down the medulla. You could go into a coma.

The Dangers of Alcohol

• What To Know • What To Do • What To Say •

Directions: The following words are hidden in this word search puzzle. Find the words and then complete the sentences below about the dangers of alcohol.

alcohol	black out	brain	communicate	make decisions
impair	depressant	judgment	media message	solve problems

S K D N S Q S J S E P E I V C
B N D E U E U J D H V O E U I
R S O K P D B E K L A K G X C
N I M I G R L P O U Q K A T O
R F A M S R E S Y O W C S B U
N K E P H I M S Y K G T S L A
D N E O M E C B S V A V E A C
T L J K L I Y E N A N T M C L
O Z F B X U Q M D Q N J A K N
V F O V T D D T D E V T I O I
B R F G F N Z S Q I K Z D U A
P A D O C L O H O C L A E T R
C O M M U N I C A T E K M D B
V W J N T Y C W M Z O Z V X D
P K S M E L B O R P E V L O S

In spite of the _____ that _____ will make life more fun, it actually is a _____.

Just one drink can _____ your _____'s ability to _____, _____s,
and use good _____.

Alcohol can make you slur your speech, messing up your ability to _____. If you drink a lot of alcohol,
you might even _____.

Answer Key

The Dangers of Alcohol

• What To Know • What To Do • What To Say •

Note: Arrows indicate the direction to read the words. The highlighted letters are the first letters of the hidden words.

alcohol black out brain communicate make decisions
impair depressant judgment media message solve problems



In spite of the **MEDIA MESSAGE** that **ALCOHOL** will make life more fun, it actually is a **DEPRESSANT**.

Just one drink can **IMPAIR** your **BRAIN**'s ability to **MAKE DECISIONS**, **SOLVE PROBLEMS**, and use good **JUDGMENT**.

Alcohol can make you slur your speech, messing up your ability to **COMMUNICATE**. If you drink a lot of alcohol, you might even **BLACK OUT**.

The Dangers of Alcohol

• What To Know • What To Do • What To Say •

Directions: The typist who completed this message about the dangers of alcohol made some funny errors. Some important words were left out. When asked to correct the message, the typist scrambled the words left out and put them below the message. See if you can correct the errors. Unscramble the words and then place them correctly in the message.

In spite of the _____ that _____ will make life more fun, it actually is a _____.

Just one drink can _____ your _____'s ability to _____, _____ and use good _____.

Alcohol can make you slur your speech, messing up your ability to _____. If you drink a lot of alcohol, you might even _____.

hloalc _____

labck uot _____

ainrb _____

otmuinemacc _____

meak ssondciei _____

riimap _____

dsseepatrn _____

tduemngj _____

iaedm gesmesa _____

losev opermslb _____

Answer Key

The Dangers of Alcohol

• What To Know • What To Do • What To Say •

In spite of the **MEDIA MESSAGE** that **ALCOHOL** will make life more fun, it actually is a **DEPRESSANT**.

Just one drink can **IMPAIR** your **BRAIN'S** ability to **MAKE DECISIONS**, **SOLVE PROBLEMS**, and use good **JUDGMENT**.

Alcohol can make you slur your speech, messing up your ability to **COMMUNICATE**. If you drink a lot of alcohol, you might even **BLACK OUT**.

hloalc	alcohol
labck uot	black out
ainrb	brain
otmuinemacc	communicate
meak ssondciei	make decisions
riimap	impair
dsseepatrn	depressant
tduemngj	judgment
iaedm gesmesa	media message
losev opermslb	solve problems



<http://www.toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov/teachin>