

# Lesson 3

## Consequences of Drinking Alcohol

PROJECT  
ALERT





# Lesson Overview

## Lesson Goals

1. Identify the similarities between using marijuana and alcohol
2. Increase students' perception that drinking alcohol has serious consequences that can immediately affect their daily lives and social relationships
3. Motivate students to resist drinking alcohol by helping them identify the social, psychological, and physical consequences of consumption/use
4. Identify alternatives to drinking

## Scope and Sequence with Pacing Guidance

1. Introduce Lesson (~1 min.)
2. Discuss Why People Drink Alcohol (~5 min.)
3. Discuss How Alcohol Is Used to Cover Feelings (~8 min.)
4. Make List of Consequences of Drinking (~9 min.)
5. Discuss Alternatives to Drinking (~5 min.)
6. Play the *Alcohol Facts Game* (~14 min.)
7. Wrap-up (~3 min.)

## Brief Lesson Description

In this lesson, students are asked to make lists of reasons and consequences for alcohol use that are similar to the lists students made for nicotine and marijuana use. In this lesson, students will identify similar consequences between drinking alcohol and using marijuana.

Class discussion will allow the teacher to point out that any time you consume alcohol you are in danger of using the substance as a “quick fix,” to avoid problems or cover up feelings rather than learning how to deal with them.

Students will find alternatives to drinking, or activities they can engage in rather than drinking when negative feelings arise. The *Alcohol Facts Game* reinforces information learned about alcohol and teaches new facts.

## Background Knowledge: Pre-Reading

It has long been established that drinking alcohol heavily can lead to all kinds of negative social, psychological, and physical health effects. These consequences range from impaired relationships, poor academic performance, and legal troubles to development of mental health problems like depression and anxiety, injuries, illness, and even death. For teens, using alcohol can be particularly harmful. Though many adults drink alcohol moderately, the younger a person is when they first start drinking, the more likely it is that they may struggle with alcohol use in young adulthood and later in life.

In addition to long-term damage, it is important for teens to know about the acute/immediate effects of alcohol. For example, alcohol is a powerful depressant. It slows breathing and heart rate and lowers blood pressure. It can be deadly if ingested very quickly. And it can lead to impaired decision-making, such as driving a car under the influence or riding in a car with someone who has been drinking. Alcohol-related car crashes are a leading cause of death to teens.

Other consequences teens may suffer from even occasional use of alcohol are: doing something they might regret, losing control (poor coordination, dizzy, bump into things), getting into accidents (fall down, drown), act drunk and embarrass themselves, throw up, pass out, have hangovers and miss important academic or social activities, or not being able to recall all or part of the time they spend drinking (blackouts). Teens may also report suicidal feelings and depression – more than half of teens who attempt suicide or die by suicide are involved with alcohol or other drugs. Alcohol is a major factor in the three leading causes of teenage deaths: motor vehicle crashes, homicide, and suicide.

Alcohol use by teens is also illegal. In all 50 states, it is illegal to buy alcohol for use by someone under 21 years of age. All states have zero-tolerance laws that make it illegal for youth under 21 to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in their system.

Teens may discuss some of the myths they have heard about alcohol, which teachers can address during lessons. For example, nothing sobers a person up once they drink. Not a cold shower, coffee, or exercise. The only thing that works is time – it takes the body about one hour for each alcoholic drink consumed (whether a mixed drink with one shot in it, a can of beer, or a glass of wine – all of which contain about the same amount in them).

Teens may also believe that alcohol can help to make their problems go away or that drinking reduces depression, anxiety, or other uncomfortable emotions. However, if someone feels that they need alcohol to cope with problems or emotions, they may never learn how to handle those in alternative or healthier ways. Lastly, some teens may think alcohol is not addicting. Alcohol is mentally and physically addicting for everyone – not just adults. Being physically addicted to alcohol means that one needs

to drink in order to feel normal. But the alcohol is damaging the liver, nerves, heart, and brain. Teen brains are still developing until about 25 years old. Research shows that heavy drinking in teens can cause long-lasting harm to thinking abilities and addiction.

There are many signs that could suggest a teen is using alcohol and moving toward a physical or mental addiction on the drug. They may be drinking every day, in the morning in particular, and drinking alone regularly. They may have a loss of memory during or after drinking, become more moody or irritable after drinking, or report craving – a strong need or urge to drink. They may have a loss of control once they start or not be able to stop or cut down drinking. They may neglect or cut back on activities they used to enjoy and continuing to drink even though alcohol is causing problems.

In this lesson, students will play The Alcohol Facts Game which will include many of the facts just described. Here are the facts in the game to read prior to the lesson.

- A can of beer = a glass of wine = a shot of liquor = a mixed drink. All have about the same amount of alcohol.
- Alcohol can be poisonous and deadly. Coma and death can occur if alcohol is consumed rapidly and in large amounts (for example, four or more drinks in less than two hours).
- Only time makes you sober. In general, it takes approximately one hour for one standard drink (5 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of liquor, 12 ounces of beer) to be processed by the liver. Coffee and cold showers do not make you sober.
- When alcohol wears off, uncomfortable feelings and problems are still there.
- Drinking and driving don't mix. Even one drink can affect your ability to drive safely.
- If a parent is an alcoholic, the child might become one, too. Family members are at higher risk for alcoholism.
- Alcohol can be addicting.
- Alcohol can affect your judgment. You might do something you will regret later.
- Alcohol is as dangerous as marijuana.
- Alcohol can make you pass out.
- If a pregnant woman drinks, her unborn baby is drinking, too.
- One out of every ten drinkers in the U.S. will become an alcoholic.

## Materials and Supplies to Prepare

- **Visual** - Ground Rules: Students (from lesson 1)
- **Visual** – Reason Why People Use Marijuana (from lesson 1)
- **Visual** – Create three-column chart *What can happen to you when you drink alcohol?*

What can happen when you drink alcohol...

Any time	Regularly or a few drinks a week	Heavily or a lot at one time

- **Poster** – *Alcohol can damage you in the long run*
- **Poster** – *Drinking to cover feelings*
- **Handout** – Alternatives to Drinking, one sheet per student

## Legend

We use the icons below to indicate what to say during the lesson, what to keep in mind as you facilitate the lesson, and what to display in the classroom throughout the lesson.

What to display	What to say	What to keep in mind
		

# Lesson Plan

## 1. Introduce Lesson



Display visual created in Lesson 1: *Student Ground Rules*  
Keep this displayed during the lesson for reference.



**Today, we are going to talk about alcohol – why people drink, and what happens to you when you drink. Then we're going to play a game reviewing some facts about alcohol.**

## 2. Discuss why people drink alcohol



Display visual created in Lesson 1: *Reason Why People Use Marijuana*



**These are the reasons that you listed in Lesson 1 for why people use marijuana. The ones that are checked are reasons why people use alcohol you identified in Lesson 2. The reasons that are true for marijuana and alcohol are:**

Read the items true for alcohol and marijuana.

**Are there any other reasons why people might drink?**



Elicit: Escaping uncomfortable feelings or problems.



**What feelings might make young people want to drink?**



Examples could include:

- Peer pressure and friends might be drinking.
- To cover or escape feeling such as:
  - Shyness
  - Anger
  - Loneliness
  - Boredom
  - Curiosity
- Ads and social media make it seem fun, sophisticated, safe enough.

Supplement with other feelings, if necessary.

**What about feeling \_\_\_\_? Is this a reason why young people might want to drink?**



**We've identified the following reasons why young people drink:**

Repeat reasons on visual.



**One of the main reasons we discussed is escaping uncomfortable feelings or problems they are experiencing in their lives. We identified these feelings as ones that might make them want to drink:**  
Repeat reasons on visual.

Reinforce student engagement in the activity and praise their contributions.

### 3. Discuss how alcohol is used to cover feelings



Display the poster *Drinking to cover feelings*



**Can you think of times when a young person might have one of these feelings?**



If students have trouble identifying examples of emotions, ask them how they would feel if they:

- Got a bad grade;
- Lost a game;
- Were grounded on a Saturday night;
- Had a fight with their friends;
- Had a fight with family members;
- Experienced a loss of someone close to them



**Now, let's imagine a scenario where Rob gets mad at his parents, and he has a few drinks. Does drinking help Rob work things out with his parents?**

**What about when Annie gets into a fight with her best friend and has a drink or two at a party to forget about their disagreement?**

**What happens when the effects of alcohol wear off?**

**How does being intoxicated while having strong feelings impact reactions to those feelings (for example, how might Annie confront her friend if she were to see her at the party after a few drinks?)**



Elicit that the feelings remain when the effects of alcohol wear off or the feelings are worse.



**Let's imagine Jane, who feels insecure and shy at a party, has a few drinks to loosen up or feel less insecure at the party. Every time she's in a social situation she immediately has a few alcoholic drinks to feel "comfortable." Now Jane is an adult and she's afraid to go to a party and talk to people unless she has at least a couple of drinks. Why is drinking not a good way to cope with insecure feelings?**



**Let's think about Sam who has a drink after getting a bad grade in school. When Sam is an adult, he has a drink after every bad or difficult day at work. Why is drinking not a good way to cope with bad days?**



Elicit that drinking alcohol becomes part of a routine or dependency in the long term to deal with feelings.



**Using alcohol to cover feelings means you never learn how to deal with those feelings.**

**Alcohol seems to make uncomfortable feelings go away, but it only masks them for a little while.**

**When teens drink to get rid of uncomfortable feelings,**

- they don't learn how to cope with those feelings.
- they may become dependent on alcohol to feel good.

**When you use alcohol to cover up feelings or problems, you don't learn how to cope with them.**

#### 4. Make a list of consequences of drinking



**Now let's talk about what happens to you when you drink alcohol any time, on a regular basis, or drink alcohol heavily to escape uncomfortable feelings or problems, or for any other reason.**



Display visual *What can happen to you when you drink alcohol?*

What can happen when you drink alcohol...

Any time	Regularly or a few drinks a week	Heavily or a lot at one time



**There are many reasons why someone may decide not to drink. Those reasons could be related to what could happen when you drink any time, regularly, or heavily. What can happen when someone drinks – even just once?**

Write students' answers under the "any time" heading.

If students offer responses that are appropriate for longer-term consequences, write those under the appropriate heading.



Immediate dangers of drinking:

- Lose control and lose coordination
- Get into a car crash
- Impaired judgement
- Slurred speech
- Pass out, lose consciousness
- Someone may do something to someone else without them knowing



Display the poster *Alcohol can harm you any time you drink*.



**We have a comprehensive list of what can happen any time that you drink. How does our list compare to what we see on the poster?**

**Alcohol, like marijuana, can be dangerous even if it is used just once. Even one drink can make you feel out of control and affect your coordination and judgment. You may do things that you later regret. Drinking alcohol is related to many problems, including car crashes, violence, suicide, unwanted sex, drowning, and fire deaths.**

**What can happen to people who drink regularly? When I say drinking regularly, I mean a few drinks over the course of a week or even having a few drinks most weekends.**

Write students' answers under the "regularly" heading.

If students offer responses that are appropriate for longer-term consequences, write those under the appropriate heading.



**Dangers of drinking regularly:**

- Physical and mental addition to alcohol
- Depression
- Suicidal feelings
- Trouble at school, home, or in relationships
- Someone may do something to someone else without them knowing
- Car crashes
- Brain damage
- Liver damage
- Several types of Cancer
- Heart Disease
- Weakened Immune System



**Now, let's talk about what can happen when someone drinks heavily. By heavily I mean drinking large quantities at one time, like chugging alcohol or having many drinks in short period of time. This can also be called binge drinking which is described by the National Institutes of Health as four or more drinks in less than two hours. What are the consequences of drinking heavily?**

Write students' answers under the "heavily" heading.

If students offer responses that are appropriate for longer-term consequences, write those under the appropriate heading.



**Dangers of drinking heavily:**

- Pass out, lose consciousness
- Suicidal feelings
- Trouble at school, home, or in relationships
- Someone may do something to someone else without them knowing
- Brain damage
- Car crashes



Display the poster *Alcohol can damage you in the long run*.



**In our discussion, we identified many of the ways alcohol can damage you anytime you drink and in the long run. Regular and heavy drinking are related to many problems, including car crashes, violence, suicidal thoughts, unwanted sex, drowning, and fire deaths.**

**Chugging large quantities of alcohol in a short period of time puts you at risk for coma and even death.**

**After a while, you can become addicted to alcohol.**

Praise the students for knowing so much about the consequences of drinking.

## 5. Discuss alternatives to drinking alcohol



Distribute the *Alternatives to Drinking* activity sheet



**Now you are going to complete an activity that asks you to consider feelings that someone might try to cover up by drinking, and you will then identify one thing that a person can do instead of drinking to actually feel better.**

**I'm going to challenge you to come up with a wide range of alternatives. Don't suggest the same alternative for each feeling you identify. Try to suggest a different alternative for each feeling.**

Provide a few minutes for students to generate alternatives for feelings.

**Who would like to volunteer an alternative to drinking for \_\_\_\_\_?**



Elicit a variety of responses for each feeling; aim to elicit the same alternative for different feelings.

For each feeling, ask two students to suggest alternative (playing sports, contact a friend, listen to music, talk about the problem).



**One thing I noticed about the alternatives you identify is many of the same things work for different problems. For example, talking to someone can help you work out anger or frustration.**

**It's important to develop a range of healthy coping strategies to deal with our feelings and problems.**

Praise students for their engagement in the activity and generating a range of alternatives to drinking to manage feelings and difficult situations.

## 6. Play the *Alcohol Facts* game



Now we are going to play a game about alcohol facts. This game is sort of like Pictionary or Skribbl where teams compete against each other. One member of a team draws a picture of a word or saying, and a team member guesses the word or saying. The first team to correctly identify the word or saying wins.

Before we break into teams, I'll give you an overview of the game.

Each team will select an Illustrator. The Illustrator will be given a fact about alcohol. The fact includes some ideas about how to draw the fact, but you can use your own ideas. Only the Illustrator sees the alcohol fact; all teams will be working on the same fact.

When I say 'go,' the Illustrator will draw a picture to illustrate the fact. The other team member(s) will guess the fact from the picture.

You'll only have two or three minutes to illustrate the fact. Don't try to create a great work of art. Try to communicate the idea, not the exact words.

If your team member guesses the fact, the Illustrator will write the fact on the picture. When I call 'time's up,' each team should hold up its picture. I'll walk around to read the guesses and each team that has guessed the fact will get a point.

When I've reviewed all guesses for a fact teams will switch Illustrators. I'll show the new illustrator a new fact and say start. We'll play for roughly \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. I'll keep score on the board.

Any questions so far?

Let's break into our groups. You will need paper to draw on and a writing utensil.

Break students into groups of roughly equal size.

Let's all agree on a few symbols you will need for the game.

How could you represent the following:

- Alcohol
- Addiction
- Sober
- Unhappy feelings

Draw their suggested pictures on the board. Tell students that for some small words, or if they really get stuck on one word, it's okay to write it out.



Illustrations could be:

- Alcohol - beer can or wine glass
- Addiction - chains

- Sober - happy face
- Unhappy feelings - sad face



**Teams, choose your first Illustrator. I'll walk around and show you the first fact.**

After each team views the fact:

**Ready, set, go!**

Allow two or three minutes for each drawing.

**Time's up!**

Review the facts written down by each team and award points on the board as appropriate.



Students don't need to guess the fact exactly; the point is to get the information across. You can determine if what they have come up with is close enough to accept. For example, facts are listed below, but do not need to be exact:

- A can of beer = a glass of wine = a shot of liquor = a mixed drink. All have about the same amount of alcohol.
- Alcohol can be poisonous and deadly. Coma and death can occur if alcohol is consumed rapidly and in large amounts (for example, four or more drinks in less than two hours).
- Coffee and cold showers do not make you sober. Only time makes you sober. In general, it takes approximately one hour for one standard drink (5 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of liquor, 12 ounces of beer) to be processed by the liver.
- When alcohol wears off, uncomfortable feelings and problems are still there.
- Drinking and driving don't mix. Even one drink can affect your ability to drive safely.
- If a parent is an alcoholic, the child might become one, too. Family members are at higher risk for alcoholism.
- Alcohol can be addicting.
- Alcohol can affect your judgment. You might do something you will regret later.
- Alcohol is as dangerous as marijuana.
- Alcohol can make you pass out.
- If a pregnant woman drinks, her unborn baby is drinking, too.
- One out of every ten drinkers in the U.S. will become an alcoholic.



Show the next fact to the new Illustrator. After each team views the fact:

**Ready, set, go!**

Allow two or three minutes for each drawing.

**Time's up!**

Review the facts written down by each team and award points on the board as appropriate.

Continue this process until roughly five minutes remain in the class period.

**And the winner is....**



**Every team did a great job with this activity. This was a creative way to review all the alcohol facts we've discussed throughout today's lesson.**

## 7. Wrap-up Lesson



**Today, we have discussed why people might want to drink and what can happen to you in the short and long-term if you drink. You've come up with good alternatives to drinking and have been very creative in showing your team members some facts about alcohol.**

**Most importantly, we talked about how feelings and problems that we might try to escape by drinking alcohol remain or are worse when the effects of alcohol wear off. When you use alcohol to cover up feelings or problems, you don't learn how to cope with them or solve them.**

**In the next lesson, we will look at how advertisers create pressure to use drugs and alcohol.**