

DRUGS

Read the text and then complete the exercise below.

Drugs are natural or artificial substances that cause a change in a person's physical and psychological state. Alcohol, tobacco, coffee and many medicines are also drugs as they can alter a person's mental and physical state.

Some drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco, are legal while others, like heroin and cocaine, are illegal. The former are permitted by law and can therefore be produced, marketed and consumed without problems; the latter are prohibited by law and their manufacture, sale and use is a punishable offence.

Natural and synthetic drugs

Natural drugs are extracted from plants: heroin from opium poppy, cocaine from coca leaves, marijuana from the dried leaves of cannabis (Indian hemp) and hashish from the dried resin of cannabis.

Synthetic drugs are substances that do not occur naturally in the environment but are manufactured through chemical synthesis in the laboratory. The most widely used chemical drugs are acid diethylamide or LSD, amphetamines and barbiturates. Ecstasy belongs to the family of amphetamines. Chemical drugs are very dangerous because they are manufactured by clandestine laboratories, who pay very little attention to the effects their substances may have on consumers. Their chemical composition is often unknown and they can have serious and devastating effects on the brain or can lead to an early death even when they are used for the first time.

Soft and hard drugs

Drugs are divided into two types: soft drugs and hard drugs. Generally soft drugs don't lead to dependence; marijuana and hashish, both derived from cannabis, are considered soft drugs. All the others are heavy drugs.

Drug use

The drug trade is clandestine and illegal, so it is difficult to quantify exact figures for it.

According to reliable estimates, it is calculated that the illegal trafficking in drugs exceeds \$400 billion a year. In fact the business of drug trafficking is second only to the trafficking of arms and is greater than the illegal smuggling of oil.

Throughout the world 230 million people use illegal drugs, which is one person in thirty. The most widely used drug is cannabis (150 million); followed by amphetamines (25 million); ecstasy (17 million), cocaine (15 million), opium (13 million) and heroin (10 million).

Social effects of drug use

Drug trafficking and use have very serious social effects. The drug trade is a huge source of profits for the big criminal organizations and helps make them more and more powerful. The unlawful profits are then invested in lawful activities. This means that the very socio-economic fabric of society risks being affected by the presence of organized crime. The spread of illegal drugs also increases petty crime (muggings, robberies etc.) as drug addicts often

turn into drug pushers or resort to stealing in order to obtain money needed to buy the stuff. Naturally the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts also have an economic cost (structures, operators, medicines...) and weigh on the budget of national healthcare systems. Finally, there is the negative effects of drug abuse on society. Apart from the damage to consumers' and drug addicts' health there is the incalculable cost that drug abuse has on the unity and stability of family life

DID YOU KNOW?

- 88 million Europeans (from a population of 510 million) have used illicit drugs.
- Drug use is more common among males.
- Cannabis is the most widespread drug in Europe.
- London has the highest cocaine usage.

ACTIVITIES

Circle the correct answer.

1. What happens to a person who uses drugs?
 - a. There is a change in his or her body
 - b. There is a change in his or her brain
 - c. There is a change in his or her mental and physical state
 - d. There is a change in his or her way of speaking

2. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. Drugs are extracted from flowers
 - b. Cocaine is derived from opium poppy
 - c. Marijuana is derived from the dried leaves of Indian hemp
 - d. Hashish is derived from cannabis

3. What does the word "heedless" mean in line 17? Check That "Heedless" Is Indeed Line 17 After The Corrections
 - a. Uncaring
 - b. Caring
 - c. Worried
 - d. Unhappy

4. What are the consequences of chemical drug use?
 - a. Changes in appetite
 - b. Brain disorder and death
 - c. Changes in mental state
 - d. Illness

5. How many people use ecstasy?
 - a. 17 million b. 18 million
 - c. 15 million
 - d. 10 million

6. Who makes vast profits from the drug trade?

- a. Smugglers
- b. Thieves
- c. Criminals
- d. The big criminal organizations

7. Why does petty crime increase?

- a. Because of the spread of illegal drugs
- b. Because of the need of money
- c. Because of the lack of food
- d. Because of the effects of natural disasters

8. Who is a drug pusher?

- a. A person who steals
- b. A person who uses illegal drugs
- c. A drug addict
- d. A person who sells illegal drugs

9. What does the word stuff refer to?

- a. To drugs
- b. To tobacco
- c. To cigarettes
- d. To medicines

10. Where is cannabis widely used?

- a. In Europe
- b. In the USA
- c. In Australia
- d. In the UK