

# All drugs should be decriminalised

## Discussion questions

1. What types of drugs do you know of and what effects do they have on the body?
2. Can you think of any drugs which are legal in your country?
3. Do you think if the government legalised all drugs that it would lower the crime rate or the number of people who would be taking drugs?
4. Why do you think people take drugs? If you asked them, what reasons might they give?
5. What advice would you give to people younger than you about the use of drugs and the culture surrounding it?
6. Much of the illegal drug trade is linked to black market activities, why do you think this is?
7. Is there peer pressure amongst the young to take drugs?

## Statistics—True or false? (answers on the next page)

1. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2014), there are 21.5 million Americans (over 12 years old), who have used or are trying to stop taking drugs.
2. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates (2015) that 1% of all illnesses in the world are related to alcohol or drug abuse.
3. Switzerland legalised heroin for addicts over a decade ago. Nobody has ever died of an overdose there on legal heroin.
4. A Harvard professor, Jeffery Miron, has calculated that the murder rate would fall 5% if drugs were to be made legal.
5. According to the Huffington Post, drug taking is usually the result of distress that people suffer in life.

## Useful vocabulary

1. Opioids – a drug similar to opium.
2. Left in the dark – to not know something, to be left out.
3. Addiction – can not stop yourself from doing something, harmful.
4. Susceptible – easily influenced.
5. Epidemic – the appearance of an illness in a large number of people.
6. Enhancing – improve the quality of something.

## Reading – Legally addicted

When the debate on drugs begins, the speakers are almost always referring to heroin, cocaine, MDMA, and many others, which are banned in most countries. Rarely do they ever talk about the growing **epidemic** of legal **opioid** drug use that has risen steadily over the last 20 years.

While most are aware of the dangers of illegal drug use, many are **left in the dark** to what prescription drug overuse is doing to healthy people. According to the National Drug Use and Health organisation, there are just over 2 million Americans who use powerful painkillers and prescribed drugs for non-medical uses. The reasons for this **addiction** vary between age, gender, and social environment. What is clear, however, is that older adults and women are more **susceptible** to becoming addicted.

Further to this, many are becoming heavy users of dietary supplements and stimulants. Many are working hard in the gym in the pursuit of the perfect body. Body **enhancing** supplements are being overused in the hope that it will quicken results. Some legal drugs like Fentanyl, a powerful painkiller, has been proven by the Drug Enforcement Agency to be 50 times more powerful than heroin.

The next time the debate on legalising drugs begins, spare a thought to the millions of people already addicted to drugs given to them by a doctor.

## Answers

1. True      2. False, it's 6%      3. True      4. False, it's 25%      5. True