



**FRAME 2 – UK GEOGRAPHY: the land and the people**

NEWS ABOUT BRITAIN

# Teenagers and drugs

Two separate surveys suggest that Britain’s teenagers are amongst the heaviest drug-users and drinkers in Europe. The British government has introduced a number of measures to tackle the use and supply of drugs, particularly among young people. The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs interviewed 15 and 16-year olds in 35 countries. 26% of boys and 29% of girls in the UK had indulged in binge drinking at least three times in the previous month. For the purpose of the study, binge drinking was categorised as having more than five alcoholic drinks in a row. In the same survey, 42% of boys and 35% of girls admitted they had tried illegal drugs at least once.

According to another survey, by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, two in five 15-year-olds in the UK have tried cannabis. This number is higher than anywhere else in Europe. The UK has also the joint highest number of young cocaine users, alongside Spain.

The British Government has recently unveiled new plans to fight the problem of drug abuse in the UK, also among teenagers. According to the new proposals, young offenders will have to attend drug treatment as part of community service. British police will be able to give people blood tests for drugs when they arrest them, not just when they charge them with an offence. Dealers working near a school or using children to help sell drugs will face tougher penalties. But schools also try to fight the problem of drug use themselves. At the beginning of 2005 a British state school introduced for the first time random drug testing. Students from a school in Kent will have mouth swabs taken to detect drug use. Each week 20 names will be selected by computer and the swabs sent off to a drug testing laboratory. Results will be available three days later. The school’s head teacher says that no child will be tested against his or her wishes. Children who test positive will not be expelled from the school, but those who sell drugs will.

**1 Read the article above and find the words or phrases that mean:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. to try to deal with something (usually a problem) .....            | 8. excessive use (of something) .....   |
| 2. ( <i>infinitive form</i> ) to take pleasure in (something) .....   | 9. unpaid work for the community, often as an alternative to prison .....   |
| 3. uncontrolled drinking over a period of time .....                  | 10. accuse them of .....  |
| 4. next to each other .....   | 11. ( <i>here</i> ) people selling drugs .....  |
| 5. the state of being dependent on something, for example drugs ..... | 12. without a plan; irregular .....   |
| 6. together with .....  | 13. tests taken with a small piece of cotton which is put into a person’s mouth in order to take a sample of their saliva ..... |
| 7. ( <i>infinitive form</i> ) to reveal; to make known publicly ..... | 14. to discover something using a special method .....  |
|   | 15. obtainable .....  |

**2 Read the text again and answer the following questions.**

1. What did the first survey find out? .....
2. And the second survey? .....
3. What measures is the British Government planning in order to fight the problem of drug abuse among teenagers? .....
4. What do schools do to fight the problem of drug use? Give examples. ....
5. How will school children selling drugs be punished?.....

**3 Class discussion.**

- Does your country have problems with drug abuse and binge drinking among teenagers? What is being done to prevent it? Do you think that random drug testing in schools may be an effective weapon against drug use? Does your government punish drug dealers and how?