



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Rob: Welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Rob...

Neil: ...and hello, I'm Neil.

Rob: Hello Neil. Today we're talking about the increase in the number of young people who have decided not to drink alcohol.

Neil: We're particularly talking about young people in the UK – teenagers and people in their early twenties. In some countries, drinking is not a big issue, but in Britain, we're seeing a change in **attitude** – in other words, a change in people's beliefs and behaviour.

Rob: Now, I started to drink alcohol in my mid-teens. It made me feel grown-up and helped me **let my hair down** at parties. It didn't always taste good though! What about you Neil – when did you start drinking?

Neil: Just like you Rob, I started drinking in my mid-teens, I'd say. It's a big part of the British social life I would say.

Rob: Yes, and you've never stopped?

Neil: Not to this minute!

Rob: Well, teenagers in the UK may have had a reputation – they were known for **binge drinking**. That means drinking lots of alcohol and very quickly. But as we'll hear, that image is changing. And we'll be looking at some vocabulary around the topic of drinking - but not before I give you Neil a question to stew over.

Neil: 'To stew over'! You mean to think about – so go on, let's have it.

Rob: OK, well, alcoholic drinks can be measured in units. This gives drinkers a guide to how much they've **consumed** – or drunk. Drinking too many units of alcohol can be bad for your health. So how well do you know your units Neil? Do you know how many units there are in a typical bottle of wine? Is it:

- a) 8
- b) 10
- c) 13

Neil: I am going to go for 13. I'm pretty confident about this one.

- Rob:** Unlucky for some, but we'll find out if you are right or wrong later on. Did you know the UK National Health Service recommends that a man should not drink more than 3 or 4 units of alcohol a day, and for women it's 2 or 3 units?
- Neil:** But we know some young people in the UK who drink far more than that and get **intoxicated** – another word for getting drunk. And this often leads to a **hangover** – feeling tired and ill the day after drinking – or worse.
- Rob:** Well, a report earlier this year by the BBC's Asian Network, found this picture is changing. Young people are drinking less, or not at all – they are **abstaining**.
- Neil:** That's good news. I find, even at my age, cutting back on drinking is a hard thing to do. It takes **willpower** – that's the ability to control my own behaviour.
- Rob:** Yes, of course this is not an issue for people from certain cultures, who don't drink alcohol because of their religious beliefs. But for others, there are a number of changes that have encouraged younger people to remain **sober** – or not get drunk.
- Neil:** Well, there have been **awareness campaigns** – that's when organised publicity in the media has shown the benefits of not drinking. Also, British pubs and clubs have been stricter when stopping underage drinkers from buying alcohol.
- Rob:** Yes, because officially you have to be 18 years old before you can buy alcohol. Another reason is the recession – people can't afford to go out and drink.
- Neil:** But Jonathan Birdwell, who's a senior researcher at the think-tank Demos, has another reason. A think-tank, by the way, is a group of experts brought together, usually by a government, to develop ideas on a particular subject and to make suggestions for action. See if you can hear what his reason is...

Jonathan Birdwell, Senior Researcher for Demos:

Around 2004 we see the rise of awareness campaigns around units to consume, and daily guidelines, we see the arrival of 'drink aware' labels on alcohol. We also see the rise of negative media stories around binge drinking culture.

I think also significant, is the rise of social media technologies, smartphones, iPads. You know we have not only new ways of interacting with our friends, which takes up time, but we also have multiple forms of entertainment that didn't exist, say ten years ago.

- Rob:** Interesting! One factor for the change is the rise – the increase – in people using social media technology. He calls this significant – so it's important.

Neil: Yes, all this interaction with our friends takes up time. And time is also taken up using what he calls multiple forms of entertainment – things like gaming and watching films online. There's more of it now.

Rob: So maybe one way to cut down on drinking is to keep busy! But does this mean going out **boozing** – or drinking alcohol – is a thing of the past?

Neil: Not yet, Rob. Although there are more coffee shops and ice cream parlours now, to spend time in – alcohol abuse still remains a problem among the young in the UK.

Rob: Well, on that sobering thought, let me reveal the answer to the question I set you earlier. I asked if you knew how many units there are in a typical bottle of wine. Is it:

- a) 8
- b) 10
- c) 13

Neil: I said 13 but I want to change my mind and say b) 10.

Rob: Well, actually, that's a good idea because it is 10. Did you know that one unit equals 10 ml or 8 grams of pure alcohol, which is around the amount of alcohol the average adult can process in one hour? OK, before we go, please could you remind us of some of the words and phrases that we've heard today?

Neil: Yes, we heard:

attitude
let my hair down
binge drinking
consumed
intoxicated
hangover
abstaining
willpower
sober
awareness campaigns
boozing

Rob: Thanks. Well, it's time now for a healthy glass of orange juice I think. We hope you've enjoyed today's programme. Please join us again soon for another 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. Bye.

Neil: Cheers!

Vocabulary and definitions

attitude	feeling or opinion about something
let my hair down	relax and enjoy myself
binge drinking	drinking a lot of alcohol in a short space of time
consumed	eaten or drunk (something)
intoxicated	drunk; unable to behave normally because you have drunk too much alcohol
hangover	feeling tired and ill the day after drinking too much alcohol
abstaining	not doing something
willpower	the ability to control your behaviour
sober	not drunk; without any alcohol in your system
awareness campaigns	planned activities to increase people's knowledge and understanding of a subject
boozing	slang word for drinking alcohol

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