

## Devoir Surveillé Anglais

- I- Lisez les textes ci-dessous et répondez en anglais à la question qui suit en 200-250 mots, indiquez clairement le nombre de mots.

**Why is alcohol consumption decreasing in the UK? What are the problems faced by those who want to reduce their alcohol consumption in France and in the UK?**

**People are fascinated by the sober and sober-ish. But the real question is – why aren't there more of us?** *Moya Lothian-McLean*, 20 July 2023, The Guardian.

(...) The UK may have one of the highest numbers of pubs in the world, but the evidence is growing that we're teetering on the edge of a sober sea change. Drinking among the nation's teenagers and young people is on the decline – and this June, sales of low- and non-alcoholic beer at Tesco outstripped those in dry January by 25%. (...)

I have been “sober adjacent” (a term a friend favours for those of us not completely teetotal, but more likely than not to go “dry” on any given night) for a year now (...) People seem fascinated by the rise of sober and sober-adjacent, and the first question you tend to hear is: why? The answer will be different depending on personal circumstance and demographic, though for most it falls into some combination of health, wealth and context. Today's teenagers may be drinking less because the places where they socialise have changed – social media is now their main public square, a location that offers significantly fewer opportunities for drinking copious amounts of Sourz Apple – and because it's prohibitively expensive. Most of the sober or sober-curious people I know – urban-dwelling, middle-class millennials like me – want their all-too-short weekends unmarred by a day lost to sore heads, and to manage their health better.

Another clue to what's going on in the urban millennial demographic lies in the upswing in the recreational usage of magic mushrooms and ketamine. Unlike stimulants such as cocaine (whose use is closely associated with booze), these drugs are used to “soften the edges”, and are increasingly building profiles as alternative treatments for conditions like depression. The hardcore, booze-driven lad and ladette culture of the 90s and the “three-day bender, no surrender” approach of the noughties are now passé. (...)

All this is against a backdrop of creaking welfare and healthcare services, and the premium placed on both physical and mental health by “wellness” culture. Taking care of yourself has become an individual, not a collective, endeavour. The ill effects of alcohol have been well-documented – is it any wonder that people are opting for alternatives?

I do think, though, that when people ask “why” we're moving away from alcohol, what they really want to know is, “How? How have you managed it?” The spotlight on us sober and sober-ish folk is so bright, I suspect, because we're still outliers: because ours is a nation of people who, for the large part, feel compelled to drink, while receiving little to no state-provided assistance in reducing their consumption, and a lot of cultural reassurance that their boozing is “normal”. It's pretty clear why people *don't* drink – the real question is why do people continue to drink when they don't want to?

Over and over again, I've played priest in whispered confessions from smashed people who tell me they yearn to be able to cut down their drinking, but can't. Because it lubricates social situations; because they need it to manage their mental health conditions; because life in Britain is bleak and hellish and this is their one escape, OK?

One thing I have learned is that those who are secure in their drinking habits don't give a fig who is or isn't drinking – and that they're far rarer than you might think. The pandemic may have seen light drinkers reduce their consumption, but at the same time, heavy drinkers increased theirs. Ten million people in England regularly exceed drinking guidelines; and cultural stigma surrounding the image of the alcoholic prevents people from seeking what help there is if they feel uneasy about their relationship with alcohol – while acting as a source of comforting denial if they have not yet reached “rock bottom”.

Instead, the burden often falls on the individual to “moderate” their drinking or to simply give it up. For some of us, that is an option. For others, it is not that easy: even if they stop the act of drinking, it dominates their thoughts, as actor Tom Holland recently articulated when discussing his sobriety. In a society with a comprehensive understanding of when drinking stops being a choice and becomes a compulsion, people would feel they could reach out for more structured help, rather than struggling alone to find their way to sobriety. But I fear that such a utopia is still a long way off. 719 words

## **Les jeunes, gros consommateurs d'alcool : « il faut boire pour**

**s'intégrer »** *Enquête réalisée par Cannelle Corbel (La Presse de la Manche), Matthieu Gain (Côté Quimper) et Raphaël Tual. Par Rédaction Enquêtes, [actu.fr](https://actu.fr), Publié le 12 Sep 23*

Amélie a connu ce que vivent énormément de jeunes : l'injonction à boire pour s'intégrer. « Je pense que l'alcool en France est un rite de passage à l'âge adulte. Cela fait partie de notre culture et de la culture étudiante. C'est quasiment indispensable à l'intégration. »

Un sentiment confirmé par le Dr Stéphane Billard, chef du service d'addictologie à l'hôpital psychiatrique de Quimper : « La consommation d'alcool chez les adolescents peut s'apparenter à un rite initiatique. Ce type de consommation peut être un facteur identitaire d'appartenance à un groupe. Il s'agit aussi d'un phénomène reconnu socialement, renforcé par les réseaux sociaux — principalement sur Tik Tok — avec l'apparition notamment de jeux autour de l'alcool depuis la crise sanitaire. »

Une manière de s'intégrer donc. À tel point qu'Amélie dit « admirer ceux qui ne boivent pas ». Des jeunes souvent mis à l'écart, comme le stipule un article de sociologie consacré au sujet : « Les non-buveurs décrivent des soirées dans lesquelles ils se mettaient ou se trouvaient placés [...] en situation d'observateurs plus ou moins extérieurs, plus ou moins gênants. Témoin indiscret, « triste luron », « coincé », la réaction sociale se fait alors bien sentir. Mais c'est sans doute moins la non consommation en elle-même qui est pointée du doigt que l'incapacité présumée à se laisser aller, à se dévoiler [...]. »

Tim, 21 ans, étudiant à Marseille, passé par Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine), fait partie de ces jeunes-là. Ce natif de Cherbourg (Manche), est abstinent parce qu'il « aime bien savoir ce qu'[il] fai[t] ». Lui aussi ressent constamment cette « obligation sociale à boire ». 269

## **II – Rédigez en anglais un essai (au choix) en 200-250 mots**

Should the state intervene to change health-related behaviours?

## Correction DS 2 BV2

### **I- Why is alcohol consumption decreasing in the UK? What are the problems faced by those who want to reduce their alcohol consumption in France and in the UK?**

In the UK, people have been consuming less alcohol. First, the damage of alcohol has been well documented and can no longer be ignored. Simultaneously, a lifestyle trend, focused on wellbeing has emerged, which accounts for people's desire to take care of their minds and bodies. The rise of new drugs like mushrooms makes it now possible for middle-class millennials to party and be under control. The fall in consumption is also rooted in the cost-of-living crisis and the replacement of the pub as the place where people get together for social events.

Despite the emergence of a dry generation, those who want to reduce their consumption come across several obstacles: drinking is indeed part of the culture in France and in the UK, it is a norm and it's difficult to run counter to this expectation. It's particularly the case for students whose drinking habits stem from a desire to be included in a group and are similar to a rite of passage. Finally, drinking is an addiction, and it may help temporary to feel better or to forget the bleak reality. People struggle to find help, all the more so as health and habits are now considered as an individual responsibility, not a public one. When one is in the grip of addiction, not only is there no infrastructure to find help, but the social stigma attached to alcoholism deters one from seeking help.

### **II- Should the state intervene to change health-related behaviours?**

The Covid 19 lockdown was an extreme case of state intervention, and many critics argued that governments were infringing upon individual liberties. The state enforces rules and aims at protecting its population. Its intervention is often necessary to maintain order and security. But how far should it intervene?

The state needs to intervene in public health. The welfare states that developed after WWII embody this ideal of protecting the most vulnerable ones. This is when public, universal health coverage was developed and it guaranteed healthcare for all. This is a noble vision of the state's role and it should be embraced. The welfare state alleviates the issues linked to poverty. Its intervention against harmful behaviours like smoking, drinking, eating too much sugar, is necessary to ensure public health. The risks are indeed too important for society (lack of productivity...)

Yet too much intervention can encroach on individual liberties. China restricts video games for children, New Zealand had banned cigarettes (even if it has been rolled out since). While both governments aim at protecting their population, a limit should be set with the agreement of the population or people would feel oppressed and would adopt harmful habits anyway. What happened during the Prohibition clearly illustrates the fact that when the state takes too much control, it's not efficient. In this case, awareness campaigns may be more efficient.

To conclude, while the state needs to intervene to protect public health, lifestyles and consumer habits may not fall in that category. Having the support of the population is of paramount importance. (258)