DRUGS

New Internationalist Easier English lesson
Upper Intermediate
The lesson today:

Introduction: speaking and vocabulary
Reading: for detail and for gist
Speaking: role-play
In small groups:

1) List all the illegal drugs you know

2) List all the reasons you can think of for making illegal drugs legal
Match these:

1) ecstasy, cocaine, heroin, cannabis, amphetamines, marijuana and opium
2) prohibition
3) illicit
4) legalization
5) psycho-active
6) decriminilization

a) illegal
b) makes your brain change
c) these are illegal drugs
d) making something no longer a crime
e) making something legal
f) not allowing something
The next slide shows lots of facts about drugs.
You have 5 minutes study this and try to remember as many facts about drugs as you can. Then tell each other.
Illegal drugs: The Facts

The demand for illegal drugs is solid and the trade in them resilient – in spite of expensive and punitive attempts to stop it.

**1. Consumers**

How many?

- 5% of the world's adult population is estimated to have used illicit substances at least once in 2010. (That's around 230 million people aged 15-64)

Comparison: 42% of the global population uses alcohol (higher in Europe and North America) and 25% uses tobacco.³

1 in 40 people uses illegal drugs at least once a month

1 in 160 people uses in a way that exposes them to severe health problems²

What?

- World's most popular illegal drugs
  - Cannabis
  - Heroin
  - Ecstasy
  - Cocaine

Cannabis

- 42%
- Used in Asia and Latin America
- Grows indoors hydroponically in the countries where it is sold
- Synthetic drugs are made in labs around the world, from the US to China
- For farmers, growing opium poppy or coca leaves is many times more profitable than growing any other crop. But the really big profits are made by others.

*Opioids* (e.g., morphine, heroin etc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opioids</td>
<td>25.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic Opioids</td>
<td>119,426-224,490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. Suppliers**

Most opium and coca is grown in Asia and Latin America. Cannabis is increasingly grown indoors hydroponically in the countries where it is sold. Synthetic drugs are made in labs around the world, from the US to China.

*Opium**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Asia | 63%
| Africa | 28% |
| South America | 9% |

*Estimated turnover of global market in illegal drugs (in a year with the global heroin trade)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>$700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opium</td>
<td>$12,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish dealers</td>
<td>$31,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering the UK</td>
<td>$47,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling price in the UK</td>
<td>$177,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering the US</td>
<td>$80,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling price in the US</td>
<td>$237,735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3. Prohibition**

- $100 billion: The world spends on prohibition each year. Includes military attacks, crop eradication, customs seizures and hefty prison sentences. Equal to what rich countries spend on oil.

**4. Alternatives**

Legalization and regulation of drugs could save tens of thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

**Where?**

- North America: accounts for 44% of the global drug markets
- Europe: 33% followed by Asia, the Pacific region, Africa and South America³

*US has the highest cocaine use - almost 2% of 15-64 year olds.*²

**Race and drugs in the US**

- The US population is 80% white, with similar levels of drug use as the black and Hispanic population.
- 45% of all prisoners on drug offenses are black, while only 28% are white.²

**Cost**

- Heroin: $25.7 billion estimate of US spend on drug-related criminal justice each year.
- $5.1 billion: annual US spend on drug-related correcting the criminal justice system.
- $1.9 billion: Australian spend on dealing with drug use, the majority on crime costs, in 2002.

**Has the war on drugs reduced demand?**

- Has the war on drugs reduced demand? No.

**Narcoterrorism**

- $125 million:what the Taliban derive from the illegal drugs trade annually to fund its activities.
- $100 million: estimate of amount taken by Colombian FARC guerrillas from the illegal drug trade, in addition to kidnapping, extortion and protection tax²

**Tax**

- In addition, legalization would generate tax revenue at $46.7 billion annually if drugs were taxed at the same rate as alcohol and tobacco.²

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Now read:

Find as many reasons as possible for legalizing or decriminalizing drugs:

http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Make_drugs_legal

Compare with other learners.
Questions:

What questions do you have about drugs being made legal?

Write some questions in pairs eg. If all drugs were legal, what would happen?
In pairs, A is a journalist and B is a doctor

A needs to interview the doctor about what would happen if all drugs were legal.

A ask and B answer some of the questions on the next 2 slides:
1) Why would making drugs legal make things better?

2) Would making drugs legal increase the use of dangerous drugs?

3) How could we protect children and young people?

4) After drugs were made legal, how would you control them?

5) We can make drugs legal. But isn’t it better to change the way people think?

6) Isn’t it true that drug takers can’t think clearly? So isn’t it a good idea to protect drug takers themselves?
7) If drugs were legal, would there be a private free market for drugs?
8) Would hard drugs become cheap?
9) Should some drugs be illegal for health or social reasons?
10) Is it possible there will still be a “black” market?
11) Has anyone tried legalizing drugs and been successful?
12) Would legalization happen everywhere quickly?
13) Where can I find more information?
Now read the answers the doctor gave and find any different ideas from yours:

http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/If_all_drugs_were_legal,_what_would_happen%3F
In pairs, write a letter to your country’s leader:
- summarize some of the arguments for legalizing drugs
- say if you think this should happen
- and why
Now read the original versions of the two texts:

http://www.newint.org/features/2012/09/01/illegal-drugs/

http://www.newint.org/features/2012/09/01/drugs-legalization/