



SAMPLE ARTICLE - BINGE DRINKING

NOTE: You may customize this sample article for release to school or campus newspapers. Also send this article to local newspapers, television and news radio stations, suggesting an investigative report on binge drinking.

Binge Drinking Linked to 4,000 Deaths Every Year

Binge drinking, defined as drinking too much alcohol too fast, has been linked to as many as 4,000 deaths every year from alcohol overdose. Until recently, deaths by alcohol poisoning were largely unreported in the media. Now that college campuses are required by law to publish all student deaths, people are learning more about the tragic effects of binge drinking.

Around the country, reports from victims' families and county medical examiners confirm that alcohol can be a lethal drug. And it's particularly true for teenagers. Of the first eight cases ever reported as alcohol poisoning, half were 16 years old or younger. At least half were first-time drinkers and had never been drunk before. Five of them were put to bed by friends or their own parents to "sleep it off," only to be found dead in the morning.

Tragically, what these friends and parents didn't know is that if a person drinks too much alcohol too quickly before falling asleep, the alcohol will shut down breathing and heart functions, killing a person within hours. That's due to the physiological effects of alcohol, which suppresses nerves that control involuntary actions like breathing, heart beat, and the gag reflex.

Even after a person stops drinking, alcohol in the stomach continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body. That's why binge drinking is especially dangerous, because many victims ingest a lethal dose of alcohol before losing consciousness. By the time they do lose consciousness, and even if friends and family rush them to a hospital, it may be too late. Even if caught in time and the victim survives, alcohol poisoning often results in permanent brain damage.

Here's what can happen when a person drinks too much alcohol too fast:

- **Choking:** the victim chokes on their own vomit.
- **Breathing stops:** the victim's breathing becomes irregular and slows to a stop.
- **Heartbeat stops:** the victim's heart beat becomes irregular or stops.
- **Hypothermia:** the victim's body temperature decreases, leading to cardiac arrest.
- **Hypoglycemia:** the victim's blood sugar level plummets and causes seizures.

Here are the critical warning signs of alcohol poisoning:

- **Mental confusion:** the victim is in a stupor, a coma, or cannot be roused.
- **No response:** the victim does not respond or cannot feel pinching of his/her skin.
- **Vomiting while sleeping**
- **Seizures**
- **Slow breathing:** breathing is less than 8 breaths per minute.
- **Irregular breathing:** there is 10 or more seconds between breaths.
- **Hypothermia:** low body temperature, victim is pale or has bluish skin color.

Community Action Kit

If you suspect that someone may have ingested a fatal dose of alcohol, call for emergency medical help immediately:

- **Call 911**
- **Stay with the victim**
- **Keep the victim from choking on vomit by placing them on their side**
- **Tell the emergency medical technicians exactly how much alcohol the victim drank — don't guess or minimize the amount!**

Prompt medical attention is the only way to save a person's life if they have consumed too much alcohol. It can be deadly to try to reverse the effects of alcohol by drinking coffee, taking a cold bath or shower, sleeping or walking it off.

The [NAME OF YOUR GROUP] is a group of young people working together to educate peers and adults about the dangers of underage drinking. If you'd like more information, or if you'd like to join us, contact [INSERT CONTACT NAME AND NUMBER FOR YOUR GROUP].

Source: "Alcohol Poisoning," RID-USA, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1998.
FACE-Truth and Clarity on Alcohol.



SAMPLE ALCOHOL OUTLET SURVEY

Name of Business: _____
Address of Store: _____
City: _____

Type of establishment:

Type of alcohol sold:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bar	<input type="checkbox"/> Beer
<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/> Wine
<input type="checkbox"/> Convenience	<input type="checkbox"/> Liquor
<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery	Alcohol sold cold?:
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive thru	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sample prices of alcoholic beverages:	Single servings sold from tubs on ice:
_____ Malt liquor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
_____ Beer	<input type="checkbox"/> No
_____ Wine	
_____ Liquor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Number of outlets in this city block: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Promotional specials:	Advertising in windows:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> No	Product: _____ Price: _____
Floor displays for alcoholic beverages? _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe display:	
	Your Name: _____
	Date: _____



SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE - SURVEY FINDINGS

NOTE: Send this release to the local news editor at your newspaper. Call the newspaper for the editor's name and for instructions on submitting the release. Or, you can customize the article for submission in your school newspaper.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For additional information, contact: [INSERT NAME AND PHONE NUMBER]

Students Conduct Local Survey On Alcohol Advertising

A student group from [NAME OF SCHOOL, NEIGHBORHOOD OR ORGANIZATION] has just completed a survey of alcohol advertising throughout our community to demonstrate how alcohol is affecting youth here in [NAME OF COMMUNITY, CITY OR AREA].

[DESCRIBE HOW, WHEN, AND WHERE THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED...]

[DESCRIBE RESULTS - YOU CAN USE BULLET POINTS AS SHOWN HERE...]

The results of our survey are as follows:

- Of the total number of [INSERT TOTAL #] billboards counted, [INSERT # OF ALCOHOL BILLBOARDS] were billboards advertising alcohol.
- We counted a total of [INSERT TOTAL #] alcohol outlets in the surrounding neighborhood near our school [CUSTOMIZE FOR THE AREA YOU SURVEYED].
- In our local newspaper, we counted [INSERT TOTAL #] of advertisements for alcohol products in a week's worth of daily papers.
- At our local [NAME OF SPORTS FACILITY], we counted [INSERT #] of alcohol advertisements.
- During the community event held (SPECIFY DATE AND LOCATION OF EVENT) we counted [INSERT NUMBER] of banners and other advertisements dedicated to alcohol.
- [CUSTOMIZE AND SPECIFY ANY OTHER DATA YOU COLLECTED DURING YOUR SURVEY].

As this survey shows, alcohol advertising is pervasive and its messages bombard underage youth as well as adults. That's why the following facts are not really surprising when it comes to alcohol and teens:

- The average age when youth say they first tried alcohol is 12.8 years.¹
- 61 percent of high school seniors say they consumed alcohol in the last 30 days.²
- Nearly 90% of tenth graders and 75% of eighth graders say alcohol is "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get.³
- Almost 75% of seventh graders who drink alcohol obtain it from their parents (with or without their knowledge).⁴
- Almost 65% of the students who drink buy their own alcoholic beverages.⁵

In spite of these facts, not all kids drink. The [NAME OF STUDENT GROUP] is a group of students organized to voice concern about the pervasiveness of alcohol advertising in our community. To join us in our efforts, contact [NAME AND PHONE NUMBER] -

Sources: 1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 1997. National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1998.

2-3. "Monitoring the Future Study," National Institute on Drug Abuse, Rockville, MD, 1998. Based on surveys carried out by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center.

4-5. "Drinking Habits, Access, Attitudes, and Knowledge: A National Survey." From: Report to the Surgeon General "Youth and Alcohol: A National Survey," by the Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, June 199 1.

FACE-Truth and Clarity on Alcohol.



SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR – SURVEYS

NOTE: Follow the instructions in the opinion section of your local newspaper for submitting a letter to the editor. Most newspapers print these instructions in the opinion-editorial section, or you can call the newspaper for instructions.

ISSUE: Local Survey of Alcohol Advertising

As a student at [NAME OF SCHOOL, NEIGHBORHOOD OR ORGANIZATION], I'm writing to inform the community about a survey of alcohol advertising that we just completed here in [NAME OF COMMUNITY, CITY OR AREA].

[DESCRIBE HOW, WHEN, AND WHERE THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED...]

[DESCRIBE RESULTS - YOU CAN USE BULLET POINTS AS SHOWN HERE...]

The results of our survey are as follows:

- Of the total number of [INSERT TOTAL #] billboards counted, [INSERT # OF ALCOHOL BILLBOARDS] were billboards advertising alcohol.
- We counted a total of [INSERT TOTAL #] alcohol outlets in the surrounding neighborhood near our school [CUSTOMIZE FOR THE AREA YOU SURVEYED].
- In our local newspaper, we counted [INSERT TOTAL #] of advertisements for alcohol products in a week's worth of daily papers.
- At our local [NAME OF SPORTS FACILITY], we counted [INSERT #] of alcohol advertisements.
- During the community event held [SPECIFY DATE AND LOCATION OF EVENT] we counted [INSERT NUMBER] of banners and other advertisements dedicated to alcohol.
- [CUSTOMIZE AND SPECIFY ANY OTHER DATA YOU COLLECTED DURING YOUR SURVEY].

As our survey shows, alcohol advertising is pervasive and its messages bombard underage youth as well as adults. That's why I am calling on community leaders to consider the impact of alcohol advertising messages especially at community events, athletic events, [SPECIFY OTHER EVENTS OR LOCATIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY]. We would like the images in our community to be more about people and less about alcohol.

The [NAME OF STUDENT GROUP] is a group of students organized to help reduce underage drinking. To join us, contact [NAME AND PHONE NUMBER].

Sincerely,

[Include name and age]



SAMPLE BILLBOARD SURVEY FORM

Address of Billboard: _____

City: _____

What Company is advertising: _____

Type of sign:

Area:

<input type="checkbox"/> Junior poster (75 sq ft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial
<input type="checkbox"/> Poster panel (300 sq ft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed residential / commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> Painted bulletin (672 sq ft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Central business district
	<input type="checkbox"/> Strip commercial

Neighborhood:

Neighborhood is predominately:

<input type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input type="checkbox"/> Black
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic district	<input type="checkbox"/> Latino
	<input type="checkbox"/> White
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Can you see any of the following:

The ad is for:

<input type="checkbox"/> Residences	<input type="checkbox"/> Wine
<input type="checkbox"/> Parks	<input type="checkbox"/> Beer
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Liquor / spirits
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals	<input type="checkbox"/> Malt liquor
<input type="checkbox"/> Churches	
<input type="checkbox"/> Schools	

**Community
Action
Kit**

Does the billboard ad contain:

If the ad shows people, estimate their age:

<input type="checkbox"/> Animals	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18
<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol product	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 20
<input type="checkbox"/> Cartoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 21
<input type="checkbox"/> Minorities	
<input type="checkbox"/> Logo of the alcohol company	
<input type="checkbox"/> People	

Beyond drinking, what does the billboard promote?

Photo taken?

	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	If yes, attach to the survey.

Please record the advertising copy on the billboard:

Side 1: _____

Side 2: _____

How many other billboards are visible nearby? _____

Total number of billboards in an eight block area: _____

Total number of alcohol billboards in this eight block area: _____

Your Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Your age: _____