



Prohibition

PROHIBITION

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. What does the word “prohibit” mean?
2. Have you heard of the period of time in United States called Prohibition? If so, what do you know about it? If not, what do you think it refers to?
3. Are there any restrictions on the sale or drinking of alcohol in the city or country where you live?
4. Do you know of any places that ban the sale of alcohol? If so, what do you think is the reason for the ban?





Prohibition

From 1920 to 1933, it was illegal to make, transport, or sell alcohol in the United States. This period is called Prohibition.

Churches and groups opposed to alcohol wanted it banned because they believed that drinking alcohol led to crime, poverty, early death, and great suffering for the families of drinkers. They wanted Americans to give up drinking and have a better life.

At first, drinking did decrease. Before long, though, alcohol was made illegally or smuggled in from other countries. Speakeasies, hidden places where people could buy and drink alcohol, became common in big cities. In 1925, there were over 100,000 speakeasies in New York City alone.

Organized gangs sold most of the illegal alcohol and made a great deal of money doing this. They smuggled large quantities of alcohol from Canada or Europe and ran speakeasies where people could have dinner, dance, and watch floorshows while they drank. The gangs gave police officers money so they would not arrest them or shut down their businesses.

Alcohol was still legal if it was used as medicine or for religious ceremonies. Although many doctors prescribed whiskey for patients who did not need it, no one put a stop to the practice. People also made alcohol in their homes or backyards for themselves or to sell to others.

By 1931, it was clear that the law could not be enforced and that many Americans were not obeying other laws, as well. Some people thought that the number of people who drank alcohol and the number of violent crimes had increased during Prohibition. Rival gangs became famous for their violent fights to decide who controlled the illegal alcohol business.

In 1933, the federal Prohibition law was abolished, but individual states could continue to ban alcohol. Mississippi did this until 1966, the last state to do so.

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

A. True or False. Read the statements below. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F. If it is false, correct the information.

1. During Prohibition, it was against the law to drink alcohol. _____
2. Churches opposed alcohol because it was very expensive. _____
3. It was not difficult to buy alcohol during Prohibition. _____
4. Some people made a lot of money selling illegal alcohol. _____
5. Prohibition was successful in decreasing the amount of alcohol people drank. _____

B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.

1. What was illegal in United States during the period called Prohibition? _____

2. Why did churches and other groups want to ban alcohol? _____

3. What were speakeasies? _____

4. Why were many of the speakeasies allowed to stay open? _____

5. Besides going to speakeasies, what were some other ways that people were able to get alcohol? _____

6. How were organized gangs able to make a lot of money during prohibition? _____

7. Why was prohibition ended? _____



VOCABULARY REVIEW

A. Match the words on the left with the correct meaning on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| _____ 1. illegal | a) against; not agreeing with |
| _____ 2. transport | b) bring into the country illegally |
| _____ 3. opposed | c) out of sight; not easily seen or found |
| _____ 4. ban | d) catch and take to jail |
| _____ 5. smuggle | e) make someone obey |
| _____ 6. hidden | f) group of people who commit crimes |
| _____ 7. common | g) end something |
| _____ 8. gang | h) against the law |
| _____ 9. run | i) not allow; prohibit |
| _____ 10. arrest | j) strong type of alcohol |
| _____ 11. whiskey | k) carry, send, move |
| _____ 12. enforce | l) usual |
| _____ 13. rival | m) manage |
| _____ 14. abolish | n) someone who competes with another |

B. Choose the correct word from the list below to complete the following sentences.

crime – poverty – suffering – give up – decrease – ceremony – prescribe – obey - violent

1. A soldier in the army must _____ his officer.
2. The doctor told John that he had to _____ smoking or he would die.
3. The city wants to hire 50 new policemen because there is a lot more _____ now.
4. Many children in Africa live in _____ and don't have enough food to eat.
5. The doctor will probably _____ an antibiotic for your infection.
6. There was a very _____ storm last night and many trees were blown down.
7. Susan's boyfriend left her and now she is _____ from a broken heart.
8. When many cities banned smoking in public places, there was a _____ in the number of smokers.
9. She invited over 100 people to her wedding _____.

**ANSWER KEY****PRE-READING QUESTIONS**

1. Prohibit means to not allow something.
- 2-4. Individual answer

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**A. True or False**

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F

Written Answers

1. During prohibition, it was illegal to make, transport, or sell alcohol in the United States.
2. Churches and other groups opposed alcohol because they believed it led to crime, poverty, early death and great suffering for the families of drinkers.
3. Speakeasies were hidden places where people could buy and drink alcohol.
4. Many of the speakeasies were allowed to stay open because organized gangs made a great deal of money doing so.
5. People could also obtain alcohol if used as a medicine or for religious ceremony, through a doctor's prescription, and by making it in their homes or backyards.
6. Organized gangs could make a lot of money during prohibition by smuggling and selling large quantities of alcohol from Canada and Europe as well as running speakeasies where people could have dinner, dance, and watch floorshows while they drank.
7. Prohibition was ended because people were not obeying the law, violent crime had increased, and gangs were fighting for control of the illegal alcohol business.

VOCABULARY REVIEW**A. Choose the closest word**

1. h
2. k
3. a
4. i
5. b
6. c
7. l
8. f
9. m
10. d
11. j
12. e
13. n
14. g

B. Find the matching word

1. obey
2. give up
3. crime
4. poverty
5. prescribe
6. violent
7. suffering
8. decrease
9. ceremony