



Sugar named  
the world's  
most popular  
drug

Tasty treats: But by year six one in five children are obese, according to official figures.

Literacy

A new study has cast light on English children's shocking sugar intake. Like many harmful drugs, sugar seems addictive and changes the brain. So should sugar be treated as drugs are?

Literacy

It changes our mood. It creates a pleasurable short-term sensation. And once we get used to it, we want more.

These statements are all true of alcohol, nicotine and cannabis. But they could also refer to something most people take — and give to their children — every day: sugar.

Literacy

Now our relationship with sugar is under scrutiny again. This week, research by Public Health England reveals that children in England have half their recommended daily allowance of it at breakfast.

**Literacy**

Scientists are divided on whether sugar is addictive. But like nicotine, heroin and cocaine, it is purified to concentrate its effects. It also stimulates the release of dopamine — a hormone commonly associated with the brain's pleasure system and withdrawal symptoms. And it has become easier to transport and refine it since it was discovered in the tropics centuries ago. As its price fell, consumption rose quickly.

Literacy

It is now not only present in chocolate bars or fizzy drinks, but in many tinned and canned products. Since the 1980s it has become a common ingredient in snacks branded as healthy. 'Sugar has become so **ubiquitous**\* it can only be avoided by concerted and determined effort,' wrote Gary Taubes in yesterday's *Guardian*.

*\*This is a former Word Banksy. What does it mean?*

Literacy

But sugar is associated with many health problems — particularly obesity, diabetes and associated illnesses. This has led to growing calls for tougher action on sugary food and drinks.

**Literacy**

Last year the UK government introduced a sugar tax on the soft drinks industry. The World Health Organisation has called on others to follow suit. This, in turn, has inspired a backlash: in Colombia, for example, an anti-sugar broadcast has been banned at the sugar industry's behest.

Literacy



## Sweet poison?

Absolutely, say health campaigners. Sugar is addictive and harmful, just like substances we usually call 'drugs'. It may be legal and socially acceptable to wolf down a cake, but that does not make it any better for us. The government should get tougher to protect people, particularly the young, from 'the white killer'.

Literacy

Ridiculous, cry sugar enthusiasts. We do not inject, snort or smoke sugar. Its impact on our behaviour is relatively minor. Small amounts of sugar in our diet can be beneficial, provided we exercise regularly. And our bodies convert carbohydrates to glucose: a substance which occurs naturally in the human blood is hardly a drug.

Literacy

*What do you think?*

Is sugar a drug?

Literacy

*What do you think?*

Would you eat less sugar  
if it cost more?

Literacy

EMBRACE AND  
LOVE YOUR BODY,  
IT IS THE MOST  
AMAZING THING  
YOU WILL EVER  
OWN.

verb of the day

**purify**

to make pure; free from anything that debases, pollutes, adulterates, or contaminates:

*Water isn't free; someone is paying a bill to **purify** the water that comes through that fountain.*

noun of the day

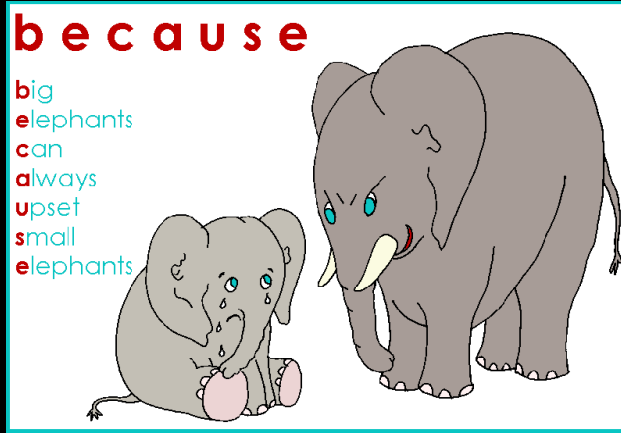
# scrutiny

1. a searching examination or investigation; minute inquiry.
2. surveillance; close and continuous watching or guarding.
3. a close and searching look.

*Too aware of his **scrutiny**, she cleared her throat and pretended to read the iPad.*

Literacy

purify  
scrutiny



Can you think of a spelling acronym, like the example above, to help you spell this week's new words?



*What we do in life echoes in Eternity*

# pervasive



**FIND OUT THE  
MEANING OF THIS  
WORD.**

**USE IT CORRECTLY  
IN YOUR WORK OR  
WHEN IN LESSON TO  
EARN P POINTS.**

*Word Banksy*

