



# Marijuana Facts

**FACT: Marijuana is addictive.**

Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the main active ingredient in marijuana. It stimulates brain cells to release the chemical dopamine, artificially causing a feeling of pleasure. The “high” feeling it creates is one of the reasons some people use it again and again, which can lead to addiction. And the younger you start, the higher your risk for addiction. About one in six teenagers who smoke marijuana will become addicted.

**FACT: Marijuana use can negatively affect your performance in school and athletics.**

THC affects many parts of the brain, including those that control memory and movement. Marijuana users may experience the following:

- problems with learning and memory
- distorted perceptions (sight, sound, time, touch)
- impaired motor coordination
- increased heart rate
- loss of interest and motivation

**FACT: Driving under the influence of marijuana is dangerous.**

Safe driving involves good concentration, judgment, and reaction time. Safe drivers must also be alert and have good coordination. Smoking marijuana—and mixing it with even small amounts of alcohol—negatively affects all of these necessary skills. In fact, up to 14 percent of the drivers who die in car accidents have marijuana or both marijuana and alcohol in their bloodstreams.

**Think It Through:** Considering the scientific facts above, study the following scenarios. Look for marijuana myths and answer the questions on separate paper. Apply facts regarding the dangers present in each situation.

1. Two members of a high school football team are nervous before a big game. A friend gives them a joint and tells them it will help them calm down before the game. What are the risks involved for these two teammates? What about the team as a whole?
2. A young man wants to smoke marijuana with his date before going to a movie. He tells her it will “open her mind” and enhance her understanding of the film. He will be driving her home afterward. What do the facts tell you about the dangers involved in this scenario?
3. A study group gets together to prepare for an important test. During a study break, one member pulls out a joint and offers to share it with anyone who wants to join her. What do the facts tell you about the risks?



# Consider the Source

A **fact** can be verified with data. An **opinion** is a personal judgment based on the knowledge or beliefs the person has at that point in time. Can opinions be trusted? It depends on the source.

Learn more by reading the following statements and then answer the questions below each statement. Decide whether the source of information is reliable or unreliable, and then circle the correct answer at the end of each statement. Finally, answer the “Think It Through” question at the bottom of the page. Use separate paper as needed.



## 1. “Marijuana is not addictive.”

**Source:** *High school student offering marijuana to a friend*

- Is the above statement most likely fact or opinion? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where might this student have gotten his or her information? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you think is the purpose of this statement? \_\_\_\_\_

Source Reliable

Source Unreliable

## 2. “One in six people who start smoking marijuana in their teens become addicted.”

**Source:** *The National Institute on Drug Abuse*

- Is the above statement most likely fact or opinion? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did the information most likely come from? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you think is the purpose of this statement? \_\_\_\_\_

Source Reliable

Source Unreliable

## 3. “I’m okay to drive. I only got a little stoned and had a couple of beers. Besides, if I don’t bring Mom’s car home, I’m dead!”

**Source:** *High school student to a friend after a party*

- Can the above statement be verified as true? \_\_\_\_\_

- On what kind of information is the student likely basing his or her decision? \_\_\_\_\_

- What other factors should the student take into consideration before getting behind the wheel of the car? \_\_\_\_\_

Source Reliable

Source Unreliable

## 4. “Marijuana—sometimes in combination with other drugs and alcohol—is found in the bloodstream of up to 14 percent of drivers who die in car accidents.”

**Source:** *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)*

- Can the above statement be verified as a fact? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did the NHTSA most likely get its information? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can knowing this information make a difference for the student wanting to drive home after a party? \_\_\_\_\_

Source Reliable

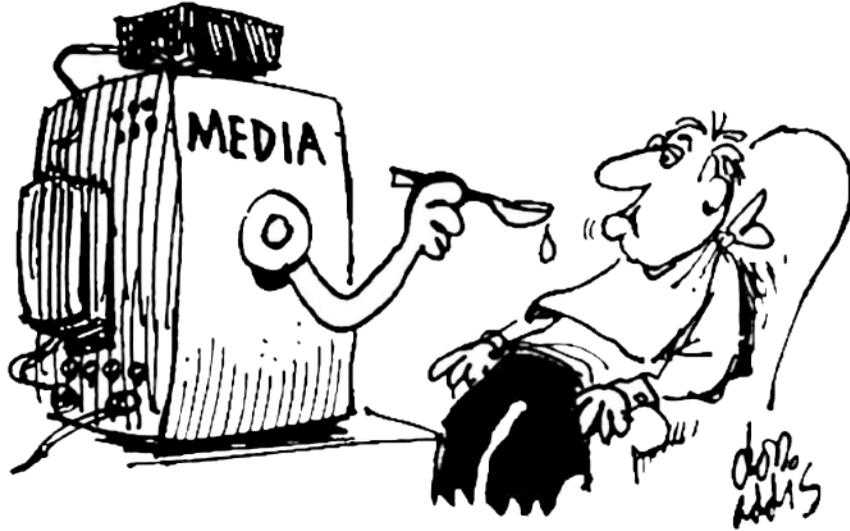
Source Unreliable

**Think It Through:** Every day, you are bombarded with information from a variety of sources, including friends, teachers, family, books, TV programs, the Internet, music, and more. Based on the reliability rating activity you just completed, how can you evaluate sources of information in your daily life to determine whether they are based on fact or opinion?



# Think It Through

Study the editorial cartoon below. Try to identify both obvious and hidden messages in the cartoon **before** answering the questions below.



1. The word “media” is written on the television set in this picture. What does this portray to you?

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2. What does the image of the arm and its actions symbolize?

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3. What is the most obvious message of this editorial cartoon?

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4. Editorial cartoons also have subliminal (hidden) messages. Imagine if this cartoon were portraying YOU in the chair. What message is the cartoon telling you?

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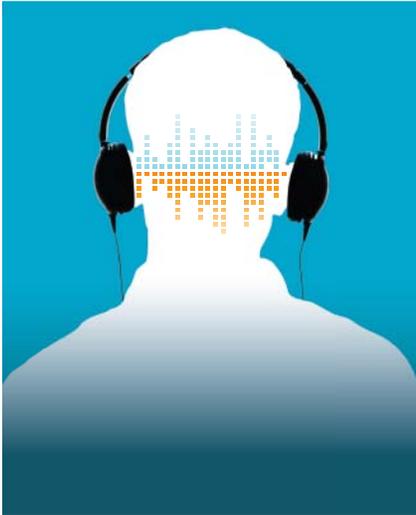
5. Think about the messages—both obvious and subliminal—that you get from popular culture, whether it is a TV show, a chart-topping song, or a post on a website. How does this editorial cartoon apply to those messages and how you should perceive them?

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# Analyzing Media Messages



Just how often are you exposed to messages about drugs and alcohol? If you listen to the same song every day, several times a day, for months, does it start to influence how you think about drugs and alcohol, and the choices you make?

Choose a popular song or music video that mentions drugs or portrays drug use. Remember, even if it isn't said explicitly, there may be hidden messages in the song that suggest that marijuana, tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs are no big deal. Fill in the blanks below, then answer the questions to learn more about the messages you may be getting about marijuana or other drug use.

**Name of song/video you are analyzing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Intended audience of song/video:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Main theme of song/video:** \_\_\_\_\_

How many times are drugs or drug use mentioned/portrayed in the song/video? Fill in the chart below and indicate whether the drug reference is positive (e.g., "cool," "fun," "not dangerous") or negative (e.g., "not cool," "not fun," "dangerous").

Reference	Positive	Negative	Reference	Positive	Negative
1			5		
2			6		
3			7		
4			8		

1. What messages about marijuana, other drugs, or drug use are mentioned/portrayed in the song/video?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Based on the information from the chart above, is the overall message about drugs positive or negative?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What information about marijuana or other drug use was omitted from this song/video?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Are any of the messages about drugs in this song "hidden"? If so, what are the hidden messages?  
\_\_\_\_\_