

SHOULD PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS BE ALLOWED IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS?

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA FOR HOMEWORK, IN-CLASS TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the [Thinkalong module](#). Students can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

SHOULD THE OLYMPICS JUST ALLOW DOPING?

BrainCraft | August 3, 2016 | Video

5:38 minutes

A short video from BrainCraft that talks about the issues with doping, PEDs, testing, and the punishments for athletes that get caught using them.

- Doping is hard to catch because testing doesn't catch a lot of substances used to improve performance.
- The range of substances is huge – 10 different classes of drugs are most commonly used, according to the US Anti-Doping Agency. These substances include anabolic steroids, human growth hormones, blood doping procedures, and stimulants.
- There are pros and cons to each kind of substance – testosterone, for instance, can help an athlete get stronger, but also has side effects like acne and stunted growth.
- As new PEDs are developed, it's harder for anti-doping agencies to stay ahead of the curve and develop tests to detect their use.
- Some substances and procedures aren't banned but still act as performance enhancers, like caffeine. These aren't banned because we see them as natural rather than artificial – a phenomenon known as the "Nature Bias."
- Some argue that we should allow PEDs but regulate them to ensure that athletes are healthy in using them. This would help keep illegal PEDs out of sports and help anti-doping agencies stay ahead of the groups that develop procedures that beat their tests.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET A DRUG BANNED FOR ENHANCING ATHLETES' PERFORMANCE?

NPR | June 14, 2016 | Article

1023 Words

In the wake of tennis player Maria Sharapova's punishment for taking a heart medication banned by international sports oversight groups. An interview with Oliver Rabin, the World Anti-Doping Agency's science director, that addresses how and why substances get banned by the agency.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

- Rabin says that drugs are banned not just because they can enhance an athlete’s performance, but also because of concerns for athletes’ health and wellness or if using the drug goes against the spirit of sport. If a drug meets two of these criteria, WADA prohibits their use.
- If athletes are taking a banned substance because of medical necessity, they can apply for an exemption. Some drugs that may fall into this category, like anti-depressants, asthma treatments, or blood pressure medications.
- WADA laboratories can tell if something is being used for doping when entire teams use the substance rather than just one or two athletes who may be using it legitimately.
- WADA conducts studies that take into account a lot of different factors to help determine if an athlete is taking a substance to help improve performance. Rabin says one of their biggest concerns is athlete safety.

DUTCH CYCLIST THOMAS DEKKER’S MISADVENTURES IN BLOOD DOPING

Only a Game | January 26, 2018 | Audio

7:51 minutes

An interview with professional cyclist Thomas Dekker about his new book detailing his experiences with blood doping in competition.

- Dekker says that when he was 16, his coach told him that he’d need “help” to get ahead. That meant blood doping.
- Dekker’s doctor who helped him with blood doping worked with other cyclists and was arrested for “endangering public health.”
- Blood doping is when an athlete takes blood out of their body, freezes it for later, and then reintroduces it to their bloodstream before competition. This adds red blood cells to their bloodstream, meaning they can carry more oxygen and have better stamina.
- Dekker says he was so desperate to win that he eventually had to perform the procedure himself, leading to problems with the needles and the process itself.
- Once he started, Dekker says it was hard to stop. Even when he hurt himself doping, he would perform well in competition. He says that others were probably doing the same.
- Dekker got caught for using EPO, another performance enhancing substance. He was suspended for two years and stopped doping, but couldn’t compete the way he did before. He also ruined his relationships with teams, sponsors, and his friends.

KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your classroom and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Doping
- Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs)
- World Anti-Doping Agency
- Nature Bias

CONTEMPLATE

Students will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help students answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Students will engage their peers in an evidence-based debate using the media they just analyzed. Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form an evidence-based response to the debate question.

In addition to rich in-class discussions, teachers can also connect with other classrooms through the Thinkalong website. [Sign up here](#) to be connected.