

Teacher Copy

The 18th Amendment



Introduction (Whole Class): The 18th Amendment was ratified January 16, 1919. It is the only amendment to ever have been repealed (1933). It is also known as “The Noble Experiment.” The Volstead Act (October 1919) would later clarify the law. It stated that any drink containing more than 0.5% alcohol by volume was prohibited. Also, that ownership of any machine for the use of producing these alcohols were illegal and punishable by fine and/or jail time. There were several reasons why the Amendment was passed.

- ✓ **Question 1:** What problems do we have today with alcohol use? (Alcoholism, drunk-driving, binge drinking-death, under-age drinking, domestic violence, birth defects, poverty).
 - Several of these reasons are the same reasons the Amendment was originally passed.
 - It started to destroy traditional American values (more time spent in saloons instead of the home and money for the home was wasted on alcohol)
 - Domestic Violence occurred
 - Crime and Murder
 - Drunkenness
 - Workers drank at lunch and more accidents would occur in the workplace

Directions: “Think, Pair, Share” With a partner, read each section of the 18th Amendment and determine the meaning of it. Then place the main idea of the section in your own words in the space provided. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

Section 1.

After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

In my own words: Within a year of passing this law, no one in the United States is allowed to make, sell, transport, or receive from outside the United States any alcohol as a beverage/drink.

- ✓ **Question 2:** According to this section, on what date did this law take affect? (January 16, 1920)
- ✓ **Question 3:** How do you think people got around Prohibition?
 - It did not say that people could not drink the liquor.
 - Since there was a year before the law went into effect, people stocked their cellars with alcohol.
 - The Volstead Act allowed purchase of alcohol if it were prescribed by a doctor (many prescriptions would be written during this time).
 - Gangsters (like Al Capone) would open secret bars called “Speak Easies” where people could buy alcohol for consumption (lead to bribery and police corruption).

Section 2.

The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

In my own words: Both the national legislative branch (Congress) and state legislatures can make laws that will aid in enforcement of the law.

✓ For Example1 : A state could make its own law to go completely “dry.”

Section 3.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

In my own words: If this Amendment is not ratified by 1926 by the states, it is invalid.

✓ Question 4: How many states must approve for a Constitutional Amendment to take place?
o ¾ of the states = Approx. 38 states