



Does champagne stop dementia?

A study found that it improved spatial awareness, so it might make it easier to find the way home from the pub.

crack open (vb): to open a bottle, often in celebration

rodents (n): group of mammals incl. rats, mice and squirrels

quaff (vb): to drink (an alcoholic beverage) heartily

fizzy (adj): (of a drink) containing bubbles of gas

maze (n): a complex network of paths and passages

disease (n): another word for illness

stroke (n): (this context) interruption in brain blood flow

flute (n): (this context) a tall, narrow wine glass

berry (n): a small, round juicy fruit without a stone

grains (n): (this context) cultivated cereal used as food

boxing (n): sport that uses gloved hands to fight

Three glasses of champagne a day can prevent dementia, claimed news stories last week. Enough to make anyone **crack open** the Cristal. The reports were based on a study from the University of Reading that was carried out three years ago but resurfaced last week via social media. The researchers found that drinking champagne improved spatial memory – the ability to navigate to wherever you want to go (for example, getting home after the pub). Champagne contains chardonnay mixed with pinot noir and pinot meunier, two black grapes that contain phenolic acids, which are thought to reduce inflammation and may protect brain cells.

Solution

So far so good but, unless you are a **rodent**, there is no evidence that **quaffing** champagne will preserve your cognitive function. The study was done not on humans but on 24 mature rats. The rats were divided into groups of eight and either champagne, another **fizzy** alcoholic drink or a carbonated soft drink was mixed into their feed. Over six weeks, researchers measured the rats' ability to get through a **maze** to locate a treat and found that the champagne drinkers were significantly better at the task.

When the rats' brains were examined under a microscope, those who had drunk champagne showed increased amounts of proteins that stimulate the formation of nerve-cell networks and are involved in memory and learning. In particular, these rats had more of a protein called dystrophin in the hippocampus region of the brain, which may protect against loss of reasoning and spatial memory.

However different rats are from humans, the laboratory rodent has been widely used as a model for human **disease**, especially for research into **stroke**, heart disease, diabetes and breast cancer. So are there implications in this study for humans? Disappointing news for champagne lovers – the rats were given just 1.78ml per kilo of body weight – the human equivalent would be one and a half **flutes** a week.

If you eat fruit and vegetables, you will already be getting enough phenolic acid anyway – especially if you go for mangoes, **berries**, apples and citrus fruits. There is some evidence, more relevant for humans than this rat study, that regular exercise, a Mediterranean diet of whole **grains**, fruit and vegetables, not smoking, having a normal blood pressure and avoiding **boxing** (or at least getting regularly punched in the head) may all reduce your risk of both loss of memory and reasoning. If you really want to justify a glass of champagne on health grounds, you can always quote physicians of the 19th century, who swore it could dissolve kidney stones, cure anaemia and keep you healthy.

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/nov/16/will-drinking-champagne-stop-me-getting-dementia>

“Let's chat about that!”

- Do you like drinking champagne?
- Is it any better than other similar drinks (Cava, Prosecco etc.)?
- What are the health risks of drinking too much alcohol?
- Imagine life without alcohol. What would the advantages and disadvantages be?
- How do you think we can live as long and as healthily as possible?
- Should governments interfere in our freedom of choice with regards to what we eat and drink?

Weekly English Practice

19th November 2015



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www.englishcoachingprojects.net Calle San Ignacio de Loyola 15 bajo
info@englishcoachingprojects.net 01001, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Araba-Alava



“iLook, iThink, iSpeak” Express yourself better!

1) You need to put a comma between the different items in a list, as in the following sentence:

Saturday morning started with a hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, and French toast.

2) In direct speech, if the speaker is before the quotation, then you need a comma to separate them:

Steve replied, 'No problem.'

If the quote comes before the speaker, then we need a comma before the final quotation mark:

'I don't agree,' I replied.

However, if you use a question or an exclamation, no comma is needed:

'Stop him!' she shouted. or 'Did you see that?' he asked.

3) Commas are used to separate clauses in a sentence which is made up of a main clause and (a) subordinate clause(s):

Having had lunch, we went back to work.

I first saw her in Paris, where I lived in the early nineties.

4) Commas are used to separate a part of a sentence that is not part of the main statement:

Gunpowder is not, of course, a chemical compound.

His latest film, Calypso Dreams, opens next month.

Cynthia's daughter, Sarah, is a teacher.

If we take out the part between commas, the sentence still makes sense:

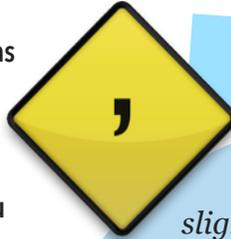
Cynthia's daughter is a teacher. (Cynthia has one daughter who is a teacher)

But if we use the original sentence with no commas, the meaning changes:

Cynthia's daughter Sarah is a teacher. (Cynthia has more than one daughter, and the daughter who is a teacher is called Sarah.)

The original article can be found here: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/comma>

We hope that this guide makes using commas a little easier!



Commas

A comma marks a slight break between different parts of a sentence. Used properly, commas make the meaning of sentences clear by grouping and separating words, phrases, and clauses. It also gives the reader a chance to take a breath!

The 4 main uses of a comma are in lists, direct speech, to separate clauses and to separate parts of a sentence which aren't considered to be part of the main clause.

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* to pintxo: (a new verb invented by ECP)

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- (ii) to create new pintxos and share them with others while practising English



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