English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

Articles of the week

The day London went 'barmy.' An East End boy remembers the end of World War II in Europe

---

LONDON (AP) — John Goldsmith was too young to fight in World War II, but he remembers the rationing, the blackouts and the bombs that devastated his neighborhood in east London. And he remembers the party when peace returned to Europe.

Church bells rang across the city, bonfires were lit and conga lines snaked through Piccadilly Circus as people filled the streets to celebrate the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. For a 14-year-old boy, May 8, 1945, also brought something else: an end to the tedium of wartime rules and restrictions.

“Well, it was such a contrast. Suddenly, freedom! Mucking about. Doing all sorts of things that were frowned upon as not being the right thing to do,” Goldsmith, now 94, said.

“But now, for instance, all these wonderful pictures of Piccadilly and places like that. Buses covered with people standing on the roof just going barmy — not necessarily due to drink or anything of that nature. But definitely, they were letting their hair down,” he added with a giggle.

Victory in Europe Day was a moment of relief for a city scarred by bombing raids and rocket attacks that killed an estimated 30,000 civilians throughout the war and didn't end until just a few weeks earlier. But it was also a time to look forward to the safe return of husbands, sons, brothers — and sisters — who were serving abroad, and to hope that lives put on hold in 1939 might soon return to normal.

While D-Day was all about the troops who landed on the beaches of northern France to begin the liberation of Europe, V-E Day was a moment for the public, for everyone who sacrificed for the common good.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had inspired Britain during its darkest days, caught the mood of the nation when he announced the victory at 3 p.m. on May 8.

“My dear friends, this is your hour,” he said. “This is not victory of a party or of any class. It's a victory of the great British nation as a whole.”

That's a message Goldsmith wants people to remember before the World War II generation fades from the scene. A retired architect and amateur artist, he has long regaled his family with stories of his boyhood in the Bow neighborhood of east London. After a bit of prodding from his wife, Margaret, he recently began sketching the scenes so others could see what he lived through.

“The soldiers, the airmen, the sailors can't operate without the people supporting them and backing them,” Goldsmith said. “So if we the people don't contribute, the armored elements will collapse. So it's so important that V-E Day should be … the people's day.”

While Londoners had been anticipating the end of the fighting in Europe for weeks, the announcement was like the cork popping out of a giant bottle of champagne in a city that had lived in the shadow of war for six years.

The East Enders paid a heavy price

Nowhere was the relief felt more deeply than in the East End, where thousands of homes, schools and businesses were reduced to rubble as Nazi bombers pounded docks and warehouses along the River Thames during the onslaught that became known as The Blitz. When Buckingham Palace was bombed on Sept. 13, 1940, Queen Elizabeth reportedly told a policeman she was glad, because “it makes me feel I can look the East End in the face.”

Goldsmith's drawings capture the day The Blitz began, with Nazi bombers filling the air and fires turning the night sky a molten volcanic red behind the docks. There's also the time a cricket match was suspended as one of the flying bombs known as “doodlebugs” soared overhead, and the ghostly image of a rent collector emerging from a cloud of dust after a V-2 rocket, a type of long-range ballistic missile, obliterated a block of houses.

The last V-2 to hit London destroyed an apartment building less than two miles from his home on March 27, 1945.

Eighty years later, Goldsmith holds back tears when he remembers the moment he heard that the Nazis had surrendered.

He and his friends were playing street soccer using a tennis ball — soccer balls being scarce after six years of war — when a young boy ran out of the nearby dairy and shouted simply, “It's over!”

“I have to be very careful now, because I could break up,'' Goldsmith said, pausing to collect himself. “But that was the point when you realized: 'I didn't have to worry anymore.'”

People had seen the end coming, but didn't dare to believe it could be true.

A wave of joy

In an era before television, Londoners flocked to the cinema to watch the weekly newsreels that charted the Allied advance toward Berlin. Goldsmith, who was just 8 when the war broke out, tracked the progress of the troops through the newspaper, carefully clipping the headlines and maps. By early 1945, he realized the surrender of the Third Reich was near.

When the news finally came, it unleashed a wave of joy that lasted for days.

Goldsmith remembers climbing the steps of St. John's Church in Bethnal Green to see over the crowds that lined the streets as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth drove through East London to celebrate with the locals.

There were street parties and bonfires. Everyone contributed what they could with food still in short supply.

“The favorite table from the lounge was brought out in the center of the street and linked with all the other personal possessions covered up with cloth and that sort of thing,” Goldsmith remembered. “Food was magicked from somewhere, and kids gorged themselves on all sorts of cakes.”

Sleep training is no longer just for babies. Some schools are teaching teens how to sleep

By JOCELYN GECKER AP Education Writer

MANSFIELD, Ohio (AP) — The topic of a new course at Mansfield Senior High School is one that teenagers across the country are having trouble with: How to Get to Sleep.

One ninth grader in the class says his method is to scroll through TikTok until he nods off. Another teen says she often falls asleep while on a late-night group chat with friends. Not everyone takes part in class discussions on a recent Friday; some students are slumped over their desks napping.

Sleep training is no longer just for newborns. Some schools are taking it upon themselves to teach teenagers how to get a good night's sleep.

“It might sound odd to say that kids in high school have to learn the skills to sleep,” says Mansfield health teacher Tony Davis, who has incorporated a newly released sleep curriculum into a state-required high school health class. “But you'd be shocked how many just don't know how to sleep.”

Adolescents burning the midnight oil is nothing new; teens are biologically programmed to stay up later as their circadian rhythms shift with puberty. But studies show teenagers are more sleep deprived than ever, and experts believe it could be playing a role in the youth mental health crisis and other problems plaguing schools, including behavioral and attendance issues.

“Walk into any high school in America and you will see kids asleep. Whether it's on a desk, outside on the ground or on a bench, or on a couch the school has allotted for naps — because they are exhausted,” says Denise Pope, a senior lecturer at Stanford Graduate School of Education. Pope has surveyed high school students for more than a decade and leads parent sessions for schools around California on the importance of teen sleep. “Sleep is directly connected with mental health. There is not going to be anyone who argues with that.”

How much sleep do teens need?

Adolescents need between eight and 10 hours of sleep each night for their developing brains and bodies. But nearly 80% of teens get less than that, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has tracked a steady decline in teen sleep since 2007. Today, most teens average 6 hours of sleep.

Research increasingly shows how tightly sleep is linked to mood, mental health and self-harm. Depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts and behavior go up as sleep goes down. Multiple studies also show links between insufficient sleep and sports injuries and athletic performance, teen driving accidents, and risky sexual behavior and substance use, due in part to impaired judgment when the brain is sleepy.

For years, sleep experts have sounded an alarm about an adolescent sleep crisis, joined by the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and others. As a result, some school districts have shifted to later start times. Two states — California and Florida — have passed laws that require high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. But simply telling a teenager to get to bed earlier doesn't always work, as any parent can attest: They need to be convinced.

That's why Mansfield City Schools, a district of 3,000 students in north-central Ohio, is staging what it calls “a sleep intervention.”

'Sleep to Be a Better You'

The district's high school is piloting the new curriculum, “Sleep to Be a Better You,” hoping to improve academic success and reduce chronic absences, when a student misses more than 10% of the school year. The rate of students missing that much class has decreased from 44% in 2021 but is still high at

32%, says Kari Cawrse, the district's attendance coordinator. Surveys of parents and students highlighted widespread problems with sleep, and an intractable cycle of kids going to bed late, oversleeping, missing the school bus and staying home.

The students in Davis' classroom shared insights into why it's hard to get a good night's sleep. An in-class survey of the 90 students across Davis' five classes found over 60% use their phone as an alarm clock. Over 50% go to sleep while looking at their phones. Experts have urged parents for years to get phones out of the bedroom at night, but national surveys show most teens keep their mobile phones within reach — and many fall asleep holding their devices.

During the six-part course, students are asked to keep daily sleep logs for six weeks and rate their mood and energy levels.

Freshman Nathan Baker assumed he knew how to sleep, but realizes he had it all wrong. Bedtime meant settling into bed with his phone, watching videos on YouTube or Snapchat Spotlight and often staying up past midnight. On a good night, he got five hours of sleep. He'd feel so drained by midday that he'd get home and sleep for hours, not realizing it was disrupting his nighttime sleep.

“Bad habits definitely start around middle school, with all the stress and drama,” Baker says. He has taken the tips he learned in sleep class and been amazed at the results. He now has a sleep routine that starts around 7 or 8 p.m.: He puts away his phone for the night and avoids evening snacks, which can disrupt the body's circadian rhythm. He tries for a regular bedtime of 10 p.m., making sure to close his curtains and turn off the TV. He likes listening to music to fall asleep but has switched from his previous playlist of rousing hip hop to calmer R&B or jazz, on a stereo instead of his phone.

“I feel a lot better. I'm coming to school with a smile on my face,” says Baker, who is now averaging seven hours' sleep each night. “Life is so much more simple.”

There are scientific reasons for that. Studies with MRI scans show the brain is under stress when sleep-deprived and functions differently. There is less activity in the pre-frontal cortex, which regulates emotions, decision making, focus and impulse control and more activity in the emotional center of the brain, the amygdala, which processes fear, anger and anxiety.

Parents and teens themselves often aren't aware of the signs of sleep deprivation, and attribute it to typical teen behavior: Being irritable, grumpy, emotionally fragile, unmotivated, impulsive or generally negative.

Think of toddlers who throw temper tantrums when they miss their naps.

“Teenagers have meltdowns, too, because they're tired. But they do it in more age-appropriate ways,” says Kyla Wahlstrom, an adolescent sleep expert at the University of Minnesota, who has studied the benefits of delayed school start times on teen sleep for decades. Wahlstrom developed the free sleep curriculum being used by Mansfield and several Minnesota schools.

Social media isn't only to blame

Social media has been blamed for fueling the teen mental health crisis, but many experts say the national conversation has ignored the critical role of sleep.

“The evidence linking sleep and mental health is a lot tighter, more causal, than the evidence for social media and mental health,” says Andrew Fuligni, a professor of psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles, and co-director at UCLA's Center for the Developing Adolescent.

Nearly 70% of Davis' Mansfield students said they regularly feel sleepy or exhausted during the school day. But technology is hardly the only reason. Today's students are overscheduled, overworked and stressed out, especially as they get closer to senior year and college applications.

Chase Cole, a senior at Mansfield who is taking three advanced placement and honors classes, is striving for an athletic scholarship to play soccer in college. He plays on three different soccer leagues and typically has practice until 7 p.m., when he gets home and needs a nap. Cole wakes up for dinner, then dives into homework for at least three hours. He allows for five-minute phone breaks between assignments and winds down before bed with video games or TV until about 1 a.m.

“I definitely need to get more sleep at night,” says Cole, 17. “But it's hard with all my honors classes and college stuff going on. It's exhausting.”

There aren't enough hours in the day to sleep, says sophomore Amelia Raphael, 15. A self-described overachiever, Raphael is taking physics, honors chemistry, algebra and trigonometry and is enrolled in online college classes. Her goal is to finish her associate degree by the time she graduates high school.

“I don't want to have to pay for college. It's a lot of money,” says Raphael, who plays three sports and is in student council and other clubs.

She knows she's overscheduled. “But if you don't do that, you're kind of setting yourself up for failure. There is a lot of pressure on doing everything,” said Raphael, who gets to bed between midnight and 2 a.m. “I am giving up sleep for that.”

The Associated Press' education coverage receives financial support from multiple private foundations. AP is solely responsible for all content. Find AP's standards for working with philanthropies, a list of supporters and funded coverage areas at AP.org.

Article Archive

- Finance
- Work & Business
- Society
- Science

- Culture
- Miscellaneous