

NEWS BREAK

Article: **The energy drink that hooked young women — and industry giant Celsius**

Section: **BUSINESS, C5**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, April 20, 2025**, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will explore the rise in popularity of energy drinks and explore the social media marketing strategy of using influencers to market products. They will talk about the ingredients and whether they are healthy or not.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the meaning of the word.

Social media has **catalyzed** the brand's growth.

Catalyzed Guess:

Catalyzed Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. _____, a giant in the energy drink market, purchased Alani Nu for \$1.8 billion this year.
2. On TikTok, the hashtag #alaninu has been used in almost _____ posts, where users perform blind taste tests, rank flavors and showcase rainbow-tinged beverage recipes based on Alani Nu.
3. Social media has catalyzed the brand's growth: Alani Nu's U.S. sales jumped _____% in the fourth quarter from a year earlier.
4. Fitness influencer and coach Katy Hearn launched Alani Nu in 2018 after what?
5. Energy drinks were introduced around late 2018. What did each can promise its customers?
6. Alani Nu moved away from what?

7. Alani Nu got “the sugar right. They had the flavors right. They targeted the female consumer with a _____ positioning.”
8. In a survey by Kantar and Mintel, _____% of women between the ages of 18 and 34 said they consumed a “fitness energy drink” this year, up from 27% in 2023.
9. Promised benefits like increased energy, metabolism, use of botanical-sounding ingredients — Alani Nu says its drinks contain ginseng root extract — and partnerships with _____ drew women to Alani Nu.
10. The brand’s health claims have drawn scrutiny from consumers and regulators. On TikTok, health influencers warn about the long list of ingredients on Alani Nu cans, including what?
11. Its energy drinks were among many brands recalled in Canada. Why?
12. Nutritionists say energy drinks shouldn’t be used as health supplements. “Their flashy colors and yummy sounding flavors and especially when they’re fruity, people might think that’s good for me,” said Kate Patton, a dietitian with the Cleveland Clinic Center for Human Nutrition. She said many energy drinks — including Alani Nu — contain _____, which is linked to a greater risk of cardiovascular disease.

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?
- Do you consume energy drinks? Have you tried Celsius or Alani Nu? How do they make you feel? Do you think they’re good for your body? Why or why not?

Deeper-Dive comprehension questions for small groups, entire classes or journal entries and/ or essay prompts for extended enrichment assignments:

The article highlights how Alani Nu successfully targeted young women. What specific strategies did they use in terms of branding, flavors, and marketing that differed from established energy drink giants like Red Bull and Monster?

Social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram, played a significant role in Alani Nu's rapid growth. How did influencers and user-generated content contribute to the brand's popularity? Can you think of other examples of products or brands that have experienced similar social media-driven success?

Alani Nu positioned itself as a "healthier" energy drink, emphasizing attributes like being sugar-free and containing vitamins. Based on the information in the article, critically evaluate whether these claims align with the concerns raised by nutritionists and health influencers.

The article mentions the acquisition of Alani Nu by Celsius for \$1.8 billion. Why do you think Celsius, an already established energy drink company, was willing to pay such a high price for Alani Nu? What potential benefits could this acquisition bring to Celsius?

The article touches upon the scrutiny Alani Nu faced regarding its health claims and ingredient list. Why do you think some consumers and regulators are concerned about the ingredients in energy drinks like Alani Nu? What responsibility do companies have in ensuring the accuracy and transparency of their health claims?

The co-CEO of Monster Beverage suggests that Alani Nu's growth might eventually plateau due to competition and changing consumer preferences. What factors could contribute to a decline in a brand's popularity, even after experiencing significant initial success?

The article mentions that Alani Nu's former owner, Katy Hearn, learned what women wanted "out of a product" through her fitness coaching. How important is understanding a specific target demographic when developing and marketing a new product?

Consider the role of brand ambassadors. How do these partnerships benefit Alani Nu? What are the potential advantages and disadvantages for the individuals who become brand ambassadors?

The article points out that Alani Nu moved away from the "male-focused vibe" of traditional energy drinks. Why do you think the energy drink market was historically more geared towards men? What does Alani Nu's success suggest about the potential of targeting previously underserved demographics?

The article mentions a survey indicating a significant increase in "fitness energy drink" consumption among young women. What societal trends or factors might be contributing to this rise in popularity?

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.
Copyright © 2025 The Seattle Times Company