

Describing Social Issues with the Passive Voice

Choose one of the things below and describe it without saying its name (or any part of its name). Continue until your partner guesses what you are speaking about. If they can't guess, let them look at the list below.

Useful phrases for describing social issues

In this country In South Korea In this region In this city	It They No one Residents Students Safety ... people Prices Laws MPs	can('t) (doesn't) need to should(n't) has/ have will would	mainly/ usually often sometimes hardly ever/ very rarely
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allowed arrested asked attended avoided banned based believed bothered bought changed (double) checked commented on committed converted into cut damaged decreased defined as disappear(s)	elected employed forbidden forced funded held hooked housed imported increased inhaled injected killed legalised located lowered made moved nominated noticed	occur(s) opened opposed paid processed produced proven punished put into raided raised related to smoked snorted sought after spread staffed stared out stored supported	take(s) part in taught tempted tested trained underreported. used
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Things to describe

- Alcohol
- Amphetamines (speed, crystal meth, etc)
- B&Bs
- Betting shops
- Borstals/ Youth detention centres
- Cemeteries/ Graveyards
- Churches/ Mosques/ Shrines/ Synagogues/ Temples
- City hall/ Town halls
- Cocaine
- Community centres
- Consumption tax/ Sales tax/ GST/ VAT
- Council estates/ Housing estates/ Housing projects
- Customs
- Cram schools
- Disputed borders
- Disputed waters
- Domestic violence
- E-cigarettes
- The financial district
- Firearms/ Guns
- Food bank
- Gated communities
- Gay and lesbian bars/ Gay and lesbian clubs/ Drag bars
- Glue
- GP surgeries/ Local clinics
- Graduate schools
- Green spaces
- Group homes
- Heroin
- Homeless shelters
- Immigration office
- Income tax
- Job centres
- Jury rooms
- Kindergartens
- Knives
- (Public) libraries
- Lobbyists
- The lower house (the House of Commons, the House of Representatives, etc)
- Magistrates courts/ Lower courts/ Small claims courts
- Marihuana
- Military bases
- (Government) ministries
- National insurance/ Social insurance/ Social security
- National parks

- Nuclear power plants
- Nursery schools
- Nursing homes
- Open prisons/ Low security prisons
- Opium
- Orphanages
- Paddy fields
- Police boxes
- Private detective agencies
- Private schools
- Race tracks
- Referendums/ Referenda
- Regional parliaments
- Research institutes
- Sexual violence
- Sheltered housing
- Snap general elections
- Squats
- State schools/ Public schools
- Supreme Court
- Tax offices
- The upper house (The House of Lords, The Senate, etc)
- Vocational colleges
- Ward offices
- Women's shelters

Ask about any topics above which you couldn't understand or couldn't describe.

Read the descriptions below and decide what each section is describing.

Your energy levels are increased by them.
Your appetite is decreased by them.
They are often imported from Asia, but they can also be made from chemicals.
Your health and teeth can be damaged by them.

It is made from coca leaves.
Most of it is imported from Central and South America.
It is usually snorted up the nose.
It can be converted into crack and smoked.

It is paid every time you buy something.
Prices are raised when it goes up.
It can be avoided by going to duty free shops.

Homes there aren't sought after by most people.
In many countries a lot of crime occurs there.

They are mainly located in Asia.
They are mainly attended in the evening.
In Korea they are forced to close at 22:30 but many stay open later.
They are mainly attended by people who need to pass exams or are weak in one area of study.
The students aren't usually taught by certified teachers.

It is mainly committed by men.
It is related to the home or family.
It is often underreported.
It isn't punished as seriously as it should be.

Their safety hasn't been proven.
They are banned in quite a lot of countries.
They are believed to be safer than normal tobacco.
There is a danger that non-smokers such as young people will be tempted by them to start smoking for the first time.

In some, straight people aren't allowed in.
The customers can express themselves freely without being stared out or being bothered.
In the US and UK, they used to be banned and often raided by the police.
A famous riot started when one called Stonewall was raided by the police.

Mentally and physically disabled people are housed there.
The residents are looked after by care staff.
The residents are trained to do as many things for themselves as they can.

Many people are killed by it every year.
It is made from opium, which is made from a kind of poppy (flower).
It is injected.
AIDS is often spread by people injecting it.
Millions of people are hooked on it.

It is paid from your salary.
It has been lowered in many countries since the 1970s.
It often doesn't need to be paid by low income earners.

It is smoked.
It can be put into food.
Your consciousness is changed by it.
It is forbidden by international law but it has been legalised in some places.
You can be arrested for having, using or selling it.
It is used to treat pain and other medical symptoms.
It can be bought in pharmacies in some places.
It can be bought in Amsterdam coffee shops.
Probably no one has been killed by it in this country this year.

In Japan, the American ones are mainly based in Okinawa.
Many local people are employed there, but they are opposed by most local people.
A lot of crimes occur nearby.
Demonstrations and other protests are often held there.

Welfare is paid from it.
In some countries healthcare is also supported by it.
It is usually paid to the government directly from your salary.

Lots of radioactive material is both used and produced there.
No CO2 is produced.
It is opposed by some local people and supported by others.
For some reason, it is usually opposed by left-wingers.
If accidents occur there, the consequences could be very serious.
The waste has to be processed and/ or stored for a long time.

Old people are moved there when they can't look after themselves.
They are staffed by care workers and some medical staff.
Stays there are paid for by the residents, families and/ or the government.
New ones are being opened all the time to cope with the aging population.
More will need to be opened in the future.

People are put in them for minor and white column crimes.
The inmates are sometimes allowed to leave for a short time, for example to work or to go to a funeral.
They are often located in the countryside.

It is made from a special kind of poppy (flower).
It is converted into morphine and used in hospitals.
It can be converted into painkillers like ibuprofen.
It can be converted into heroin.

The people there are often asked for directions.
They are usually staffed by one or two people.
They are usually located on the corner of streets and/ or near stations.
They have disappeared from some countries such as the UK.
They are often noticed and commented on by visitors to Japan.

All adults of voting age can take part in them.
Sometimes resident non-nationals can also take part in them.
They can also be held in local areas.
Recently ones related to independence have been held in Europe.
The law can be changed by them.
In some countries they are held very often and in other places they very rarely happen.

They are usually held once every four or five years, but these are held in special circumstances such as after a vote of no confidence.
One was held in the UK recently, but it was regretted by the ruling party.
MPs are elected in them.
They are held with quite short notice.

In America, the people on it are nominated by the President.
Laws are tested for their constitutionality there.
Its decisions are usually covered by the national press.

In some countries, the people there aren't elected.
Laws are double checked there and amendments are made.
Elections are held at different times to the lower house.

Hint: They are in the same order as the list of topics, but with some missing.

Suggested answers

Amphetamines (speed, crystal meth, etc)

Your energy levels are increased by them.

Your appetite is decreased by them.

They are often imported from Asia, but they can also be made from chemicals.

Your health and teeth can be damaged by them.

Cocaine

It is made from coca leaves.

Most of it is imported from Central and South America.

It is usually snorted up the nose.

It can be converted into crack and smoked.

Consumption tax/ Sales tax/ GST/ VAT

It is paid every time you buy something.

Prices are raised when it goes up.

It can be avoided by going to duty free shops.

Council estates/ Housing estates/ Housing projects

Homes there aren't sought after by most people.

In many countries a lot of crime occurs there.

Cram schools

They are mainly located in Asia.

They are mainly attended in the evening.

In Korea they are forced to close at 22:30 but many stay open later.

They are mainly attended by people who need to pass exams or are weak in one area of study.

The students aren't usually taught by certified teachers.

Domestic violence

It is mainly committed by men.

It is related to the home or family.

It is often underreported.

It isn't punished as seriously as it should be.

E-cigarettes

Their safety hasn't been proven.

They are banned in quite a lot of countries.

They are believed to be safer than normal tobacco.

There is a danger that non-smokers such as young people will be tempted by them to start smoking for the first time.

Gay and lesbian bars/ Gay and lesbian clubs/ Drag bars

In some, straight people aren't allowed in.

The customers can express themselves freely without being stared out or being bothered.

In the US and UK, they used to be banned and often raided by the police.

A famous riot started when one called Stonewall was raided by the police.

Group homes

Mentally and physically disabled people are housed there.

The residents are looked after by care staff.

The residents are trained to do as many things for themselves as they can.

Heroin

Many people are killed by it every year.

It is made from opium, which is made from a kind of poppy (flower).

It is injected.

AIDS is often spread by people injecting it.

Millions of people are hooked on it.

Income tax

It is paid from your salary.

It has been lowered in many countries since the 1970s.

It often doesn't need to be paid by low income earners.

Marihuana

It is smoked.

It can be put into food.

Your consciousness is changed by it.

It is forbidden by international law but it has been legalised in some places.

You can be arrested for having, using or selling it.

It is used to treat pain and other medical symptoms.

It can be bought in pharmacies in some places.

It can be bought in Amsterdam coffee shops.

Probably no one has been killed by it in this country this year.

Military bases

In Japan, the American ones are mainly based in Okinawa.

Many local people are employed there, but they are opposed by most local people.

A lot of crimes occur nearby.

Demonstrations and other protests are often held there.

National insurance/ Social insurance/ Social security

Welfare is paid from it.

In some countries healthcare is also supported by it.

It is usually paid to the government directly from your salary.

Nuclear power plants

Lots of radioactive material is both used and produced there.

No CO2 is produced.

It is opposed by some local people and supported by others.

For some reason, it is usually opposed by left-wingers.

If accidents occur there, the consequences could be very serious.

The waste has to be processed and/ or stored for a long time.

Nursing homes

Old people are moved there when they can't look after themselves.

They are staffed by care workers and some medical staff.

Stays there are paid for by the residents, families and/ or the government.

New ones are being opened all the time to cope with the aging population.

More will need to be opened in the future.

Open prisons/ Low security prisons

People are put in them for minor and white column crimes.

The inmates are sometimes allowed to leave for a short time, for example to work or to go to a funeral.

They are often located in the countryside.

Opium

It is made from a special kind of poppy (flower).

It is converted into morphine and used in hospitals.

It can be converted into painkillers like ibuprofen.

It can be converted into heroin.

Police boxes

The people there are often asked for directions.

They are usually staffed by one or two people.

They are usually located on the corner of streets and/ or near stations.

They have disappeared from some countries such as the UK.

They are often noticed and commented on by visitors to Japan.

Referendums/ Referenda

All adults of voting age can take part in them.

Sometimes resident non-nationals can also take part in them.

They can also be held in local areas.

Recently ones related to independence have been held in Europe.

The law can be changed by them.

In some countries they are held very often and in other places they very rarely happen.

Snap general elections

They are usually held once every four or five years, but these are held in special circumstances such as after a vote of no confidence.

One was held in the UK recently, but it was regretted by the ruling party.

MPs are elected in them.

They are held with quite short notice.

Supreme Court

In America, the people on it are nominated by the President.

In the US, members aren't forced to retire when they reach a certain age.

Many important topics like the legality of abortion have been decided by this place.

A lot of controversy is caused every time that a new member is chosen.

Laws are tested for their constitutionality there.

Its decisions are usually covered by the national press.

The upper house (The House of Lords, The Senate, etc)

In some countries, the people there aren't elected.

Laws are double checked there and amendments are made.

Elections are held at different times to the lower house.

Passive voice presentation

Add one word to each gap below. Some cannot be passive.

Amphetamines (speed, crystal meth, etc)

Your appetite _____ decreased by them.

They _____ often imported from Asia, but they can also be made from chemicals.

Your health and teeth can be damaged _____ them.

Cocaine

It can _____ converted into crack and smoked.

E-cigarettes

Their safety _____ n't been proven.

Gay and lesbian bars/ Gay and lesbian clubs/ Drag bars

The customers can express themselves freely without being stared out or _____ bothered.

In the US and UK, they used _____ be banned and often raided by the police.

A famous riot started when one called Stonewall _____ raided by the police.

Income tax

It has _____ lowered in many countries since the 1970s.

Police boxes

They _____ disappeared from some countries such as the UK.

Referendums/ Referenda

All adults of voting age can _____ part in them.

Check with the descriptions above.

Put the verbs in brackets below in the right form with any necessary auxiliary verbs.

Cocaine

Most of it _____ (import) from Central and South America.

Consumption tax/ Sales tax/ GST/ VAT

Prices _____ (raise) when it goes up.
It can _____ (avoid) by going to duty free shops.

Council estates/ Housing estates/ Housing projects

In many countries a lot of crime _____ (occur) there.

Income tax

It often doesn't need _____ (pay) by low income earners.

Marihuana

Probably no one _____ (kill) by it in this country this year.

Nursing homes

New ones _____ (open) all the time to cope with the aging population.

Referendums/ Referenda

Sometimes resident non-nationals can also _____ (take part) in them.
Recently ones related to independence _____ (hold) in Europe.

Check with the descriptions above.

Write descriptions of the other social issues, using passive voice as much as possible.

Try to think of other words related to social issues that your partner might not know and explain it to them. You get one point if they didn't understand it before your explanation but think they did understand it afterwards.