

### Legal English strong and weak opinions

Ask your partner about a topic below. They will secretly write a number from 1 (strongly disagree with this idea) to 5 (very strongly agree with this idea), then give their answer. After asking them for more details about their opinion if you like, write down what you think their number was. You then both reveal the numbers to check if they were the same.

#### Useful language for asking for opinions

“How do you feel about...?”/ “What do you think about...?”/ “What’s your opinion on...?”

- A *statute of limitations*
- *Banning extremist* political parties
- Changing the law on *capital punishment*
- Changing the law on *corporal punishment* in schools
- Changing to (more) *jury trials*
- *Community service* for more offenses
- *Criminalising advocating violence*
- *Curfews* with *electronic tagging*
- *Decriminalising* possession of *soft drugs* for personal use
- *Hard labour* as a punishment
- *Jail time* for *persistent petty crime* (“three strikes and you are out” etc)
- Keeping all *suspects’* names secret until they are *found guilty*
- *Legalising assisted suicide*
- *Legalising personal protection devices* such as *pepper spray* and *Tasers*
- *Legalising soft drugs*
- Less *harsh* punishments if you apologise to the *victim*
- *Life sentences* that really mean life
- More *adversarial* court cases
- More *armed police*
- More protection for *whistle-blowers*
- Organising meetings between *criminals* and *victims* as part of their *rehabilitation*
- *Permanent criminal records*
- *Prison sentences* for *online harassment/ cyber-bullying*
- *Prison tours* for *young offenders*
- Punishment for *jaywalking*
- Scrapping *diplomatic immunity*
- Treating violence during sporting events the same as other kinds of *assault*
- Videoing of all police *interrogations*

Brainstorm strong and weak opinions language you could have used in the task above.

Choose a topic below and decide which person will take each side of the argument. Start with you both strongly arguing your side of the argument, then try to slowly move together in some way, e.g. by one of you being convinced or by finding a compromise position. Then do the same for other rows of views below.

| One side  | The other side   |
|---|--|
| <i>Criminalisation</i> of being a member of an <i>organised crime group</i> | Only <i>prosecuting</i> crimes by members of <i>organised crime groups</i> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Decriminalising prostitution</i>  | <i>Harsher punishments</i> for prostitution  |
| Emphasising people's right to <i>privacy</i>   | Emphasising people's right to <i>free speech</i> and <i>freedom of information</i> |
| Encouraging official <i>graffiti</i>   | Discouraging all graffiti  |
| <i>Fines</i> for dangerous driving   | <i>Prison time</i> for <i>reckless driving</i>                                     |
| Full <i>legal immunity</i> for serving politicians   | Treating politicians exactly the same as ordinary citizens                         |
| Harsher punishments for illegal downloading  | More <i>enforcement</i> of the existing laws on illegal downloading                |
| Higher <i>compensation payments</i>  | Lower compensation payments  |
| Longer <i>jail sentences</i>   | Shorter jail sentences   |
| Making <i>bankruptcy</i> easier and less serious   | Making bankruptcy harder and more serious  |
| Making becoming a <i>lawyer</i> easier   | Making becoming a lawyer more difficult  |
| Making it easier for police to monitor communications ( <i>phone tapping etc</i> )           | Making it more difficult for the police to monitor (electronic) communications     |
| Making it easier to set up a <i>law firm</i>   | More controls on law firms   |
| Making it easier to <i>sue</i> people for <i>libel</i>                                       | Making it harder to sue people for libel   |
| Making <i>mutually-agreed</i> divorce easier   | Making all divorce more difficult  |
| <i>Mediation</i> for <i>wrongful dismissal</i> cases   | <i>Court cases</i> for wrongful dismissal cases                                    |
| More <i>anti-terrorism measures</i>  | <i>Scrapping</i> some useless anti-terrorism measures                              |
| More controls on gambling  | The <i>legalisation</i> of other forms of gambling such as casinos                 |
| More emphasis on <i>punishing</i> criminals  | More emphasis on <i>rehabilitating</i> criminals                                   |
| More <i>freedom of information</i>   | More protection for government secrets   |
| More <i>international law</i>  | More freedom for countries to decide their own laws                                |
| More <i>local police</i>   | More specialist police such as <i>armed response units</i>                         |
| More rights for <i>asylum seekers</i>  | More restrictions on asylum seekers  |
| More warnings to make people worried about crime   | More reassurance for people not to worry so much about crime                       |
| Prison for <i>drug addicts</i>   | Treatment for drug addicts   |
| Prosecuting domestic companies for <i>bribery</i> abroad                                     | Leaving foreign courts to deal with bribery in their country                       |
| Prosecuting <i>white hat hackers</i>   | Using white hat hackers to help society  |
| <i>Prosecutions</i> for <i>first offenses</i> of <i>petty crimes</i> like <i>shoplifting</i> | Unofficial police warnings for first offenses of petty crimes like shoplifting     |
| Raising basic taxes for the rich   | Only closing tax <i>loopholes</i>  |
| Taking <i>legal precedent</i> more into account  | Taking legal precedent less into account   |
| Treating teenage criminals the same as adults  | Different systems and punishments for teenagers                                    |

Share something you finally agreed on and see what the class thinks. Then ask about vocabulary above, e.g. words in italics, discussing your real opinions as a class each time,