

Social Issues- Brainstorming and Speaking

Without looking below, brainstorm as many social issues as you can in pairs.

Find social issues in the list of collocations below:

Ageing	marriages
Assisted	suicide
Brain	labour
Breakup of	population
Censor	-ship
Child	drain
Community	standards
Data	protection problems
Domestic	equality
Drinking and	activism
Falling educational	driving
In-	violence
Falling birth	-ness
Gambling	rate
Glass	addiction
Health	scares
Homeless	ceiling
Human	trafficking
Lack of local	-term unemployment
Lack of respect	immobility
Social	for elders
Social	isolation
Long	democracy
Mal-	nutrition
Organised	drug addiction
Old	people's homes
Political	extremism
Prescription	crime
Runaway	harm
Self-	children
Sexual	violence
Single member	families
Stress-related	harassment
Single parent	households
Union	action
Youth	illnesses

Compare your answers to the collocations task and your original brainstorming ideas to the big list below.

Abortion
Ageing population
Alcoholism
Assisted suicide
Bankruptcy
Body image problems (e.g. anorexia/ bulimia)
Brain drain
Breakup of marriages (e.g. divorce and separation)
Bullying
Censorship
Child labour
Children in care
Community activism
Control of the internet
Corruption (e.g. bribery and nepotism)
Dangerous dogs
Data protection problems
Debt
Discrimination (e.g. sexism, racism, ageism)
Domestic violence
Drinking and driving
Drop in belief in religion
Dropping educational standards
Dropping out of corporate life
Falling birthrate
Gambling addiction
Gentrification
Glass ceiling
Globalisation
Graffiti
Hard drug use
Health scares
Homelessness
Human trafficking
Illegal gambling
Illegal weapons, e.g. firearms
Immigrants not assimilating
Inequality
Lack of affordable quality housing
Lack of blood bank blood/ donated organs
Lack of giving to charities
Lack of health insurance
Lack of local democracy
Lack of respect for elders



Lack of respect for teachers
Lack of social mobility
Loneliness/ Social isolation
Long term unemployment
Malnutrition
Multilingual classrooms
NEETs
Neighbourhood watch organisations/ Vigilantism
Obesity
Old people's homes
Organised crime (e.g. mafia and gangs)
Outsourcing
People released from prison not being able to fit back in to society
Political extremism
Pornography
Post-industrial society
Poverty, e.g. the Working Poor
Prescription drug addiction
Problems with pest control (e.g. rats and cockroaches)
Protests/ Demonstrations
Recidivism
Rise in crime
Runaway children/ Missing children
School absenteeism
School violence
Self-harm
Sex industry
Sexual harassment
Shrinking middle class
Single member households
Stress-related illnesses
Single parent families
Smoking
Soft drug use
Squatters
Suicide
Teenage pregnancy
Terrorism
Underage sex
Union action (strikes etc)
Youth violence

Did you have any on your list which aren't above? Are there any above which you don't understand?

Brainstorming Part Two – checking understanding

Try to think of at least two examples of these:

Addictions
Addictive prescription drugs
Body image problems
Bullying
Censorship
Child labour
Community activism
Control of the internet
Corruption
Data protection problems
Discrimination
Dropping educational standards
Dropping out of corporate life
Financial problems
Gentrification
Glass ceiling
Globalisation
Hard drugs
Health scares
Illegal weapons
Immigrants not assimilating
Inequality
Lack of respect for elders
Lack of respect for teachers
Lack of social mobility
Loneliness/ Social isolation
Malnutrition
Organised crime
Outsourcing
Petty crime
Political extremism
Poverty
Problems with pest control
Relationship problems
School violence
Sexual harassment
Single member households
Stress-related illnesses
Single parent families
Terrorism
Union action
Vandalism
Vigilantism
Youth violence

Brainstorm/ Agree

Work together to find at least five things in the list above or your own list which:

- Aren't (really) problems
- Are problems but also have positive aspects
- You are interested in but didn't mention before.
- You are totally uninterested in
- Aren't much of an issue in this country
- Aren't the government's job to sort out
- You would put on your manifesto if you were a politician.
- Are likely to become bigger problems in the future
- Could be solved by teachers
- Should be studied/ talked about in schools
- Could be solved by parents
- Should be studied/ talked about by parents
- Are likely to become worse/ less of a problem in the future
- Are impossible/ too difficult to change much
- Could easily be changed
- Should be covered more by the media

Brainstorming phrases

Brainstorm suitable language for the discussion above with these functions:

Asking for opinions

Giving strong opinions

Giving weak opinions/ Speculating

Other opinions phrases (neither strong nor weak)

Strongly agreeing

Strongly disagreeing

Politely disagreeing

Other agreeing phrases

Compare your lists with another group, agreeing or disagreeing with the social problems that they have chosen using language like that above.

Choose one of the topics below and give your opinion on it using language like that which you brainstormed above. What does your partner think?

- All abortion is wrong
- The government should limit abortion to the absolute minimum number of weeks
- The only solution to the ageing population is immigration
- Alcoholism is not a serious problem in my country
- Assisted suicide is a good idea in theory but would never work in practice
- People shouldn't be ashamed of bankruptcy
- Body image problems (e.g. anorexia/ bulimia) are increasing
- The breakup of marriages (e.g. divorce and separation) is mainly due to unrealistic expectations of married life
- Bullying is an unavoidable part of childhood
- There is no need for any kind of censorship
- Child labour laws are too strict – there is nothing wrong with a thirteen year old having a part-time job
- Putting children in care should be the last resort – it is always better for children to be with their parents if at all possible
- Community activism will never have a great effect in this city
- There is a continual danger of government control of the internet that we have to fight
- Corruption (e.g. bribery and nepotism) is becoming less of a problem
- Breeds of dogs which can be dangerous should just be banned
- Banks are to blame for people's debt problems
- The most serious kind of discrimination in this country is racism
- Most claims of domestic violence are false
- Drinking and driving should have an automatic jail sentence
- Educational standards are falling because people have comfortable lives and so aren't ambitious
- People dropping out of corporate life will force companies to change for the better
- There is nothing the government can do to affect the falling birthrate
- Gambling is addictive and so it should be made difficult for people to bet
- Globalisation has mainly been positive for this country
- Graffiti is art
- Health scares happen because they help sell newspapers
- Most homeless people have chosen that life
- The main reason immigrants don't assimilate is because local people don't welcome them
- Inequality is the main cause of social problems
- The lack of affordable quality housing should be solved by local governments
- People don't give to charities because people's taxes are too high
- There is no reason to respect all people who are older than you
- Everyone has an equal chance to become successful
- Social isolation is made worse by technology
- Obesity is a medical problem, not a social one

Choose one of the topics above and whether you want to be for or against that proposition. Your partner must take the opposite point of view and debate it with you.

Choose questions from the list below to discuss with your partner:

- Are the reasons for sending the elderly to old people's homes usually good ones?
- Does organised crime (e.g. mafia and gangs) affect ordinary people?
- Do the pros of outsourcing outweigh the cons?
- Which kinds of political extremists have more influence in your country? Why that side?
- What is a reasonable level of control of pornography?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of a post-industrial society?
- Are the Working Poor responsible for their financial situation?
- Why do governments worry more about illegal drug addiction than about prescription drug addiction?
- What things are most likely to lead to protests/ demonstrations in this country? Why those things?
- What can be done to reduce recidivism?
- Why are people more worried about crime even when it isn't rising?
- What do you think about safe shelters for runaway children?
- Should school absenteeism mean that the parents are punished?
- What are the consequences of school violence?
- Why is self-harm more common among women than men?
- Is it better for the sex industry to be open rather than hidden?
- What can be done to make sure people don't suffer from false claims of sexual harassment?
- Why is the middle class shrinking?
- Is the rise in the number of single member households inevitable?
- What are the main stress-related illnesses in this country? Why?
- Can single parent families raise healthy and happy children?
- Is people feeling guilty for smoking taking things too far?
- Is there ever any reason for a prison sentence for soft drug use?
- What is your view on squatters who take over the building which hasn't been used for years?
- Are there any solutions to teenage suicide?
- Has the government overreacted to the threat of terrorism?
- How worried should parents be about underage sex/ teenage pregnancy?
- Why is union action (strikes etc) so much greater in some countries than others?
- What are the reasons for youth violence?

Use the underlined parts of the questions above to ask each other about other issues.