

SPEAKING

Talking about social issues

LEVEL

Intermediate (B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_3094S

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

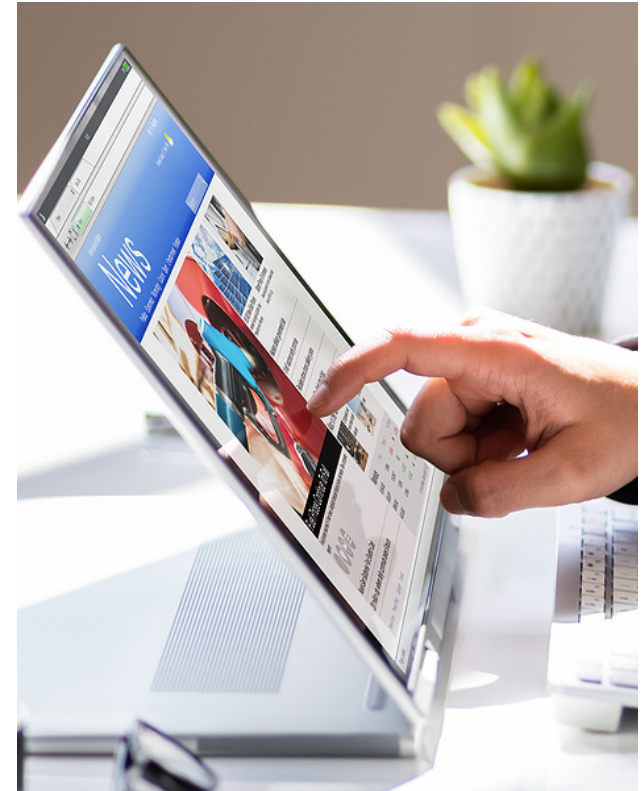
- I can identify different issues that affect society.
- I can discuss problems and potential solutions.





What are some examples of social issues?

Work in breakout rooms then gather your ideas as a class.



What's it like where you are?

Give a score between **1-5** (1 = very bad and 5 = excellent) for each area below.
Share some of your scores, giving a brief explanation of why you chose that number.

Discuss the questions afterwards as a group.

*What's the usual process
when someone is sick in
your country?*

Healthcare
facilities

Education
system

Employment
opportunities

*Do many people buy their
homes or is it more
common to rent?*

Safety and
security

Transport
services

Housing

*Is there support for people
when they are
unemployed?*

Culture and
recreation

Access to
technology

Environmental
protection



Discuss

Are things the same all over your country? Or are there big differences in certain regions?



Have you ever lived in another country? Were things similar or different there?

What's the issue?

Skim the statements. **Identify the issue(s)** each person describes. **Share** with the class.



I live in a village two hours outside the city and the public transport services are just atrocious. There's one bus, but it's very unreliable. It's never on time and some days it doesn't show up at all! It's a disgrace, really. You're so isolated out here if, like a lot of us, you don't own a car!



I've got three kids, and they've all moved abroad. I don't blame them – they have no future here. Many businesses have either closed down or are struggling. Something needs to be done about it before it turns into a ghost town!



I live in a region where there's a lot of heavy industry. I recently read some pretty terrifying statistics about current air pollution levels and the long-term health effects. We're slowly being poisoned, but the government is apparently turning a blind eye.



Talking about social issues

Match the words and phrases to a definition or explanation (a-f)

1

*...the public transport services are just **atrocious**...*

a

A phrase to express extreme dissatisfaction with something

2

It's a disgrace!

b

A description of a place with few opportunities

3

*My kids have all moved abroad, and **I don't blame them.***

c

A phrase that means *to ignore*

4

*They **have no future** here.*

d

A phrase that describes a lack of possibility or potential for growth

5

*Something needs to be done, before it turns into **a ghost town.***

e

A synonym for *very bad*

6

*The government is apparently **turning a blind eye.***

f

A phrase to express agreement, especially about a negative situation



Tip: These phrases are quite strong – they convey a lot of emotion.



Thinking about solutions

These are some of the issues that were raised on p.7.
Can you think of any potential **solutions**?

Poor transport
services

Social isolation

Well, if you can't get from A to B, then of course you've got a problem...

Economic
decline

Unemployment

I don't think there is a simple solution to the problem of unemployment...

Pollution

Government
inaction

If enough people speak out, maybe something can be done...



How might these issues
be **related**?

What's the solution?

Read the rest of the statements. What kinds of **solutions** are proposed?
How a) **realistic** and b) **effective** do you think these solutions would be?



A few locals have suggested starting a carpooling system, but I don't think that's very convenient for either the drivers or the passengers.



We need to invest in our community and create more incentives for our young people to stay.



There has to be more regulation of these big companies! They're destroying the environment and putting us all at risk.



What's it like where you are?

Can you **relate to the issues** outlined on slide 7?

**How easy is it to travel
around where you live?
How do most people
get around?**

**Is it common for
young people in
your area to move
away to find work?**

**Do you know
anywhere that you
would describe as a
ghost town?**

**Is pollution an issue in
your town or city?**

Practise describing and discussing an issue

Match (1-3) with (a-c). **Describe** an issue, using the real-life language. A classmate will **respond**.

1

You're on a waiting list for an important surgery. You might not get a date for your operation for another six months – and you know others who have waited for over a year!

a



2

There is a housing shortage in your city. Many people cannot afford to move into their own homes. The city council have approved plans for lots of new luxury hotels and office blocks.

b



3

You live in a capital city where a significant portion of the population is experiencing homelessness. So far, the current government hasn't taken any concrete steps to address this.

c



atrocious
It's a disgrace!

I don't blame them
ghost town

to have no future
to turn a blind eye



End of the lesson

Idiom

To sweep something under the rug

Meaning: to hide or ignore a problem instead of dealing with it openly

Example: The school was accused of sweeping the issue of bullying under the rug, ignoring the needs and safety of the students affected.



Additional practice



Language review

Take a few minutes to read the statements on the right again.
As you read, **look for**:

An adjective
that means *very bad*

A description of
a place with few
opportunities

... the public transport services are just atrocious... There's one bus, but it's very unreliable. It's a disgrace, really. You're so isolated out here if, like a lot of us, you don't own a car!

A phrase
relating to
employment
prospects

A phrase to
express
extreme
dissatisfaction

My kids have moved abroad and I don't blame them – they have no future here. So many businesses have either closed down or are struggling. Something needs to be done about it, before it turns into a ghost town!

A phrase that
means
to understand why someone does something

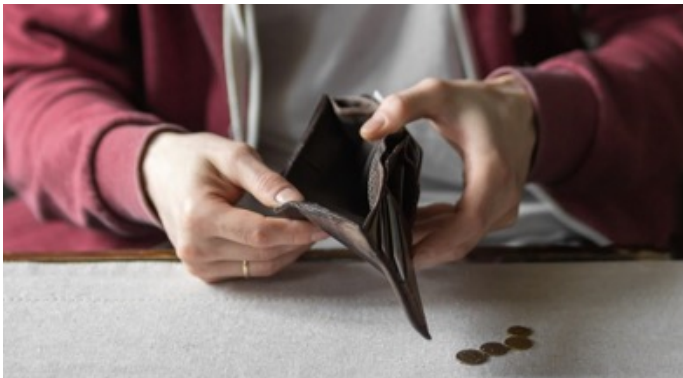
A phrase that
means
to ignore

There's a lot of heavy industry here. I recently read some pretty terrifying statistics about current air pollution levels and the long-term health effects. We're slowly being poisoned, but the government is apparently turning a blind eye.



Describe the pictures

What do you see in each picture?
How do these pictures relate to **social issues**?





Match a word to a picture

Choose one and say how it affects where you live. Your classmates will ask **follow-up** questions.



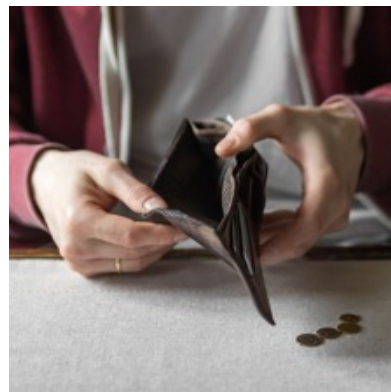
1

pollution



2

crime



3

poverty



4

homelessness

My city has a lower crime rate than other cities, but it still exists...

Overall, it is pretty safe in my city. A bigger problem is that a lot of people are struggling to get by financially.



Answer key

P.7: 1. e 2. a 3. f 4. d 5. b 6. c

P.15:

An adjective that means *very bad* – atrocious

A description of a place with few opportunities – a ghost town

A phrase relating to employment prospects – to have no future

A phrase to express extreme dissatisfaction – It's a disgrace

A phrase that means *to understand why someone does something* – I don't blame them

A phrase that means *to ignore* – to turn a blind eye



Summary

Talking about social issues

- *It's a disgrace!*
- *I don't blame them*
- *to have no future*
- *to turn a blind eye*
- *atrocious*
- *ghost town*



Vocabulary

atrocious

It's a disgrace!

I don't blame them

ghost town

to have no future

to turn a blind eye

