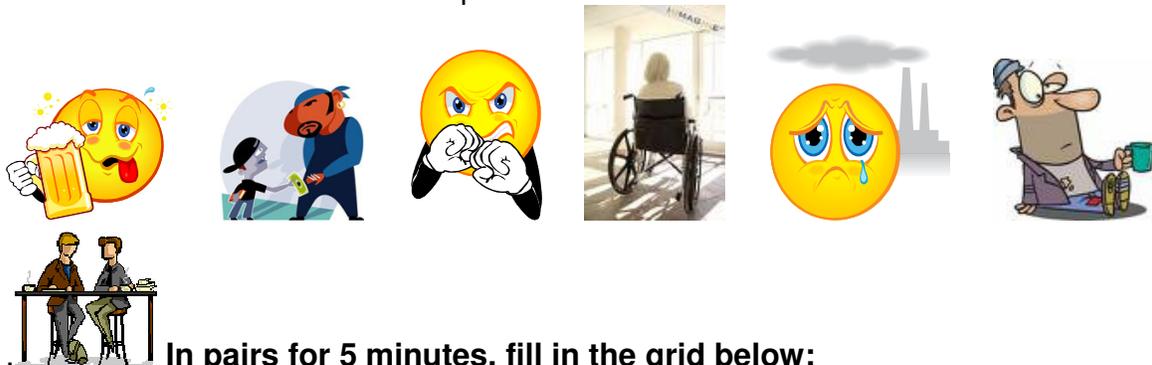


Topic: Social Problems/Cultural Differences

Let's get started... Social problems are problems that affect more than one person. Social problems may make a community an unsafe or unpleasant place to live. Talk with the other students in your group to make a list of social problems. Which ones do you think are the three biggest social problems in the U.S.A.?

Background: Every culture has social problems. Some social problems are more serious than others. A problem may be within a family, within a neighborhood, within a city, or more widespread. Often the government of a country, a state or a city tries to solve social problems. Governments try to deal with the problems in different ways. They may make new laws, hire more police, or create programs to educate people about the dangers of a problem. Sometimes a social agency may try to help.

Different countries may have different ideas about whether something is a private problem or a social or legal problem. For example, in the United States, it is illegal to hit your children or your spouse. It is called "domestic violence." It is a social and legal problem in this country. If someone is convicted of domestic violence, that person might not be allowed to become a citizen of the United States. It is important to understand cultural differences about social problems.



In pairs for 5 minutes, fill in the grid below:

Write your names in the boxes below to show whether you think that these problems are **social** (for the government to try to solve) or **private or personal** (for an individual, a family or a company to take care of without government help.)

Discuss your answers with your partner.

Problem	social ?	OR	private or personal?
alcoholism			
pollution			
domestic violence			
prostitution			
gambling			
teenage gangs			

Share your partner's answers with the group.

Discussion Questions:

Do you think that your home country has any big social problems? Tell about one. Where does it happen? Is it dangerous? Is anyone doing something to stop this problem? What do you think would help change the problem?

Sit with a partner who is from a different country to talk about the social problems listed below. These are some of the social problems in America. Are these problems in your home country too? Does your home country have social or government agencies to help with these (or with any other) social problems? Tell about some of the things that the government or people in your home country do to address each these issues. Share with your partner.

- Runaway or violent teenagers and teen gangs?
- Graffiti and littering?
- Environmental pollution?
- Crime
- Suicide?
- Poverty?
- Homelessness?
- Drug addiction and illegal drug use?
- Older citizens who have no children or other family members to care for them?
- Mental illness?
- Racism

If you could fix one problem in your home country, what would it be?

What would you do?

If you could fix one problem in the U.S.A. what would it be?

What would you do?

New words and Idioms: affect, serious, widespread, solve, to deal with, dangers, spouse, domestic violence, to be convicted, to be allowed, runaway, graffiti, littering, pollution, prostitution, homelessness, regulate, address, issue, pornography, suicide, poverty, racism