

Topic 1 **Social Problems**

1. **Vocabulary** (The **MP3** is available online)

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|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Rural | R <u>u</u> rul | 6. Close call | Clo <u>s</u> e ca <u>ll</u> |
| 2. Incident | In ci de <u>n</u> t | 7. Rut | R <u>u</u> t |
| 3. Nod off | Nod o <u>ff</u> | 8. Shallow | Sha <u>l</u> low |
| 4. Overdose | O <u>ver</u> do <u>se</u> | 9. Epidemic | Ep i de <u>m</u> ic |
| 5. Labored | La <u>b</u> ored | 10. Ripple | Rip ple |

	Word	Form	Definition	Example	Similar to:	Parts of Speech
1	Rural	<i>adj</i>	Of or relating to the country and the people who live there instead of the city.	My brother grew up in a rural community where more than half the people were farmers.	Country, Agricultural, Idyllic	Rurality n Rurally adv
2	Incident	<i>n</i>	an unexpected and usually unpleasant thing that happens.	Two people were shot yesterday in two separate incidents .	Occurrence, Circumstance, Event	
3	Nod off	<i>Phr v</i>	To fall asleep.	Try not to nod off in this class, please. :)	Drift off, Drop off, Doze	
4	Overdose	<i>v</i>	To take too much of a drug or medicine : to take an overdose of a drug or medicine.	Heath Ledger accidentally overdosed on sleeping pills.	Excess, Overkill, Gorge	Overdose n OD'd v
5	Labored	<i>adj</i>	Not having an easy or natural quality.	The patient's symptoms included a rapid pulse and labored breathing.	Arduous, Strained, Awkward	Labor n

	Word	Form	Definition	Example	Similar to:	Parts of Speech
6	Close call	<i>id</i>	An escape that was almost not successful, a narrow escape.	We nearly didn't get out of the burning building. It was a pretty close call , let me tell you!	Close shave, Close thing, Near thing	
7	Rut	<i>n</i>	A situation that is boring and difficult to change.	If you're in a rut , change jobs.	Grind, Drudgery, Same old stuff	Rut n
8	Shallow	<i>adj</i>	Taking in only a little air.	Her breathing was very shallow .	Not deep, Empty, Hollow	Shallow n Shallowly adv Shallowness n
9	Epidemic	<i>n</i>	A sudden, widespread occurrence of a particular undesirable phenomenon.	Hunger and oppression have spawned an epidemic of violent crime.	Blight, Abounding, Widespread	Epidemical adj Epidemically adv Epidemicity n
10	Ripple	<i>n</i>	A particular feeling or effect that spreads through or to someone or something.	The teacher's words set off a ripple of excitement within the class.	Surge, Cascade, Deluge	Ripple v Ripple n

2. Reading and Listening (The *MP3* is available online)

‘A Small Town Wonders What To Do When Heroin Is 'Everywhere’

BLOCK: Imagine this scene. We're in [rural](#) Pennsylvania. Picture rolling farmland studded with silos and 19th-century stone barns. It's 7:30 in the morning, first period in a high school classroom.

ZIATYK: This is actually the classroom that the [incident](#) occurred in.

BLOCK: A girl was [nodding off](#) at her desk at Brandywine Heights High School where Josh Ziatyk is principal.

ZIATYK: It just didn't look right, you know, just didn't look like she normally does.

BLOCK: She was [overdosing](#) on heroin.

FAVATA: She was sort of collapsed on the table, like, with her head on it. She had, like, a [labored](#) breathing, was definitely, like, semiconscious.

BLOCK: That's school counselor David Favata. He's a certified EMS worker. And that morning last May, he came running.

FAVATA: We just made - I just made sure we had an open airway, set up the oxygen.

BLOCK: Pumped air through a bag mask. The ambulance came and the student did survive. It was a [close call](#). It turned out she had done heroin in the school bathroom before class that morning. Principal Ziatyk says she's a great kid, a former cheerleader.

ZIATYK: Tons of energy and the world ahead of her. And through the late middle school years into early high school years, that - there was a change that occurred within her. And little by little, just found herself into a black hole, into a [rut](#), and couldn't get out of it. And there's that day.

BLOCK: The teacher who was in the class that day is still so upset by what happened she can't talk about it. In an email, she told me the awful memory of her student's [shallow](#) breath and graying face will stay with her forever. I went to Berks County, Penn., to hear what the national opioid [epidemic](#) means in a small town where everyone knows everyone and the [ripples](#) of addiction spread wide. Really, I could have gone just about anywhere. No community is immune. This area, around Kutztown, Penn., is not far from Reading and Philadelphia, which means heroin is plentiful and it's cheap. People here call opioids an equal opportunity destroyer in these small towns, afflicting the wealthy and the poor, young and old. But it's the young ones you hear about most. Between two neighboring school districts, they lost six former students to heroin overdose within two years. And they know they're lucky that number wasn't even higher.

If you want to continue reading this story, please open up the full transcript at:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=469954366>

The story is taken from NPR: <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/03/12/469954366/a-small-town-wonders-what-to-do-when-heroin-is-everywhere>

3. Conversation Strategies

Giving your opinion about a topic	Agreeing
Expressing a strong opinion	Expressing complete agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my opinion, ... • In my view, ... • In my reckoning, ... • I strongly believe in ... • I definitely think that ... • Well, if you ask me, ... • Well, I think ... • I believe • I strongly believe • I have a reason to believe • I'm sure that... • I'm pretty sure that... • Expressing a strong value (It's / They're + value adjective) • It's a nonsense to ... • ... It's a scandal, because ... • It's perfect for ... • It's wrong... Likewise, ... • They're ideal ... • Expressing certainty • According to government statistics, ... • Actually, ... • In fact, ... • Clearly, ... • Obviously, ... • People have always ... • People just won't continue to ... • Without doubt, ... • There's no doubt that • Undoubtedly • Surely, ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exactly! • Precisely! • Totally! • Absolutely! • That's right! • Correct! • You're right! • You're so right! • That's so true! • I couldn't agree with you more! • I'm with you on that • That's just what I was thinking! • That's exactly what I think. • That's a good point. • That's just how I see it. • My feelings exactly. • I'll say! • You can say that again! • Agreeing in part • Yes, perhaps, however ... • Well, yes, but ... • Yes, in a way, however ... • Hmm, possibly, but ... • Yes, I agree up to a point, however ... • Well, you have a point there, but ... • There's something there, I suppose, however... • I guess you could be right, but ... • Yes, I suppose so, however ... • That's worth thinking about, but ... <p>Expressing conditional agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd agree with you if ... • I'd certainly agree if you're thinking of ...

4. Phrasal Verbs

These *Phrasal Verbs* are very common in relation to (**Social**) **Problems**.

Phrase	Meaning	Collocation	Example
Fret about	to worry about someone or something. Fret over is also used.		Women are more likely than men to lie awake fretting about work or family problems.
Trigger *off*	Put something in motion, into action.	War	Stress and anxiety can trigger off many beauty problems, like acne, hair loss and dandruff.
Paper *over*	to try to hide a problem or disagreement instead of finding a satisfactory solution to it	Cracks Problems	It's still an open question whether they will do that now, or just paper over the problems once again.
Iron *out*	to deal successfully with a disagreement or problem, especially by removing the last remaining difficulties	Problems Disagreements	Regular meetings with the College management provide the opportunity to iron out problems .
Mount up	to get much larger	Problems	When unforeseen problems mount up , brainstorming sessions are undeniably useful.

5. Idioms

These Idioms are common and are connected to **Social Problems**.

Idioms/Phrases	Meaning	Situation	Example
Bury your head in the sand	To refuse to think about an unpleasant situation, hoping that it will improve so that you will not have to deal with it	(Alludes to an ostrich, which is believed incorrectly to hide its head in a hole in the ground when it sees danger.)	Parents said bullying was being ignored, and accused the headmaster of <u>burying his head in the sand</u> .
Take the law into your own hands	To attempt to administer the law; to pass judgment on someone who has done something wrong.		The shopkeeper <u>took the law into his own hands</u> when he tried to arrest the thief.
Set alarm bells ringing	If something sets the alarm bells ringing, it makes you begin to worry, because it shows that there may be a problem.		<u>Alarm bells started to ring</u> when my old neighbour didn't open his shutters all day and didn't answer his phone
Elephant in the room	A problem that no one wants to discuss, but is so obvious that it cannot be ignored.		Let's face it, his work is unsatisfactory. It's an <u>elephant in the room</u> that we need to discuss.
Back to the wall	If you have your back to the wall, you are in serious difficulty.		With his <u>back to the wall</u> , the wrestler had to tap out.