



BRITAIN TODAY (II)

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II. Social Ills

1. Poverty and the social gap¹

The issue of poverty is *strikingly relevant*² in the United Kingdom; indeed, in the mid-1990s, Britain had the highest level of children in unemployed homes, and the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe. Therefore, the question has been addressed by politicians and referred to as "**social exclusion**". This includes **homeless** people³, teenagers, and particularly those not in education –those who *dropped out* of school-, *truancy*⁴, teenage pregnancy.

Social exclusion also includes the problem of poor neighbourhoods, where all⁵ feel left out of society; there, unemployment, low income, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdowns are to be *coped with*.

Apparently the Social Exclusion Unit set up by Labour upon its coming to power in 1997 has been efficient. Reportedly⁶, the number of *rough sleepers*⁷ has dropped by⁸ two-thirds

¹ The idea of a « social gap » has been transferred to the more contemporary issue of a « digital gap » ie a gap between those who have access to the Internet and those who don't.

Toujours: THE Internet (Majuscule)

² Pour vos présentations orales :

« What is the most *striking* in this text is ... »

"The journalist *quotes* a highly *relevant* example to *prove his point*..."

³ Ou « the homeless ». Il s'agit ici d'un adjectif substantivé (transformé en nom) comme « the young », « the French », « the dead » qui ne portent pas la marque grammaticale du pluriel ; en revanche le verbe s'accorde au pluriel. [The rich aren't always happier than the poor.]

On peut toujours y substituer un groupe nominal : « young children », « French people », « dead ancestors ». Dans ce cas de figure, pas d'article.

Autre remarque : évitez l'emploi systématique de « people », essayez de varier avec un autre substantif.

⁴ To *play truant* : faire l'école buissonnière.

⁵ "All" est ici utilisé comme pronom, nul besoin de rajouter "all people". Pensez-y car les candidats abusent des « many people think that ... but some people disagree... ». Dans tous ces cas on peut se contenter d'utiliser: "Many deem that this is a satisfying solution. However some contend that it is short-lived."

To deem: juger

To contend: être d'avis que

Je vous conseille aussi d'éviter les « good », « big », « little » : il y a toujours un terme plus riche.

⁶ When you quote a figure or a piece of information you have read in the press for example, use either the adverb "reportedly" or the verb "is said to". If you want to suggest you have serious doubts about the information, use "supposedly".

since 1998, the number of children excluded from school is said to have fallen by a third in 1999-2000, and teenage pregnancy rate by 7% in 1999. The government also encouraged private investment in such areas, as **corporate responsibility**, which does not exclude making profit, is often more efficient than **subsidies**.

Still, other figures point out that the problem of social exclusion is far from being solved and *fosters* many fall-outs⁹: indeed the gap between the rich and the poor is now at its highest level for ten years. *This has led*¹⁰ to the **polarisation of British society**¹¹ and *triggered* an underclass characterized by poor education, low income or unemployment and lack of access to services like health, banking etc. For instance, in more than one-sixth of British households, no one works. *Let me quote* this last frightening figure: a quarter of British population is living below the breadline.

To conclude, *I'd like to point out* that the question of poverty, of an excluded poor working class is quite typical of British society as British cinema displays. To further your knowledge of British society you may turn to movies –in original version, please!-like those of Mike Leigh or Ken Loach, and particularly to recent hits like *Billy Elliot*, *The Full Monty*, *Brassed Off* (Les Virtuoses). They all take place in poor neighbourhoods and deal with the everyday *struggles* of this underclass mentioned just above.

ATTENTION: a piece of information, nom non-comptable, NE JAMAIS UTILISER L'ARTICLE INDEFINI

The news is quite good= c'est une bonne nouvelle. MAIS I never heard such a piece of news.

⁷ = those who sleep outside.

⁸ Please note how to use percentages. [On dit "two percent"]

The figure has *dropped / fallen / plummeted* by two-third // from 20 % to 5 %.

The figure has *risen / increased / soared* by one third // from 1% to 50 %.

⁹ A *fall-out* = a consequence.

An *outcome* = une issue, une fin

¹⁰ Ici j'utilise le PRESENT PERFECT car il s'agit d'une action passée qui a une conséquence sur le présent. Essayez de bien percevoir cette valeur du present perfect pour ne pas l'utiliser à tort et à travers ; en particulier, ce n'est absolument pas un équivalent du passé composé.

I didn't have breakfast this morning = simple information sur un fait passé, coupé du présent

I haven't had breakfast this morning : il y a un lien avec le présent qui peut-être « donc je vais le prendre maintenant » ou « et donc je meurs de faim, je ne me sens pas bien. »

Ceci pour vous montrer qu'on a le choix entre deux temps pour exprimer la même action mais la valeur de l'information est tout à fait différente. Pensez-y en traduction.

¹¹ In [0] British society ...: pas d'article. OU "[0] American society is multicultural."

Soyez très vigilant dans l'usage de "society" qui ne prend pas d'article.

SAUF « the society in which we live ». On met un article à cause de la relative qui suit.