

1. Vocabulary Building

epidemic	伝染病	contraceptive	避妊薬
reluctant	乗り気でない	abortion	中絶
budget	予算	abstain	避ける
vary	異なっている	afford to	余裕がある
controversial	論争の	politician	政治家



2. Reading

The AIDS epidemic continues into its second decade. It spreads best under certain conditions: poverty, low education, lower status of women in society, wars and other conflicts, and cultural taboos regarding honest discussion about sex. Governments are often reluctant to take quick action on any of these areas, especially when it relates to sex. Although many elected officials are concerned about the health of their citizens, they are also concerned about keeping their supporters and about being re-elected.

There is also a wide range of opinions within governments about how to face the AIDS epidemic. Each year, a government has a limited budget to use. Out of that budget, the government must pay for things like defense, health and education programs, new roads, water or electricity systems. When a disaster happens, emergency money must be spent to help injured people and rebuild what has been damaged. In some cases, there is not enough money to spend a lot on AIDS treatment or prevention.

Another problem that appears when officials are trying to decide how to spend their budgets is pressure they feel from some powerful groups. Some groups may have business interest, such as the pharmaceutical companies that make millions of dollars from medicines. Also, groups may look at HIV/AIDS from a moral or religious standpoint. The viewpoints of these all these groups are usually very strong and can vary widely. It can cause people to take sides on the issue.

For example, one side might say that any issue or problem that is related to sex should be decided upon by the family, not in schools. This makes it difficult for schools to teach children or young adults about HIV/AIDS and how they can avoid catching it. Some people feel that, because HIV/AIDS is spread by sexual contact, young people should be taught that it is morally wrong to have sex outside of marriage, or that sex education may cause children to want to experiment with sex. Other people think that young people should know the basic facts so they can make wise decisions for themselves, not just because a parent tells them to.

The use of condoms is also a very controversial topic. Some people feel that the use of any kind of contraceptive is against their religious beliefs or social practices. Some people think abortion is a bad thing and that using a condom is similar to abortion. Other people think that using a condom is an important way to protect themselves from catching HIV. These people think that everyone should be able to get condoms if they choose to.

So, what does all of this have to do with politics? Well, let's go back to the budget. If there is a limited amount of money, leaders have to decide how to use it. Should they use it to make sure condoms are available for everyone, even if someone can't afford to buy them? Or should the money be spent on education? If the money is spent on education, should children *only* be taught to abstain from sex until they are married? Or should they also be taught about prevention *if* they decide to have sex? How should they spend the money on treatment? Should *all* people with HIV/AIDS receive the same treatment? In some societies, gays and lesbians are considered outcasts, and many people think they do not deserve the same access to medicines as non-gay people. Also, what if there isn't enough money for medicines for everyone who needs them? How should decisions like these be made?

These are just a few of the many problems that politicians have to face.

3. Song: The Last Song

Music by Elton John, lyrics by Bernie Taupin
From the album The One© 1992 Big Pig Music Limited

Yesterday you came to lift me up
As light as straw and brittle as a bird
Today I weigh less than a shadow on the wall
Just one more whisper of a voice unheard

Tomorrow leave the windows open
As fear grows please hold me in your arms
Won't you help me if you can to shake this anger
I need your gentle hands to keep me calm

`Cause I never thought I'd lose
I only thought I'd win
I never dreamed I'd feel
This fire beneath my skin
I can't believe you love me
I never thought you'd come
I guess I misjudged love
Between a father and his son

Things we never said come together
The hidden truth no longer haunting me
Tonight we touched on the things that were never spoken
That kind of understanding sets me free

brittle もろい

whisper 囁く

shake 解放

beneath (under)

haunting とりつかれる
touched on 話した

Questions for Discussion

1. Who is the singer singing to?
2. Why does the singer say, "Today I weigh less than a shadow on the wall"?
3. Why do you think the singer is angry?
4. How did the singer misjudge his father? (there are no right or wrong answers)
5. What kinds of things do you think they talked about?
6. What do you think "the hidden truth" could be in this song?
7. Which lines of this song impressed you most?
8. What memories do you have of your parents when you were a small child?
9. What kinds of things do you talk to your parents about now that you are an adult?
10. Are there things you don't talk about?
11. Are there thing you wish you could talk about with them?
12. YOUR QUESTION:





4. Looking at YOU

Think back on the HIV/AIDS education you had in school. Do you think it was enough? Write some thoughts here:

What do you think about the way the Japanese government budgets its money? Check \checkmark your answers below: (there is no right or wrong answer!)

	Not enough	Just right	Too much	Not sure
Education				
Agriculture				
Health				
Transportation				
Defense				
Pension fund / Social Security				
Environmental Concerns				

If you wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education, would you praise it for its efforts to educate young people in Japan about HIV/AIDS or would you give your suggestions on how it can be improved? Below, write a short letter. Be sure to include information on your own AIDS education and your thoughts about how effective it was.

Ministry of Education
Marunouchi 2-5-1
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8959

(date)

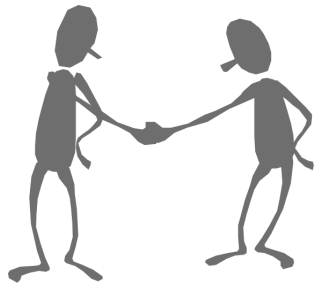
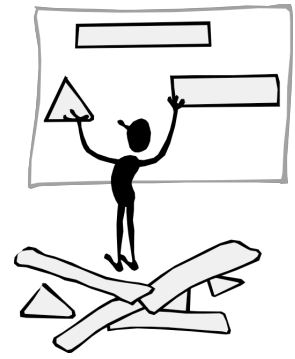
Politics and HIV/AIDS

5. Putting it Together

What have you learned in this unit?

Review the reading passage. Which of the following can you infer are True or False according to the passage?

1. There are many reasons why AIDS has spread around the world.
2. Government representatives are always eager to work on the issue of AIDS.
3. Government leaders want to be popular.
4. Some companies can put pressure on governments to make laws in their favor.
5. Most people agree on how to teach children about AIDS.



Questions for discussion

Discuss the following questions with a partner or in small groups.

1. What are some problems that face governments when they try to budget money?
2. Imagine you were in charge of the budget. Which of these things would you give more money to? Why? the environment, defense, health care, education, new roads, water or electricity systems, the pension system, transportation, agriculture
3. If there is a limited amount of AIDS medicines available in a country, how should they be distributed?
4. If there is a limited amount of money for food distribution in a country, how should it be distributed?
5. What kinds of government programs are there in Japan to help people with HIV/AIDS?
6. YOUR QUESTION:

6. Extra Reading: How politics play out

U.S. president Bush has ordered \$15 billion to be spent over three years on AIDS programs in lower-income countries. However, there are restrictions on how that money can be used. 20 percent of the money can be spent on preventing HIV/AIDS, but a third of the money must be spent to emphasize abstinence until marriage and faithfulness to one partner. The rest goes to condoms and to efforts to reduce mother-to-child transmission and intravenous transmission. Other limitations include:

- No funding for any organizations that include family planning education such as how to use condoms or other forms of birth control. Acceptable education is “abstinence until marriage”
- US Trade Representative has threatened poor countries with trade sanctions for illegal use of intellectual property (i.e. patents for AIDS medicines)
- May 23, 2003: Bush signs an AIDS bill that suggests the U.S. will withhold giving AIDS medications to African nations if they refuse to accept genetically engineered food aid

Question for Debate

The current limitations on how the \$15 billion should be spent are acceptable. [Keep in mind that different cultures have different needs and circumstances. Remember that poverty forces people to take work that would not otherwise accept in order to feed their families. Much funding might not reach these people if strict limitations were put on how the money was spent.]

Quick Facts: In 2003, the U.S. spent \$365 billion on defense.

Source: Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/asmp/profiles/aid/fy2005/FY05%20Presidential%20Budget%20-%20Summary%20Tables.htm>

In 2006 the budget estimate was \$510.3 billion

Source: Los Alamos Group, <http://www.lasg.org/USMilitarySpending.pdf#search=%222006%20budget%20estimate%20U.S.%20defense%22>