

# Thinking Deeper



*Social Issues, Problems, and Solutions*

**Critical Thinking Discussion Activities**

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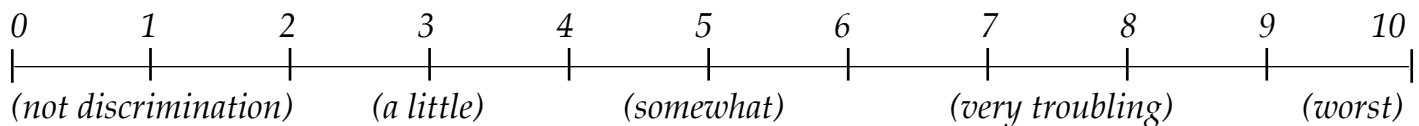
### 3. Thinking Deeper about Discrimination

People might be treated unfairly, and discriminated against, for many reasons. In your society, to what extent do minorities get discriminated against? What about women? The elderly? Discuss the picture below with your partners, then rate each potential reason for discrimination.



#### The Scale

How troubling is each situation below? Rate them.



1. Sex: a hardworking woman is not promoted while male colleagues are \_\_
2. Sex: An interviewer asks a woman if she plans to have children \_\_
3. Age: a productive worker is forced to retire at 65 \_\_
4. Race: a Japanese kid living abroad is told to “go back to your home country” \_\_
5. Race: a foreigner cannot rent an apartment because he is not Japanese \_\_
6. Profiling: Police in Arizona stop people who look Hispanic and check them for drugs \_\_
7. Poverty: more poor people go to prison than rich, even though the crime rate is the same \_\_
8. Occupational: people avoid speaking with a janitor or butcher at a party \_\_
9. Appearance: a better qualified but less attractive person doesn’t get a job \_\_
10. Religion: a Muslim is refused service at a restaurant \_\_
11. Mental challenges: a capable person is not hired because s/he has Down Syndrome \_\_
12. Physical challenges: a person in a wheelchair cannot enter a building with no ramp \_\_
13. Wage: an immigrant is offered less money than a citizen doing the same factory job \_\_
14. Sexuality: a gay man can’t marry his lover \_\_
15. Identity: a biological man who identifies as a woman is not allowed to use the women’s rest room (toilet) \_\_

When finished, share your ratings and reasons and discuss them with your partners.

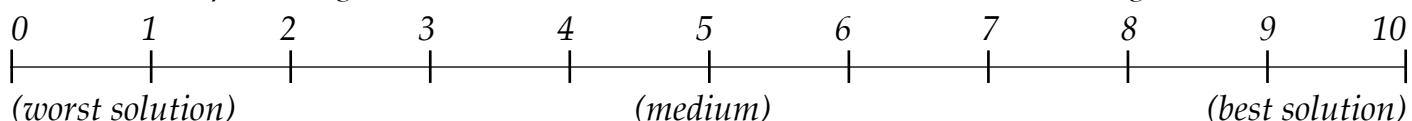
## 5. Thinking Deeper about Environmental Solutions

*Humans are very successful. However, as we consume more and more, and use more space, the natural environment is harmed. What are the most promising environmental solutions? Consider the photo below, and then do the rating activity.*



### The Scale

*How promising are the environmental solutions below? Rate them using the scale.*



**environmental issue**

1. animal extinction
2. dead sea zones
3. the Great Pacific Garbage Patch
4. overfishing
5. excess garbage
6. pesticide use
7. desertification
8. overpopulation
9. pollution
10. climate change
11. destruction of coral reefs
12. deforestation
13. space debris

**potential solution**

- strict penalties for buying endangered animals \_\_
- reduce use of fertilizers and other chemical runoff \_\_
- invent a machine to suck it up \_\_
- strict limits on what fishermen can catch \_\_
- extensive recycling \_\_
- promote organic foods \_\_
- plant trees to keep soil from blowing away \_\_
- laws that prohibit having more than one child \_\_
- strict penalties for making air or water dirty \_\_
- develop green energy (solar, wind, etc.) \_\_
- prohibit people from going in seas near coral \_\_
- plant trees \_\_
- Necropolis collects space trash and stores it \_\_

*Compare your numbers for both the problem and solution and discuss with your partners.*

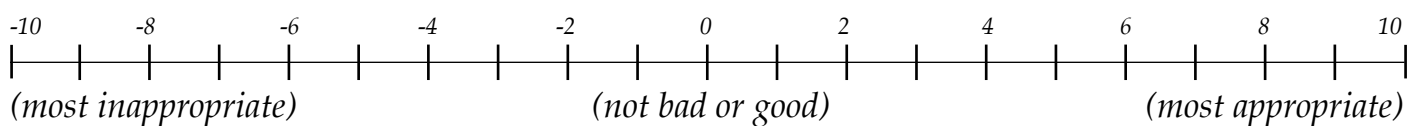
## 9. Thinking Deeper about Punishments

*How can bad behavior be stopped? Parents, teachers, and governments, all make punishments. When is a punishment wise? When is it unwise? Talk about the picture, then rate the punishments below.*



### The Scale

*How appropriate are the punishments below? Rate from -10 to 0 to 10.*



1. A parent spanks a child's behind. (aged 1-3) \_\_\_\_ (aged 4-6) \_\_\_\_
2. A parent slaps a child's face. (aged 1-3) \_\_\_\_ (aged 4-6) \_\_\_\_
3. A parent slaps a child's hand. (aged 1-3) \_\_\_\_ (aged 4-6) \_\_\_\_
4. A parent temporarily takes away a favorite toy. \_\_\_\_
5. A parent denies a 6-year-old dinner. \_\_\_\_
6. A parent locks a 7-year-old outside (but in a safe environment) for one hour. \_\_\_\_
7. Parents drive away from their 6-year-old on a country road for a few minutes. \_\_\_\_
8. A teacher kicks a student out of class for constantly bothering classmates. \_\_\_\_
9. A principal expels a high school student for 2 weeks for smoking in school. \_\_\_\_
10. Police beat a man suspected of murder to get a confession. \_\_\_\_
11. Soldiers torture an enemy soldier to get information about a terror attack. \_\_\_\_
12. A judge sentences a mass murderer to life in prison. \_\_\_\_
13. The state executes a murderer. \_\_\_\_
14. A speeder is fined \$800 for driving 30 kilometers per hour (19 mph) over the limit. \_\_\_\_
15. Angry people cut off a thief's arm. \_\_\_\_

*Share your answers with your partners, telling why you think the punishment is or isn't appropriate.*

# 11. Thinking Deeper about Weapons

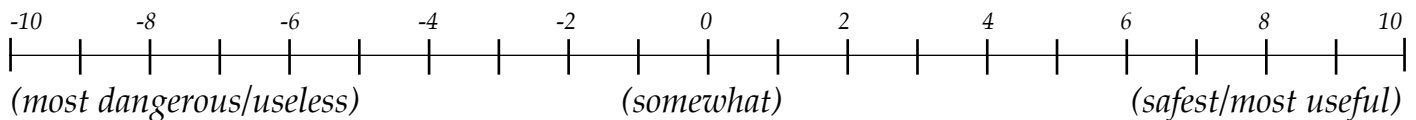
Most weapons are designed to kill. Still, some people think weapons are necessary to defend ourselves from criminals and terrorists. Others think weapons should be strictly controlled. Discuss the photo, then rate the danger, usefulness, and the degree to which you would like each weapon banned.



Cluster bombs are small bombs dropped out of a shell.

## The Scale

Rate how dangerous each weapon is and its usefulness. Then write whether it should be banned.



	danger rank	usefulness rank	ban it? (write "yes" or "no")
1. bow and arrow	_____	_____	_____
2. handgun	_____	_____	_____
3. nuclear bomb	_____	_____	_____
4. landmine	_____	_____	_____
5. pepper spray	_____	_____	_____
6. kitchen knife	_____	_____	_____
7. pocket knife	_____	_____	_____
8. rifle / shotgun for hunting	_____	_____	_____
9. cluster bombs	_____	_____	_____
10. automatic weapons*	_____	_____	_____

\* "Automatic weapons" can continually shoot between 3 and 1,800 bullets a minute.

Share your answers with your partners. Discuss how useful and dangerous each weapon is, and why you do or don't want it banned.

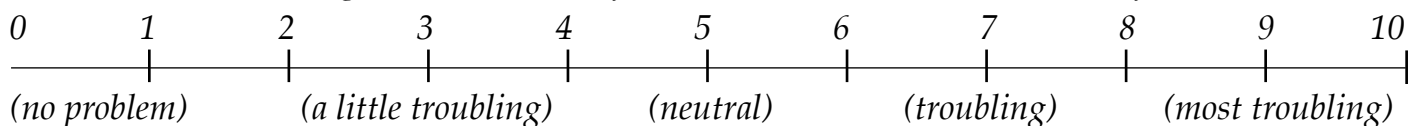
## 19. Thinking Deeper about Harassment

People's awareness of sexual harassment, and recognizing it as a problem in the workplace, began in the 1970s. Since then, other kinds of harassment have been identified. What actions can be called "harassment"? Discuss the picture, and then rate the situations described below.



### The Scale

How troubling is each situation of harassment below? Rate on a scale of 0 to 10.



1. A male boss keeps greeting his young female secretary with, "Hi, Honey," even after she has asked him to stop. \_\_\_
2. A boss keeps calling a Mexican worker "Mexico" instead of his actual name. \_\_\_
3. A receptionist is told she can't get promoted, because the company needs a beautiful woman like her at the front desk. \_\_\_
4. After Jane told her friends she didn't like to hear talk about sex in the break room, they stopped – but then they often whispered around her. \_\_\_
5. A boss keeps asking a worker out on a date, telling her it could lead to a promotion. \_\_\_
6. A female painter often gets asked questions like, "What color are your panties?" \_\_\_
7. A boss who has a side business selling New Year's food specialties tells his workers they must buy two, for \$200 each. \_\_\_
8. Keiko often rubs the shoulders, back, and neck of a male colleague in the office room that many teachers share. He likes being massaged. \_\_\_
9. Bill gets yelled at by his boss for talking about sports during lunchtime. \_\_\_
10. A male politician pats a female friend's behind as they stand for a photograph. \_\_\_
11. When Ann walks down the street in a mini-skirt and tight blouse, men whistle at her. \_\_\_
12. John gets a pay cut at his international university because he suggested to the university president that he replace the national flag with an Earth flag. \_\_\_

Share your ratings and discuss your opinions with your partners.

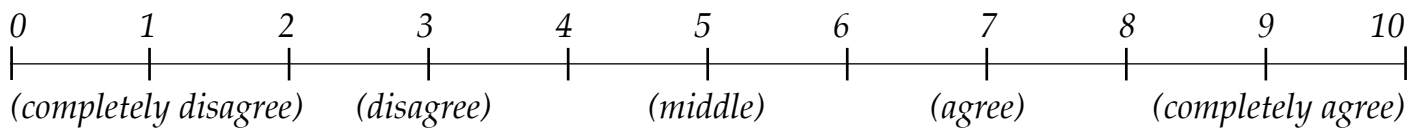
## 26. Thinking Deeper about Old Age and Death

Growing old is a fact of life. Every person or animal that is born eventually dies. Despite that fact, death is something we rarely think or talk about. Consider and rank the degree to which you agree with statements below about growing old and dying, and discuss them with a partner.



### The Scale

How much do you agree with the ideas and suggestions below? Rate on a scale of 0 to 10.



1. Although your 85-year-old grandmother can move around and is not showing signs of Alzheimer's, she finds it hard to care of herself, so she enters an "Old Folks Home." \_\_
2. Your elderly father is showing signs of Alzheimer's, so you and your siblings force him to enter a nursing home against his will. \_\_
3. Your parents, who are in their 70s, have suggested they live on the first floor of your house while you and your family live on the second floor. \_\_
4. Your elderly father is showing early signs of Alzheimer's, and plans to end his life. \_\_
5. Your elderly mother, who is showing early signs of Alzheimer's, has asked you to assist her in committing suicide. \_\_
6. Your 88-year-old grandfather insists on working outside in his garden even though the day is extremely hot. \_\_
7. Friends and family wear bright colors, talk, laugh, and dance at your funeral. \_\_
8. After you die, your body is cremated and your ashes are thrown into the sea. \_\_
9. After you die, your body is buried at a cemetery. \_\_
10. Christians believe you go to heaven after you die. \_\_
11. Buddhists believe you are born again, reincarnated, after you die. \_\_
12. After you die, you simply cease to exist. There is no heaven or rebirth. It's the end. \_\_

When finished, discuss these beliefs with your partners.