



DRUG DEALING

**A TALKING POINTS ENGLISH
LESSON FOR READING, SPEAKING,
WRITING & VOCABULARY**

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
A Secret Life.....	4
Reading Comprehension Questions.....	6
Essential Vocabulary.....	7
Discussion Questions.....	8
The Pros and Cons of Drug Dealing.....	9
Debate: Legalise All Drugs!.....	10
Role Play.....	12
Writing.....	13
Teacher’s Notes.....	14
Credits.....	17

Introduction

How do people feel about drugs in your country/culture?

Does your country have drug dealers? How do people feel about them?

What is the law in regard to the sale of drugs in your country?

A Secret Life

Read Chris's story below:

I sell drugs.

I make no bones about it, that is what I do. I am a drug dealer.

Do I carry a gun and wear a leather jacket? No, don't be silly.

I don't have any tattoos either and I studied hard at school. I went to university and I got a degree.

But I drifted into the world of drug-dealing and here I am. It's what I do now.

The reason I do it is very simple — money.

I can make three or four times what I was making before in my old job. And I had a very good job, I was working in a company that helps other companies find the right kind of staff. I was well-paid.

But I started buying certain drugs for the weekend — a little weed here, some cocaine there — and friends would start to ask me to help them out. So I did. I had to get some money from them, of course.

I then realised that this was turning into a very lucrative enterprise. I was soon making more money in a few hours than I did working a very long day in my old job.

So I quit my job and became a dealer full-time.

My parents don't know anything about it — it would kill them if they knew.

And many of my friends don't really understand what I do. I am very quiet about it and keep it undercover.

But now that has become a great business for me.

I work mainly on the weekends. I can guarantee from Thursday evening right through to Sunday morning I am flat out. I don't have time to sleep properly. That is the time when I make most of my profits.

By Sunday evening, I am exhausted and I crash into bed. I sleep right through to Monday night or sometimes Tuesday morning. Then I have two days to prepare for it all again.

I won't do this forever. Making this into a life-long career is a mug's game. I plan to only do this for another five years or so. Make enough money to set up my own business and then leave the world of drugs behind me.

It's too risky.

There is always the chance of getting arrested and I have had a couple of close calls. But also I don't like the people that sell drugs or take them.

I've met some really shady characters and I often have to deal with them, do business with them, but I don't really like them at all. They are arrogant and kind of stupid.

And I have seen other people ruin their lives with drugs. They lose their jobs, homes — relationships. I just think it's not worth it.

Yes, five more years and I will have saved quite a large sum of money.

Then I will stop all of this and get back to a normal life.

Reading Comprehension Questions

What does Chris sell?

How does he refer to what he does for a living?

Does Chris have tattoos on his body?

Did he have a good education?

Why does he do this job?

How much money does he make compared to his old job?

What did he do in his old job? Was his salary good or bad?

How did he begin selling drugs?

What do Chris's parents think about his line of business?

Is Chris discreet about his business?

When is his busiest time of the week? How long does he sleep after the busy period?

Does Chris plan to do this for a long time? How long will he do it?

What does he plan to do after?

Why does he plan to stop?

What does he think of the people he has to do business with?

What has happened to some of the people he has worked with?

Essential Vocabulary

drugs	make no bones about it	drug dealer
gun	leather jacket	silly
tattoos	to drift into (smth.)	well-paid
weed	cocaine	lucrative
enterprise	a very long day	to quit
full-time	it would kill them	undercover
guarantee	flat out	profits
exhausted	crash	life-long
a mug's game	risky	close call
shady	arrogant	ruin
it's not worth it	a large sum of money	a normal life

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

Discussion Questions

What do you think of Chris's story?

Do you think Chris is stupid to do this?

What are the risks of doing this kind of business?

What are the rewards?

Do people like this exist in your country? What do people think of them?

In your country, what is the penalty for drug-dealing? Do you agree with this? Why/why not?

Do you think Chris can return to a 'normal life'? Why/why not?

How do you think Chris's parents would react if they found out about his business? What do you think they would do?

Why is Chris so busy over the weekend?

Chris said he had a couple of 'close calls'. What do you think he means by this?

He also talks about encountering some 'shady characters'. What kind of people do you think he is talking about?

Chris talks about people losing their homes and their jobs because of drugs. How do you think this happened?

What does Chris mean by 'returning to a normal life'?

Are drugs a serious problem in your country? What can be done about it?

Are all drugs bad? Are they all the same? Why do you think this?

Some drugs are now legal in some parts of the world. Could drugs be legal in your country? Why/why not?

Do you know anyone who had used drugs? Have you used drugs?

Are cigarettes and alcohol drugs? Why/why not?

Why are cigarettes and alcohol legal in most countries, but not other drugs?

Debate: Legalise All Drugs!

This is a debate activity.

Divide the class into two teams of equal number. Choose a student to be the chairperson – this person will chair the debate and ensure order.

The Situation

Your country is considering legalising all drugs. They feel this would be a progressive thing to do.

But they are putting this to a vote with the public.

In your class, you have the opportunity to debate this topic and decide if legalising drugs is a good idea – or a very bad one.

Team A

You are very much opposed to legalising drugs in your country. You think this is a terrible idea that can only lead to more trouble.

Team B

You think legalising drugs is a great idea. The government and police have lost the war on drugs. It is time to just legalise all the drugs and let people decide for themselves.

Below is a list of pros and cons for legalising drugs. Take a look at these and use them in your team to make a strong argument in the debate.

Pros	Cons
The war on drugs creates addicts	Legalising drugs creates addicts
You can't win the war on drugs – so just regulate it!	It sends out the message that drugs are safe to use – they are not!
If the drugs are legalised, then they are regulated. Therefore, safer.	It will encourage more people to take drugs.
Personal freedom. Freedom of choice for the people!	It would make drugs seem acceptable to children!
The government can put a tax on all drugs sold and make a lot of money for other purposes.	It would make the country a drug-taking tourist attraction!
Crime would be greatly reduced. The drug-dealing gangs would go out of business.	There would be an increase in drug-taking and driving offences. This would mean more accidents on the road!
Police resources could be used for other things.	People's health could suffer. This would be a big problem for hospitals and the health service.

Each team should go through all the points above. Think of strong lines of argument you can put forward in the debate.

Try to think of what the other team will argue in the debate so you can have a response to that too.

When you are ready – begin the debate!

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

There are two characters in the role play:

Chris

You are Chris in the story at the beginning of the lesson.

You have been caught by the police and arrested. They have notified your next-of-kin – one of your parents.

You have been left alone to talk with your mother or father in private.

Chris's mother or father

You are Chris's mother or father (you can choose which one) and the police have called you as you are the next-of-kin.

You are having a private conversation with Chris and you want to get some answers.

You are angry – but you are also very concerned and want the best for Chris as he is in trouble.

The Situation

Chris's illegal activities have finally caught up with him. The police have been watching him for months and have now arrested him.

He has been told by a lawyer that he could face ten years in prison.

Chris is in a holding cell awaiting trial and one of his parents comes to visit him.

It is the time for truth, so Chris has to reveal everything. But his mother and father want to help him as best they can. They are angry but he is still their son.

In pairs, take some time to prepare your role play.

When you are ready, you can show the class.

Writing

You are Chris in the story at the beginning of the lesson.

You have been sent to prison for ten years for drug dealing. You have had a lot of time to think about what you have done and the effect it has had on your parents.

You are going to write a letter to express how sorry you are to them.

Tell them that you have learned a valuable lesson.

***When you have written your letter, you can read it out loud in front of the class.
Or you can hand it to your teacher for feedback.***

Teacher's Notes

The topic of this lesson is not suitable for younger students. It is best for older students. You may be able to teach this class in high school, but it depends on the maturity of your students and the culture of the country you are in.

Also, some countries may prefer you to not teach this subject in class at all.

I will leave this to your discretion.

Introduction

Go through all the questions and ask the students. Elicit as many responses as you can. If you are a foreign teacher working abroad, you might want to add one or two comments of your own about drugs in your country to try to get more responses from the students.

A Secret Life

Pick a few students to read through all the text. You might need to read through twice, but hopefully, the students are at the right level where they can pick up most of the meaning.

Reading Comprehension Questions

You can do this by going through all the questions as one group with all the class. Or you could put the students in small groups. Or let them do the whole exercise individually.

Essential Vocabulary

This is a list of vocabulary that may be very useful to your students.

You can do this for homework or as an in-class activity.

For either purpose, I would suggest doing the following:

- Look the word or phrase up in a dictionary
- Write down the meaning of the new word in the students' vocabulary notebook
- Think of a sentence using the new word

You could do this as a class activity for the first four or five words, then assign the rest as homework. Students often need to practice using a dictionary, so this could be a useful exercise for them.

Discussion Questions

This is a class activity.

Go round the class and ask the students all the discussion questions one by one. Their answers and responses may encourage further or follow-up questions.

The point is for the students to become active in discussing what they have read and the vocabulary they have gained.

The Pros and Cons of Drug Dealing

This is a whole class brainstorming exercise.

The students need to think about the advantages and disadvantages of being a drug dealer. There are certain things that are immediately visible – such as making a lot of money and getting into trouble with the police.

So you should try and help the students a little – make little hints at other benefits or the downsides to being a drug dealer.

You could mention social status – in some social groups being a drug dealer might bring a higher social status with it. It could also attract girls and women! It could bring power and influence with other people.

The downsides could be that there may be a lot of stress involved. The drug dealer is colluding with bad characters. There is no law to protect you – so if the drug dealer has some trouble with another gang, he may have no police protection.

Debate: Legalise All Drugs!

This is a debate activity. You should divide the class into two teams of equal number. You also need a chairperson to chair the debate. You can either choose one yourself, elect one or ask for a volunteer.

Go through all the debate conditions for each team and give each team some time to come up with strong arguments for and against legalising drugs in the country.

You should go through all the pros and cons of legalising drugs as one class so that the students understand all of these terms. They can use these in the debate.

Once the teams are ready you can begin the debate.

Ideally, you should take a very passive part in this activity. The students should lead the entire activity.

Make note of the points each team presents and after the activity, you can use these points for discussion as one class.

Role Play

This is a simple role play exercise for two people.

The two characters are self-explanatory in the exercise. Divide the class into pairs and give them some time to prepare.

When they are ready, all the class should show their role plays. Use what people say in their role plays for discussion after the activity.

Writing

This is very straightforward. The students just have to write a letter as detailed in the exercise.

Credits

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