

Table 2.2

Teenagers' attitudes toward the most important problem facing the United States today and in the future

United States, 1996

Question: "Please indicate below what you feel to be the most important problem facing the United States today. Indicate what you feel will be the most important problem facing the United States in the year 2000."

	Most important today	Most important in the year 2000
Crime/violence	23.7%	15.1%
Decline of moral and social values	14.5	11.1
AIDS	14.2	15.0
Drugs	9.3	6.2
Environmental pollution/deterioration	3.5	10.0
Decline of the family	3.2	3.1
U.S. budget	2.8	4.9
Government	2.3	3.5
National debt	2.3	3.3
Unemployment	2.2	4.3
Racial discrimination	2.0	1.1
Poverty	1.9	2.3
Racial tension	1.7	1.0
Legal system	1.2	1.1
Paroling of criminals	0.9	0.6
Inflation	0.7	0.9
Terrorism	0.6	1.7
Health care	0.5	1.2

Note: These data are from a mail survey of 938 students ages 13 to 17 conducted in 1996 by NFO Research, Inc. for the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc. The overall sample was selected to conform to the latest available U.S. Bureau of the Census data for boys and girls ages 13 to 17. The sample was selected based on nine geographic divisions, market size, household income, household size, and age and sex of teenagers. A total of 86% of the students responding to the survey were enrolled in public schools; 10% of the students attended private schools; and 3% took part in other schooling options.

Source: Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc., *The Mood of American Youth 1996* (Alexandria, VA: Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc. and National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1996), p. 51. Table adapted by SOURCEBOOK staff. Reprinted by permission.