



‘Occupy’ protests go global

The “Occupy Wall Street” protests that began in New York on September the 17th have now moved around the world. Demonstrations have spread to more than 60 major cities worldwide. Protesters were out in force at the weekend in Tokyo, Rome, London, Buenos Aires, Helsinki and other capitals and financial centres. Protests in the Italian capital saw battles between protestors and police in which dozens were injured, shop windows smashed and cars torched. The protests are against corporate greed and corruption, government cuts, and social inequality. In Japan, protestors marched behind “Occupy Tokyo” banners and protested outside the headquarters of the owner of the Fukushima nuclear power plants.

Occupy Wall Street was started in New York by the Canadian activist group Adbusters. The movement is now being compared to the Tahrir Square protests in Cairo earlier this year and the Arab Spring. Jesse LaGreca, a leader of Occupy Wall Street, spoke on U.S. television about the spread of the protests around the world. He said: "We are seeing our future stolen away from us while the wealthiest one percent get richer and richer, and I'm glad people are taking a role and participating in their democracy." He added: “The growth is happening very organically. There is communication among protestors worldwide through Twitter, through Facebook, through social media, and just through friends who are concerned about each other.”

1. In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

protests / major cities / out in force / financial centres / injured / corporate greed / activists / Arab Spring / our future / richer and richer / organically /

2. PROTESTS: What's the best way to protest about these things? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote.

	The best way	Effectiveness
Increased homework		
Corporate greed		
Government cuts		
War		
A faulty product		
Rising prices		

3. DEMONSTRATE: What would make you take to the streets? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Higher taxes
- War
- Environment
- Building of nuclear plants
- Education cuts
- Democracy
- To oust a leader
- Corporate greed

4. GREED: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'greed'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. protests | a. richest |
| 2. worldwide | b. fights |
| 3. battles | c. set on fire |
| 4. torched | d. likened |
| 5. inequality | e. taking part |
| 6. compared | f. demonstrations |
| 7. wealthiest | g. unfairness |
| 8. glad | h. worried |
| 9. participating | i. globally |
| 10. concerned | j. happy |

THE “OCCUPY” PROTESTS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A’s QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word ‘protests’?
- c) What do you protest about and how?
- d) What do you think of the “Occupy Wall Street” protests?
- e) Do you think the protests will continue, and continue to spread?
- f) What are the protestors protesting about?
- g) What would get you onto the streets wearing a face mask?
- h) How do you feel about corporate greed?
- i) What should governments do about social inequality?
- j) What do you hope for the future of the protests?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?**
- b) Do you think the movement will develop into something bigger?**
- c) Are there similarities between "Occupy Wall Street" and the Arab Spring?**
- d) Is Jesse LaGreca right in saying, "We are seeing our future stolen away from us"?**
- e) Do the rich deserve to be rich?**
- f) Should more people be participating in the protests?**
- g) Is protesting something governments welcome as part of democracy?**
- h) Where would the protests be without Twitter and Facebook?**
- i) What would you like to protest about at the moment?**
- j) What questions would you like to ask Jesse LaGreca**

