Social workers spend their time trying to ease social suffering. They encounter the extreme casualties of social inequality: the victims of poverty, illness, addiction, and abuse; they work with abusers and offenders; and operate in the space between the state and the poor or marginalized. Social Work: A Very Short Introduction explains what social work is and looks at its rich historical development. Reflecting international human stories of social problems and social work relationships, as well as the philosophies behind the practice and the evidence about what works throughout the world, it looks at the various definitions, history, and debates about purpose and effectiveness, theory, and methods.