

How Does Fairness and Unfairness Affect People?

Michael Rosen and Annemarie Young

1 **Inequality and poverty**

When we talk about inequality we are normally talking about the situation in society where some people have much more money and many more opportunities than other people. Is this situation fair?

5 **Is inequality bad for society?**

Many people believe that inequality is bad for society. There are two arguments put forward for why we should narrow the gap between rich and poor in society. One is simply that huge inequalities are immoral and unjust. The parallel argument is that society should be organised to ensure “the greatest good for the greatest number”. People who believe this argue that everyone in society should be cared for, that people should not be allowed to fall into dire poverty, that everyone should have access to health care, a good education and housing, and that this should be paid for through taxation, in particular a system of progressive income tax – where the wealthy are taxed at higher rates.

- 16 Some people don't agree that inequality is a problem. They oppose the redistribution of wealth by taxing the wealthy at higher rates, and agree with Benjamin Franklin, one of the founders of the United States, that giving help to the poor makes them less likely to want to work. They believe that money from the rich will always “trickle down” to the poor – for example through jobs – and that it's not the responsibility of the government to take care of the poor.

23 **Glossary**

Founder – someone who sets up an organisation or state

Poverty – lacking money

Redistribution of wealth – changing the way that money is shared in a society

Taxation – money people who work must give the government to pay for services such as health, education, emergency services, roads, etc.



Name:	Class:	Date:
-------	--------	-------

1 “Inequality is bad for society.”

Which of the following options is the best definition for the word “society” in this statement?

Tick **one**.

- people who have the same things
- people who like the same things
- people who have the same opportunities
- people who live in the same country

2a

1 mark

2 Look at paragraph 2, beginning “Many people believe”.

Find and copy **two** things that everyone should have access to.

2b

1 mark

3 Look at paragraph 2, beginning “Many people believe”.

What does “the greatest good for the greatest number” mean?

2a

1 mark

4 Look at paragraph 2, beginning “Many people believe”.

Find and copy **one** word from this paragraph that is closest in meaning to *increasing*.

2a

1 mark

5 Look at paragraph 3, beginning “Some people don’t believe”.

Which is the best summary of their opinions?

Tick **one**.

- Huge inequalities are immoral and unjust.
- Caring for everyone should be paid for by taxation.
- Richer people should be taxed at higher rates.
- It is not the government’s job to look after the poor.

2c

1 mark

6 Draw lines to match each section to its main content.

Section	Content
Inequality and poverty	gives the meanings of important words and ideas
Is inequality bad for society?	introduces the text
Glossary	arguments for why inequality can be good for society, as well as bad

2f

1 mark

Name:	Class:	Date:
--------------	---------------	--------------

7 The writers of this text believe that inequality is bad for society.

Give **one** reason from the text to support this statement.

2d

 1 mark

8 Do you think inequality is good or bad for society?

Tick **one**.

good

bad

Give **two** reasons, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

2d

 3 marks

9 Tick **one** box in each row to show whether each statement supports **Inequality is not good** or **Inequality is good** for society.

	Inequality is not good	Inequality is good
Everyone should have access to good schools.		
Helping poorer people makes them less likely to work.		
People who are rich should not pay more taxes.		
We should ensure " <i>the greatest good for the greatest number</i> ".		

2c

 2 marks