

## Wealth Inequality in America

Look at these five problems. Working with a partner or group rank them from 1 - 6, with number #1 being the biggest problem facing the world today.

Corruption \_\_\_\_\_  
Inequality \_\_\_\_\_  
Global Warming \_\_\_\_\_  
War \_\_\_\_\_  
Nuclear Proliferation \_\_\_\_\_  
Terrorism \_\_\_\_\_

Look at the chart on the right →

Working with a partner or group, take turns describing the graph.

**Analyze:** what happened with the US economy between 2007 and 2009?

What important economic event happened in 2007?

### GAINS AND LOSSES, 2007-2009



## Vocabulary

*Can you think of one synonym for each of the words below?*

wealthy .....  
fairness .....

well off .....  
dreadful .....

**Match each word with its definition:**

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. skewed       | a. overwhelming; incredible                       |
| 2. mindblowing  | b. existing in act or fact; real                  |
| 3. to scrape by | c. distorted                                      |
| 4. to struggle  | d. to manage or get by with difficulty            |
| 5. actual       | e. to contend with an adversary or opposing force |
| 6. barely       | f. only just; scarcely; almost non-existent       |

**Do you know this expression or can you guess what it means?**

"I can't wrap my head around it"

## Discussion questions 1

- 1) Is inequality a problem in your home country?
- 2) Where do you think has higher inequality: your home country, America, or England?
- 3) What country in the world do you think has the lowest inequality? The highest?
- 4) In the world, do you think inequality has worsened in your lifetime?

## Video gap fill

**As you watch the first part of the video, fill in the gaps below.**

*You may need more than one word for each gap.*

There is a \_\_\_\_\_ I saw recently that I can't \_\_\_\_\_ my head, a Harvard business professor and economist asked more than five thousand Americans how they thought \_\_\_\_\_ was distributed in the United States.

This is what they say they \_\_\_\_\_ it was: dividing the country into five \_\_\_\_\_ groups of the top bottom and middle three 20 percent groups.

**As you watch the second part of the video (begins at 1:55), fill in the gaps below.**

*You may need more than one word for each gap.*

Now let's \_\_\_\_\_ according to their wealth, \_\_\_\_\_ people on the left, \_\_\_\_\_ on the right. Just a steady \_\_\_\_\_ of folks based on their net worth. We colour code them like we did before based on which twenty percent quintile they \_\_\_\_\_.

## Discussion questions 2

- 1) In a group or with a partner, describe the video.
- 2) Did this video surprise you? What was the most surprising fact?
- 3) How can people combat inequality?
- 4) Look at the poster to the right →
  - Are you familiar with the Occupy Movement?
  - What do they mean by "the 99%"?

THIS IS OUR COUNTRY  
**WE WILL OCCUPY IT**  
THESE ARE OUR STREETS  
**WE WILL OCCUPY THEM**  
**WE ARE HERE. WE ARE GROWING.**

## Vocabulary Match

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1) Sustain _____       | a) Oppressed; ignored                  |
| 2) Vague _____         | b) remain stable (negatively)          |
| 3) Marginalized _____  | c) Model; example                      |
| 4) Decentralized _____ | d) Unclear                             |
| 5) Prototype _____     | e) bottom-up; without leaders          |
| 6) Stagnant _____      | f) Continue (in adverse circumstances) |

**WE ARE THE**  
**99%**

**OCCUPY TOGETHER**  
#OccupyWallSt #OccupyTogether occupytogether.org occupywallst.org

## Discussion questions 2

- 1) What's your opinion of Occupy generally?
- 2) How would you characterize the main message of the Occupy Movement?
- 3) Were there Occupy encampments in your home country?
- 3) How do you think the police in America responded to Occupiers?
- 4) Would you consider getting involved in a movement like Occupy in the future?
- 5) **Agree or disagree:** Social movements need leaders and hierarchical structures like political parties or trade unions.

## ANSWER KEY:

### Vocab 1

- 1) C
- 2) A
- 3) D
- 4) E
- 5) B
- 6) F

### Note: Discussion questions 1

Namibia has the highest inequality in the world and Sweden has the lowest.

### Gap Fill

Chart  
Get out of  
Wealth  
Thought  
Rough

Line them up  
Poorest  
Wealthiest  
Row  
Fall into

### Vocab 2

- 1) F
- 2) D
- 3) A
- 4) E
- 5) C
- 6) B

## NOTES:

The first video ("Wealth Inequality in America") should be watched **after** the first set of discussion questions. The second ("What is Occupy Wall Street") should be watched **before** the second set of discussion questions.

The entire lesson should take 2-3 hours based discussion levels within the class.