

**Date Reviewed**

March 2023

**Course**

[Social Justice 12](#)

**Topic**

Poverty, Privilege, and Power

**Big Idea**

Social justice issues are interconnected.

**Essential Question**

How is poverty linked to privilege and power imbalances in society?

**Learning Standards****Content:**

*Students are expected to know the following:*

- social injustices in Canada and the world affecting individuals, groups, and society

**Curricular Competencies**

*Students are expected to be able to do the following:*

- Determine and assess the long- and short-term causes and consequences, and the intended and unintended consequences, of an event, legislative and judicial decision, development, policy, or movement (cause and consequence)

**Core Competencies**

[Communication](#) – I am able to define poverty and describe how it impacts individual lives.

[Thinking](#) – I can analyze consequences of injustices and power imbalances which lead to poverty in our society.

[Personal and Social](#) – I can elaborate on my potential to bring about awareness of poverty and initiate change to current systems that promote inequality.

**First People's Principles of Learning**

- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

## Introduction

- Distribute the “Being Poor Is” handout. Have students discuss statements in groups, and then add 5 statements to the list. Have groups share their statements with the class.
- Ask the students to answer the following question with a Yes or No response: “It is my responsibility to address poverty, whether I have experienced it or not”. You could use [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) or [www.padlet.com](http://www.padlet.com) to receive anonymous responses. Alternatively, students can write YES or NO on a piece of paper and hold it up. Reveal the number of Yes and No responses.
- Engage students in a discussion of why they feel poverty is or it is not their responsibility. This could be a debate or a [fishbowl activity](#).

## Pre-Assessment

Ask the class the following questions to gauge their current understanding of the realities of poverty:

- How do you define poverty?
- What do we know about the causes of poverty?
- What are the best ways to reduce poverty?

## Interactive Learning Activities

### Part 1: Poverty

- Explain that the causes and consequences of poverty are complex and inter-related.
- Show the “Poverty Presentation” by Adrienne Montani. These PowerPoint slides outline the causes and consequences of poverty, and highlight the activism undertaken to address this issue in B.C.
- Using a [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy, ask students which facts from the slides stood out the most for them.
- Draw attention to the campaign by First Call to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code in terms of its relation to Child Labour Standards (to end physical punishment). Ask: “How is Section 43 especially problematic for a child in poverty?” (*For example, a child who needs to work to support the family might be afraid to report an abusive situation at work.*)
- [Exit Ticket](#) What is the most surprising thing you learned about poverty?

### Part 2: Measuring Poverty

- Explain that poverty can be measured in different ways. *Absolute Poverty* is when household income is below a certain level, which makes it impossible for the person or family to meet basic needs of life including food, housing, safe drinking water, healthcare, etc. *Relative Poverty* is when a person or family cannot enjoy the same standard of life as everyone else in the country including internet access, clean clothes, a safe home, or even education.

- Explain that Canada's poverty line is based on the [Market Basket Measure](#). This is the cost of food, clothing, housing, transportation, and other items for individuals and families representing a modest, basic standard of living.
- Handout the "Market Basket Measure" sheet and have student calculate a monthly budget. Encourage them to consider what they would have to give up if they lived at this definition of the poverty line.
- Provide students with access to the article [3.2 Million Canadians Living in Poverty](#).
- Have students read the article and summarize it using the "Article Summary Sheet"

### Part 3: Privilege and Power

- Explain that power and privilege are often unearned, and while we are in a society that tells us the value of hard work will pay off, there are systemic issues that need to be accounted for.
- Have students participate in the Privilege for Sale activity:
  - Divide students into small groups of 3-4 and provide groups with the "List of Privileges for Sale".
  - Explain that for the purposes of this activity we all exist in a world without these privileges. Groups will have an opportunity to buy specific privileges at a price of \$100 each. Each group will receive money to buy the privileges, and each group must decide which privileges to buy.
  - Provide each group with a random dollar amount ranging from \$100-\$900. Allow groups time to come to consensus about which privileges they would like to buy. They can mark on their sheet which ones they
- Debrief the activity by asking:
  - What was this activity like/what did it make you feel?
  - Was it difficult to pick out which privileges to buy?
  - Was this activity different for groups than had more money compared to those who had less?
  - Which privileges surprised you or caught you off guard on this list? Why?
  - Are there any items that you would like to discuss more or that you found particularly interesting?
- Point out that in Canada people who live in poverty are more likely to be Aboriginal people, queer and trans people, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants and refugees, single mothers and single senior women.
- [Exit Ticket](#): What is the relationship between privilege and poverty? How can we address the needs of those most likely to be living in poverty?

#### Part 4: Poverty Reduction

- Show the video [Thinking Upstream](#) (1:14) by the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition.
- Explain that by downstream, we mean giving help to those who are in need. We might donate to a food bank or support a charity to try to reduce the consequences of poverty such as hunger and homelessness.
- Explain that by upstream, we mean preventing poverty by dealing with its causes. For example, governments can introduce policies to keep people out of poverty. In 2019, the Government of Canada created the [Poverty Reduction Act](#). This Act has the goal of reducing poverty in Canada by 50% by 2030.
- Have students explore Statistic Canada's [Dimensions of Poverty Hub](#) to see how Canada is doing with its goals to reduce poverty in Canada.
- Ask: What is Canada doing to reduce poverty? What areas are improving? What do we still need to work on?

#### Post-Assessment

- Have students complete the "Reflection".

#### Extension Activities

- Students can write letters to their MP or MLA about changes in policy that they would like to see to address homelessness, childcare, poverty, and equity issues in their community.
- Students can join existing campaigns to reduce poverty and inequality.

#### Additional Resources:

"B.C. Child Poverty Report Card." 2020. *First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition*.  
[www.Still1in5.ca](http://www.Still1in5.ca)

"Digital Justice Policy Proposal for BC." 2020.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f85d82966bb203a90d1375a/t/6036f67ed7206f1eac67eb43/1614214783044/Digital-Justice-for-BC-Policy-Proposal.pdf>

B.C. Poverty Reduction Coalition. [n.d.] “For Schools: Get Involved.”

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200918070801/https://www.bcpovertyreduction.ca/learn-more/school-resources/>

Borgen Project. 2016. “What Are the Causes of Poverty?”

<https://borgenproject.org/what-causes-global-poverty/>

Borovoy, Amy Erin. 2013. “5-Minute Film Festival: Teaching Kids about Global Poverty.” December 6. *George Lucas Educational Foundation*.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/film-festival-poverty-education-lessons>

Canada Without Poverty. 2020. “Just the Facts.”

<http://www.cwp-csp.ca/poverty/just-the-facts/>

Canadian Teachers’ Federation. 2014. “Poverty, What is it? A Discussion Booklet for Students in Grades 5 to 8.” Ottawa, On. <https://www.imagine-action.ca/Documents/KTP/Poverty-Discussion-Booklet.pdf>

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. [n.d]. [www.Firstcallbc.org](http://www.Firstcallbc.org)

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. 2020. “BC Child Poverty Maps.” Vancouver, B,C. <https://still1in5.ca/poverty-maps/>

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. 2020 “Fostering Change: Youth Will Change the System.” [www.Fosteringchange.ca](http://www.Fosteringchange.ca)

Keep the Promise Canada. 2014. “What Child Poverty Means to Kids”. [Ottawa, ON.] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSja87uCILc>

Khan Academy. [n.d.]. “Global inequality.”

<https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/social-inequality/social-class/v/global-inequality>

“Living Wage for Families Campaign.” [n.d.] [www.Livingwageforfamilies.ca](http://www.Livingwageforfamilies.ca)

Morris, Toby. 2015. "The Pencilsword: On A Plate." *Radio New Zealand*.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/the-wireless/373065/the-pencilsword-on-a-plate>

Numbeo. 2020. "Cost of Living." <http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/>

"Privilege for Sale." [n.d.] *The Safe Zone Project*.

<https://thesafezoneproject.com/activities/privilege-for-sale/>

Serajuddin, Umar and Nobuo Yoshida. 2016. "The World is Aiming to Halve Extreme Poverty by 2030 – but What Does that Actually Mean?" *World Economic Forum*.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/07/the-world-is-aiming-to-halve-extreme-poverty-by-2030-but-what-does-that-actually-mean>

Shiman, David. 1999. "A Human Rights Perspective." Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Human Rights Resource Center

<http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/edumat/hreduseries/tb1b/Section2/activity2.html>

Statistics Canada. 2020. "Dimensions of Poverty Hub."

<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/topics-start/poverty>

## **Materials and Resources:**

## **“Being Poor Is...” Statements**

Being poor is knowing exactly how much everything costs.

Being poor is hoping the toothache goes away.

Being poor is knowing your kid goes to friends' houses but never has friends over to yours.

Being poor is coming back to the car with your children in the back seat, clutching that box of cereal you just bought and trying to think of a way to make the kids understand that the box has to last.

Being poor is hoping your kids don't have a growth spurt.

Being poor is stealing meat from the store, frying it up before your mom gets home and then telling her she doesn't have make dinner tonight because you're not hungry anyway.

Being poor is not enough space for everyone who lives with you.

Being poor is feeling the glued soles tear off your supermarket shoes when you run around the playground.

Being poor is thinking \$8 an hour is a really good deal.

Being poor is an overnight shift under florescent lights.

Being poor is people angry at you just for walking around in the mall.

Being poor is not taking the job because you can't find someone you trust to watch your kids.

Being poor is the police busting into the apartment right next to yours.

Being poor is not talking to that girl because she'll probably just laugh at your clothes.

Being poor is hoping you'll be invited for dinner.

Being poor is people thinking they know something about you by the way you talk.

Being poor is six dollars short on the utility bill and no way to close the gap.

Being poor is crying when you drop the mac and cheese on the floor.

Being poor is people surprised to discover you're not actually stupid.

Being poor is people surprised to discover you're not actually lazy.

Being poor is never buying anything someone else hasn't bought first.

Being poor is picking the 20 cent ramen instead of the 25 cent ramen because that's two extra packages for every dollar.

Being poor is getting tired of people wanting you to be grateful.

Being poor is knowing you're being judged.

Being poor is a box of crayons and a \$1 coloring book from a community center Santa.

Being poor is a \$200 paycheck advance from a company that takes \$250 when the paycheck comes in.

Being poor is a lumpy futon bed.

Being poor is knowing where the shelter is.

Being poor is people who have never been poor wondering why you choose to be so.



## Market Basket Measure

Canada's poverty line is based on the Market Basket Measure. This is the cost of food, clothing, housing, transportation, and other items for individuals and families representing a modest, basic standard of living. The current poverty line is \$48,000 for a family of four living in Vancouver. If you divide this amount by 365 days in a year, the poverty line become \$95 a day for a family of four.

Calculate the following costs for your family over one month.

Food	
Housing	
Utilities (including electricity, heat, water)	
Transportation	
Clothing	
Communication (cell phone & internet)	
Extra-curricular activities	
Entertainment	
MONTHLY TOTAL	
DAILY ESTIMATE (divide monthly total by 30)	

If your family had to live on less than \$95 a day, what would become most important? What would you have to give up?

## Article Summary Sheet

### ☐ Bibliographic Information

- ☐ Author(s) of article: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Title of article: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Name of magazine, newspaper, website, etc. containing the article:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Date article was published and page number: \_\_\_\_\_

### ☐ Summary Information

- ☐ Briefly state the main idea or thesis presented in this article:  
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- ☐ Summarize the most important information, ideas, facts, etc. presented in this article:  
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☐ **Personal Reaction**

- ☐ What was the most surprising/interesting thing you found out by reading this article?

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- ☐ What question(s) do you have after reading this article? What would you like to learn more about?

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- ☐ What other keywords/topics for further research did you find reading this article?

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## List of Privileges for Sale

1. When I learn about my country's history, I am shown that people of my colour made it what it is.
2. I am easily able to find role models of the same sexual orientation.
3. If I find myself in a legally dangerous situation, I can hire a lawyer to make sure my case is heard fairly.
4. I have expressions and everyday language reflect my sex (ex. A mailman; "all men are created equal"; mankind).
5. I am able to kiss/hug/be affectionate in public with my partner without threat or punishment.
6. I am able to choose bandages or pantyhose in "nude" or "flesh" colour and have them more or less match my skin.
7. I am freely able to discuss my relationship with others without fear of judgment.
8. I can walk around my neighbourhood at night without legitimate concern for my safety.
9. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
10. If I have a bad day or am in a bad mood, people aren't going to blame it on my sex.
11. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
12. I can dress how I want and not worry that it will be used as a defense if I am raped.
13. I am able to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities with friends of mine.
14. I am easily accepted by my neighbors, colleagues, and new friends.
15. Regardless of the season, I can count on being able to fall asleep in a room with a comfortable temperature.
16. I am able to go to a doctor visit and have them understand my sexual orientation.
17. I am able to focus on my education rather than working while I study.
18. People correctly assume my sexual orientation.
19. I can walk down a public street without the fear of sexual harassment.
20. I am able to be open and have my partner accepted by my family.

## Reflection

*Write a reflection answering the following questions. Remember to include connections to poverty, capitalism, and privilege.*

1. What was the most interesting part of this study for you?
2. How does having an awareness of power and privilege impact your daily life? What do you notice in your every-day life about economic inequality?
3. What are some of the ways we can challenge economic inequality on a personal level, a community level and a global level?
4. What are you curious to learn more about that we did not cover?

## Reflection Rubric

	A	B	C	D
THOUGHT & OPINION (Ideas)	Insightful response. Opinions & meotion are perceptive and thoroughly articulated	General response. Opinions & emotion clearly stated	Vague response. Opinions & emotion stated	Limited response. Opinions & emotion not stated
DETAILS & EXAMPLES (Support)	Significant precise, & deliberate variety of examples used to enhance ideas	Relevant & purposeful examples used to enhance ideas	Adequate but general ideas and examples used to enhance ideas	Irrelevant details or ideas used or not enough details/examples to enhance ideas
PERSONAL CONNECTION (Self/Worldviews)	Meaningful personal connections.	Personal connections.	Few personal connections.	No personal connections.
CRITICAL THINKING (Extend thinking)	Reflection shows critical understanding & ability to make connections to larger goal & society	Reflection shows partial understanding & ability to make some connections to areas outside of class	Reflection shows minimal critical thought and does not make any connections	Reflections does not include any critical thinking