



WE ARE A POOR FAMILY

Time	45–90 minutes
Level	pre-intermediate
Skills	speaking
Knowledge goal	raising awareness of absolute and relative poverty
Materials	Ss' worksheet: p. S1 – set A of 16 cards p. S2 – set B of 16 cards p. S3 – questions for card game (one set per group)

1 Lead-in

- Write the word “Money” on the board and ask pairs of Ss to write down as many words as possible which they associate with it. Set a time limit.
- Give the groups pens or chalk and ask them to write up their lists on a divided blackboard. If appropriate, ascertain which group came up with the most words.
- Add any words that are required for the lesson and make sure they understand the words “wealth” and “poverty”, in particular.
- Go through the pronunciation of any words that they are going to be using in this lesson.
- Form groups with four in each, preferably. Ask some groups to write a definition of a “rich person” and the others a definition of a “poor person”. The definitions should begin:
A rich/poor person is one who...
- After they have finished, they present their definitions for comparison and discussion.

2 Main activity

- Ask the Ss to stay in their groups. Tell them that they are now going to talk more about poverty and what it is like to be poor. For this activity, all the students will become poor families. To help them to imagine it, the Ss will get a set of sixteen cards with information.
- There are two different sets of cards (p. S1 – set A and p. S2 – set B). Give some groups Set A and the other groups Set B. Then ask all groups to get to know their new lives and have them agree on eight pieces of information which they think are the worst and most difficult about their lives.
- After they have agreed, ask different groups/families about their choices. Make notes for each family on the board (e.g. “no electricity”, “second-hand clothes”) or ask one person in the group to do it. As a result, the Ss will see the differences between families and can compare them. Tell them that there were two different sets of cards which represented two kinds of poor families. Do the Ss know what the two types of poverty are called? If not, tell them that these are “absolute” (p. S1) and “relative” (p. S2) poverty. Ask them: *Can you explain what the difference between “absolute”*

and “relative” poverty is?

Which of them do you think is worse and why?

INFOBOX – Absolute and relative poverty

Absolute poverty – a very low standard of living. People have problems satisfying their basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, health, housing and education. They also have poor access to services.

Relative poverty – a standard of living or level of income that satisfies basic needs, but is still lower than the standard of living of the majority of the population in a particular place or country.

3 Follow-up – card game

- Ask Ss to continue working in groups with their sets of cards. One of the Ss from each group shuffles their cards and deals all of them. The ideal number of players is four with each getting four cards. If there are five players in the group, there must be a pair of Ss playing as one. If there are only three players, the number of cards must be reduced to 12 so that only three cards from each symbol are used. Ss should not show their cards to each other.
- Distribute the cut-up questions from p. S3 face down to each group. The questions should form a pile.
- Tell the Ss the English words used for symbols on the cards: diamonds (♦), spades (♠), hearts (♥) and clubs (♣). The goal of the game is to have in hand one card from each symbol. If the player whose turn it is (P1) needs a card of a particular symbol, he randomly chooses one of the other players (P2) and says: *I would like* If the player P2 does not have the card, P1 cannot ask anyone else and it is P2's turn. If P2 has the card, he takes a piece of paper from the top of the pile of questions and reads the questions aloud and the three options to P1:
 - If P1 answers correctly, he gets the card from P2 and, in exchange, gives him one of his cards. Every player always has four cards in their hands. Then P2 puts the question back to the bottom of the pile.
 - If P1 answers incorrectly, P2 does NOT provide the correct answer and puts the paper back to the bottom of the pile.

The first player to get four different symbols wins. If the Ss are fast, ask them to play another round.

- As a conclusion, ask the Ss some of the following questions:

What information do you remember from the questions?

What was new for you?

Had you heard of slums before? What are they?

Can you imagine living without electricity? What would you do in the evenings? What could you not do without electricity?

How long do people typically live in Angola or Zambia?

What does "extreme poverty" mean?

What can be done about poverty in the world? How can it be reduced?

Possible answers:

e.g. on an individual level – volunteering in local non-governmental organizations, charity, getting more information on global issues, disseminating the information, buying Fair Trade products

e.g. on national and international levels – meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals





We all share one room.

Our simple home does not protect us from the weather completely. We have no windows.

There is no electricity in our house.

We wash by hand in the river.



We are hungry sometimes.

We cannot afford basic vaccinations.

Getting drinking water is often difficult.

Children are born at home; specialist care is too expensive.



We can't afford to celebrate any festivals.

It is too expensive to send all the children in a family to school.

We never travel for pleasure.

We cannot afford to buy school books.



We only have the clothes we are wearing now.

We never go to a dentist, optician or hair-dresser.

Access to telephone is very difficult.

We can't afford animals or machinery to help us with hard work and transport.





We don't have air-conditioning and in winter we have to save money on heating.

We don't have a DVD player.

We live in an old block of flats in a suburb.

We are paying off the loan for our washing machine.



We hardly ever eat in restaurants.

We can't pay for extra medical services like white fillings, better medical drugs or private hospital rooms.

We save money on soft drinks by drinking water only.

We can't buy special food or extra vitamins for our baby.



We don't spend much money on birthday presents or festivals.

We can't afford music or language classes for our kids.

We go to libraries and rentals to save money on new books, magazines and CDs.

We don't travel abroad on holidays.



We buy clothes in second-hand shops.

To save money, we have our hair cut at home.

We have old mobile phones.

We do not have a car.





1. How many people in the world live on less than two dollars a day?

- A. 15 %
- B. 25 %
- C. 40 %

Correct answer:
C. nearly 2.6 billion people out of the world's population of approximately 6 billion.

2. What does EXTREME POVERTY mean?

- A. to have only one TVset
- B. to live on less than one dollar a day
- C. to be homeless

Correct answer:
B. Today there are around one billion people living in extreme poverty in the world.

3. Millions of women spend several hours a day

- A. collecting water
- B. repairing their cars
- C. brushing their teeth

Correct answer:
A. Many people in developing countries still do not have access to running water at home and have to walk many kilometres a day to get water.

4. How many people in the world live without electricity?

- A. one person in ten
- B. one person in seven
- C. one person in four

Correct answer:
C. 1.6 billion people live without electricity out of the world's population of approximately 6 billion.

5. If you lived in Zambia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Central African Republic or Sierra Leone, how long could you expect to live? What is the life expectancy in these countries?

Correct answer:
between 40 and 45 years

6. In Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, how many people over 15 years old cannot read or write?

- A. every second person
- B. every third person
- C. every fourth person

Correct answer:
A. Half of the population in these countries is illiterate.

7. While in Iceland there are 362 doctors per 100.000 people, in countries such as Tanzania, Malawi, Burundi, Ethiopia, Chad, Mozambique, Niger, Sierra Leone have:

- A. from 50 to 67
- B. from 20 to 37
- C. 4 or less

Correct answer:
C. 4 or less.

8. Millions of poor people live in SLUMS. What are slums?

- A. special beaches where both fishing and swimming are allowed
- B. new environment-friendly houses built especially for the poor
- C. poor parts of cities without any infrastructure, bad access to water, no toilets.

Correct answer:
C. You can find large slums in Africa, Asia and South America.

9. In some countries, when a family is very poor and has nothing to eat, they often:

- A. write a letter to their president
- B. sell their daughter
- C. go to Hollywood

Correct answer:
B. They marry off their daughters for money. This is called Child marriage or Early Marriage.

10. One of the causes of absolute poverty is NOT:

- A. little or no education of the people
- B. HIV/AIDS
- C. spending to the maximum on your credit card in expensive supermarkets.

Correct answer:
C. Going to expensive supermarkets cannot cause absolute poverty. If you are poor and do not go to school, it is difficult for you to change your life. If you are poor and you or someone from your family suffers from HIV/AIDS, it affects all the family economically.

11. In 2005 there were only 55 Internet users per 1,000 people in:

- A. India
- B. Turkey
- C. Mexico

Correct answer:
A. India.
(Mexico – 181, Turkey – 222)

12. In 2005, 487.2 million people in India lived

- A. without electricity
- B. alone in their house
- C. in the capital

Correct answer:
A. Almost half of the population of India lived without electricity.

