

### A Definitions of poverty

United Nations definition: ‘**Fundamentally**<sup>1</sup>, poverty is a **denial**<sup>2</sup> of choices and opportunities, a **violation**<sup>3</sup> of human **dignity**<sup>4</sup>...’

<sup>1</sup> in a basic and important way    <sup>2</sup> not allowing people to have    <sup>3</sup> act that spoils or destroys something  
<sup>4</sup> worth

type and aspect of poverty	definition	comments
<b>absolute poverty</b>	being poor according to a fixed minimum standard; sometimes called the <b>poverty line</b>	In 2015, people with less than \$1.90 to live on a day were defined as being <b>below the poverty line</b> . This sum does, of course, regularly change.
<b>relative poverty</b>	being poor in relation to others around you	This kind of poverty depends on a person’s <b>social context</b> <sup>1</sup> . It takes into account that there is no <b>income equality</b> between countries.
<b>extreme poverty</b>	living below the poverty line	People living in extreme poverty will be lacking in material possessions and money. Another word for extreme poverty is <b>penury</b> .
<b>human poverty</b>	being poor in a range of ways, not only financial	This kind of poverty takes into account such social factors as <b>shelter</b> <sup>2</sup> , <b>nutrition</b> <sup>3</sup> (people living in poverty are more likely to be <b>malnourished</b> <sup>4</sup> ), <b>literacy</b> <sup>5</sup> levels (people living in poverty are more likely to be <b>illiterate</b> ), <b>sanitation</b> <sup>6</sup> , access to education and healthcare. People lacking these basic aspects of life are said to be <b>deprived</b> <sup>7</sup> .

<sup>1</sup> situation    <sup>2</sup> having a place to live that is protected from the weather    <sup>3</sup> food that people take into their body  
<sup>4</sup> suffering from ill health because of poor food (noun = **malnourishment/malnutrition**)    <sup>5</sup> ability to read and write  
<sup>6</sup> systems for taking dirty water and waste from homes to ensure good hygiene    <sup>7</sup> noun = **deprivation** [lacking in things considered necessary for a pleasant life]

### B Other expressions relating to wealth and poverty

Most of the world’s population can be **classed** as poor. [categorised]

Only a small minority of people in the world enjoy **affluence** / are **affluent**. [wealth; wealthy]

The **super-rich** are people who are exceptionally rich.

It’s a very poor country – over 60% of the population live **on** or **below the breadline**. [having the level of income of an extremely poor person]

When your income is low, it is hard to **make ends meet**. [have enough money to buy all you need]

Many people left the **poverty-stricken** countryside to go to the city. [affected by poverty]

The charity’s main aim is to improve healthcare in **impoverished** areas of the world. [poor, without much money to live on]

Everywhere in the city you see **destitute** people living in shop doorways or under bridges. [without money, food, home or possessions; noun = **destitution**]

When we were first married, we were **living from hand to mouth**, so it’s nice to be able to spend a bit more now. [having just enough money to live without suffering]

Ever since I lost my job, **money has been tight**. [there has not been much money]

We’ll have to **tighten our belts** now that Mum has lost her job. [spend less than before]

Many of the people in this area are in the lowest **income bracket**. [range of income with upper and lower levels]

#### Common mistakes

We say *the rich* and *the poor*, meaning rich people and poor people (NOT *the riches* and *the poors*).

# Exercises

## 40.1 Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first one.

- 1 The number of deprived children is increasing.  
The number of children facing ..... is increasing.
- 2 There is much less illiteracy in the world than there used to be.  
There are far fewer ..... people in the world than there used to be.
- 3 Our family enjoyed relative affluence at that time.  
Our family enjoyed a relatively ..... lifestyle at that time.
- 4 It is wrong to deny people their basic human freedoms.  
..... of people's basic human freedoms is wrong.
- 5 There are more destitute people in the city than before.  
The problem of ..... in the city is increasing.
- 6 Poverty could be said to violate human dignity.  
Poverty could be said to be a ..... of human dignity.

## 40.2 Choose one of the words in the box to complete each of the sentences below.

absolute	impoverished	line	relative	fundamental	shelter	super
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- 1 Some people in a middle income bracket claim that they are living in ..... poverty simply because they have fewer material possessions than their neighbours.
- 2 Millions of people still live below the poverty .....
- 3 Food and ..... are two of the most important human needs.
- 4 There is a ..... difference between not having a lot of money and being destitute.
- 5 It is not very meaningful to talk in terms of ..... poverty when you compare people who live in very different contexts.
- 6 His family were once quite affluent, but in the last few years they have become increasingly .....
- 7 The .....-rich control much of the world's wealth.

## 40.3 Complete the sentences.

- 1 An increasingly large number of families are living on the bread .....
- 2 Most of the people who live in this street are in a higher income .....
- 3 It all depends on your social ..... whether you feel poor or not because you don't own a car.
- 4 It can be hard for students to make ..... meet.
- 5 If we all tighten our ....., we should be able to manage all right.
- 6 I was surprised how poverty-..... the villages looked given the richness of the surrounding farmland.

## 40.4 Choose the best word to complete each of these sentences.

- 1 A person who sleeps in a cardboard box on the street and begs for money can best be described as *impoverished* / *destitute*.
- 2 Without my husband's income, we were very much living from hand to *mouth* / *foot*.
- 3 When we were children, money was always *small* / *tight*.
- 4 Even children with rich parents can be *deprived* / *destitute* in terms of love and affection.
- 5 An increasing number of people live below the *penury* / *poverty line*.
- 6 The table shows the proportion of people in each income *section* / *bracket*.
- 7 Many of the children here are *classed* / *grouped* as living in poverty.
- 8 The country has great extremes of poverty and *influence* / *affluence*.
- 9 Children who don't get enough food will suffer ill health as a result of *nutrition* / *malnourishment*.
- 10 Inadequate *sanitation* / *deprivation* can have serious health consequences.