



Who is Poor in America Today?*

1. True or False: The number of Americans who are food insecure exceeds the population of California, our most populated state.
2. True or False: The number of people living in poverty in the United States decreased from 2014 to 2017.
3. True or False: Most Americans could get out of poverty if they only had a job.
4. True or False: Over 11 million children under 18 are food insecure in the United States.
5. True or False: Adults who have regular work but remain poor – the "working poor," are finding it more difficult to lift themselves out of poverty.
6. True or False: The government says that a family of four is poor if it earns at least \$28,000 annually.
7. True or False: The federal minimum wage is now \$7.25 per hour.
8. True or False: During the summer, when children aren't in school, 6 out of 7 food insecure kids don't get healthy meals they need to grow strong.
9. True or False. Almost 100 million people in the United States live on less than \$50,000 a year.
10. True or False: While the number of people in poverty is increasing, the number of people in extreme poverty is decreasing.



Who is Poor in America Today?

1. True or False: If all the poor in the United States lived in the same state, it would be the largest state in the nation – the state of "Poverty, USA."

True - The state with the highest population is California, at 39 million. The number of people living in poverty in the United States is over 40 million as of 2017. While the average rate of poverty in the U.S. is 13.4%, the people in some states see much more poverty than those who live in other parts of the country.

2. True or False: The number of people living in poverty in the United States decreased from 2014 to 2017.

True - The number of poor people *decreased* by over 8 million from 2014 to 2017. 40 million people now live in poverty. That means that one out of every eight Americans is living in poverty. Perspective: In 1990, 33.6 million. In 2000, 31.58 million. In 2010, 46.34 million lived in poverty.

3. True or False: Most Americans could get out of poverty if they only had a job.

False - Most poor Americans are too young, too old or physically incapable of working due to illness or disability. In fact, over two-thirds of all Americans living in poverty must depend on someone else in the household to bring in money to live. And children are more likely than anyone to experience poverty.

4. True or False: Over 11 million children under 18 are food insecure in the United States.

True - Overall, children remain the poorest age group in the nation. In total, 40 million people in America were poor in 2017 and a third of them were children. Nearly one in five, or 17.5 percent, were poor in 2017, compared with 11.2% of people aged 18-64 and 9.2% of people age 65 and older.

5. True or False: Adults who have regular work but remain poor – the "working poor," are finding it more difficult to lift themselves out of poverty.

True - The working poor in America must tap government programs in order to make ends meet. Over 41 million workers participate in food stamps, housing subsidies and cash assistance.

In 2015, the top 1% of families in the US made more than 25 times what families in the bottom 99% did.

6. True or False: The government says that a family of four is poor if it earns at least \$28,000 annually.

False - The federal government puts the 2018 poverty line at \$24,250 for a family of four with two children. However, researchers estimate that meeting basic needs for an average family of four would require about \$58,000 annually. That is more than double what they actually make.

7. True or False: The federal minimum wage is now \$7.25 per hour.

True - The federal minimum wage hasn't changed since 2009. But for a mother who works full-time at minimum wage to support one small child, that translates to earnings of only \$15,080 or \$290 a week.

8. True or False: During the summer, when children aren't in school, 6 out of 7 food insecure kids don't get healthy meals they need to grow strong.

True - Currently, summer meals programs reach only 15% of the children who need it.

9. True or False. Almost 100 million people in the United States live on less than \$50,000 a year.

True - 95.7 million people lived on under \$50,000 a year. That is 29.7% of the population overall.

10. True or False: While the number of people in poverty is increasing, the number of people in extreme poverty is decreasing.

False - The number of people living in extreme poverty are 20 million. That means they live on half the poverty level yearly income \$25,000. They live on \$2 a day, in most cases.

*Realize that these lessons are meant to support understanding and compassion for those in need. Be sensitive to the needs of your youth and be careful to know their own situations and how they may respond.