

Lessons 4 - Learning Intentions (Pupils should be able to):

- To describe the extent of poverty in the US.
- To explain what is meant by poverty in the US.



Poverty in the USA

The USA is one of the richest countries on the planet and as a result, most Americans enjoy a high standard of living. The majority of Americans are well off. However, not everyone in the USA has a high standard of living as many Americans are poor. In 2017, around 45m or 14.5% of the US population were living in poverty. The USA is a very **unequal** society.



The reasons why millions of Americans live in poverty are much the same as in the UK - they live on a low income. People in poverty are more likely to be unemployed, have a poor education, work for the minimum wage or be old, sick or disabled. Young people are also more likely to be in poor with one on five children in the USA growing up in poverty.

Heading: **Poverty in the USA**

1. "Many Americans live in poverty." **Katie Shore**

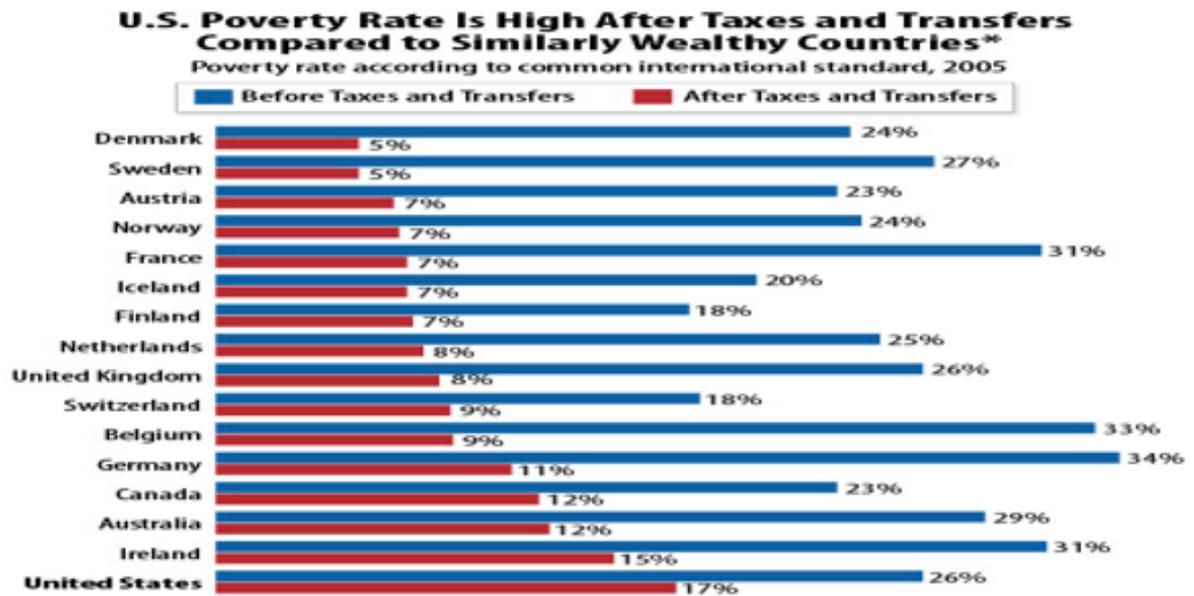
What information is there to **support** the view of Katie? Provide **two** pieces of information in your answer.

2. Describe what life is like for some of the 45m Americans living in poverty. Make **three** points in your answer. The pictures below may help you.



3. a) What is the **main** reason why many Americans live in poverty?
 b) Which groups of people are more likely to be in poverty. Give **three** examples.

4. Study the graph below then answer the question which follows

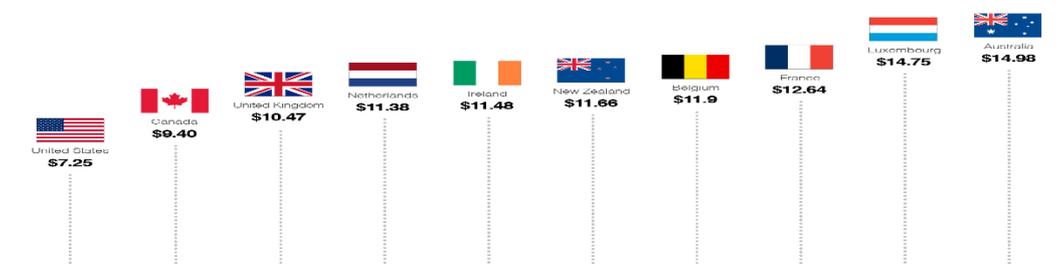


"There is more poverty in the USA than in many other countries." **Leni Rowley**

What information is there to **support** the view of Leni? Provide statistical evidence to back up your answer.

5. In the USA, like the UK, there is a minimum wage for all adult employees. Study the graph below then answer the question which follows.

Minimum wage rate per hour in selected developed countries (2014, OECD)



"The minimum wage is low in the US compared to other countries The minimum wage in Australia is double that of the USA."

Ashleigh Boswell

What information is there to **support** and **oppose** the view of Ashleigh?



6. Imagine you a journalist working for an American newspaper. You are going to interview President Joe Biden about poverty in the USA. Make up **four** questions you could ask Mr Biden.

Lessons 5- - Learning Intentions (Pupils should be able to):

- Explain the US system of healthcare.
- Describe the consequences of the US system of healthcare.



Healthcare in the UK and the USA

The National Health Service (NHS) is the main way people receive healthcare in the UK. NHS care is free for most people most of the time at the point of delivery i.e. when they need it. Funding for the NHS comes from taxes. Only around 1 in 10 people in this country have private medical insurance.



In the US, the majority of people have private medical insurance. This means that they pay into an insurance policy and if they become ill and need healthcare their private medical insurance pays the bill.

Medicaid and Medicare

Not everyone in the US is able to afford private medical care. Therefore, the US government provides a range of healthcare services to help those on a lower income. This is known as Medicaid. People who are older or which have long-term illness can get make use of another medical care program called Medicare. Until recently, there were also millions of Americans not eligible for Medicaid. These people were also too poor to afford private medical insurance and were **uninsured**.

The UK or the USA - Which healthcare system is better?

In the UK, there are often reports in the media that the NHS is short of money, short of staff or that people have to wait too long for their treatment. However, the NHS is comprehensive (treats all types of illness), universal (everyone can use it) and, in the main, provides a high quality services for a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.

The US healthcare system also has good and bad points. If people can afford private medical insurance, they usually get very high quality treatment without having to wait. However, people in the US only get what they can pay for. For example, not all types of illnesses are covered by private medical insurance (private medical insurance is not always universal). Also, for those having to depend on Medicaid, the quality of healthcare is often less good. Finally, the overall cost of the US healthcare system is far more expensive than the UK. In the UK, about 8.5% of the country wealth goes towards healthcare. In the US this figure is about 17% but evidence shows that overall standard of health is about the same as in the UK. For example, life expectancy in the US is around 79 years but in the UK it is around 81 years.

Summary UK healthcare system (NHS) and US health care system

UK NHS	US Healthcare System
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free at the point of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality private care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive / Universal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often doesn't cover all healthcare needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortage of money but overall reasonable quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poorer system (Medicare) for less well off
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often long waiting lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Few waiting lists if private
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reasonable value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expensive

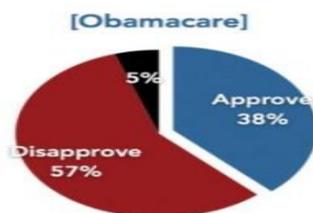
The Affordable Healthcare Act (2010) or 'ObamaCare'

When President Obama was elected in 2008, he promised to improve the US system of healthcare. He has several aims. First, he wanted to ensure that more people would be able to afford private medical insurance so he proposed legislation that lowered the cost of a private medical insurance policy. Next, he wanted to make sure that more people could get the treatment they needed. To do this private medical insurance companies would be forced by law to offer a greater range of healthcare services. Finally, he wanted to improve government healthcare services, so he proposed spending more government money on Medicare. In 2010, the US government passed the Affordable Healthcare Act or as it is widely known, "Obamacare".

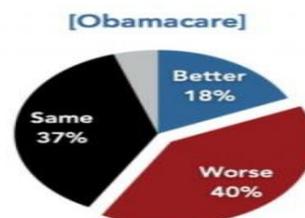
The Affordable Care Act is a controversial policy in the US. Supporters, including many people who are poor or were uninsured, believe 'Obamacare' will allow more Americans to access better quality healthcare more easily. However, critics claim the Affordable Care Act will raise taxes and do little to improve the quality of healthcare overall.

Harvard University Survey on the Affordable Care Act (Dec. 2013)

Do you approve or disapprove of _____, the comprehensive health reform package that the President signed into law in 2010?



Do you believe that your quality of care will get better, get worse or stay about the same under _____?



Healthcare in the USA

1. Describe the way in which **most** people get healthcare in the UK.
2. Describe the way in which **most** people get their healthcare in the US.
3. What is Medicaid?
4. Explain why many Americans are uninsured (have no health insurance)?
5. Give **two** advantages and **two** disadvantages of the UK healthcare system (NHS).

6. Give **two** advantages and **two** disadvantages of the US healthcare system.
7. Which healthcare system - UK or US - do you think is better? Give reasons for your answer.
8. What did the Affordable Care Act aim to do? Make **two** points.
9. Study the Harvard University Survey pie charts above.

"Most Americans approve of the Affordable Care Act and believe that it will improve health care in the USA."

Amy Cunningham

What information is there to **oppose** the view of Amy? Make **two** points.

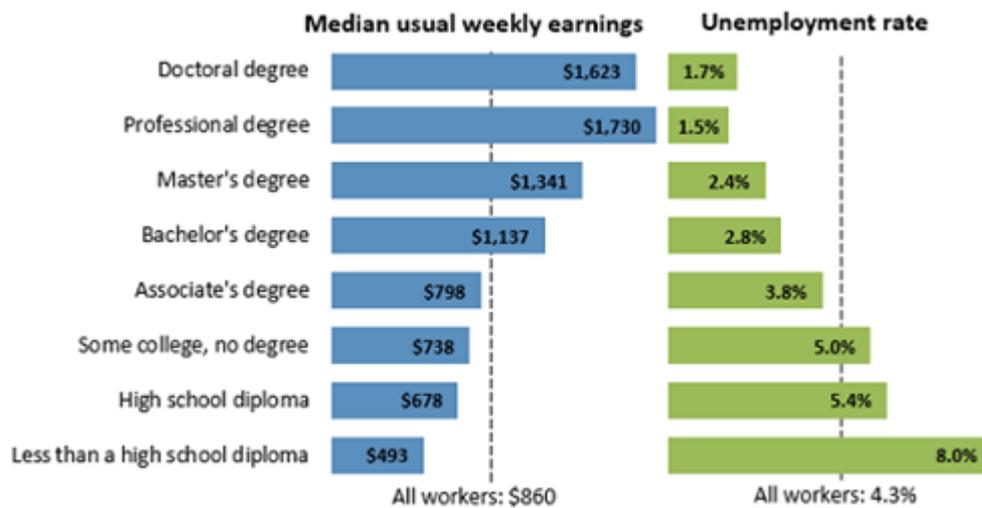
Lesson 6 - Learning Intentions (Pupils should be able to):

- Describe the US system of education.
- Explain the reasons why not everyone receives an equally good education in the USA.

Education in the USA

One important part of the American dream is the opportunity to secure a good education. As in the UK, with a good education there is a better chance of well-paid employment and thereafter a higher standard of living. See the graph below.

Earnings (\$s) and Unemployment Rates (%) by Education Level (2015)



The chance to obtain a good education is also one of the main reasons why people migrate to the USA. However, not everyone in the USA receives the same quality of education. Although every child in the US has the opportunity to go to school, the quality of the experience they receive is very different. Why?

In Scotland, apart from those who pay for a private education, the amount of money per pupil, the quality of the teachers, class sizes, the extent of resources and the curriculum are much the same across the country. In the USA, there is not a single school system. Instead, the amount of money per pupil, the resources available, etc. varies according to the wealth of the people in the school area. This means there can be huge differences between public schools (as they are called in the US). For example, those public schools that are located in wealthy areas are more likely to be modern buildings, have far more resources, attract more experienced and better qualified teachers and have a wider curriculum. This is because the school authority can raise more money from local taxes and this money is then re-invested in the education of the children of the families who pay the tax. However, in poorer area where there is higher unemployment and wages are lower, the local authority cannot raise as much as tax and so there is less money to spend on schools.

Heading: Education in the USA

1. Explain why a good education is seen as an important part of the American dream.

2. Study the table above then answer the question below.

"There is a big difference in the median usual weekly salary or unemployment rate between Americans with the most and least education."
Iona Carr

What information is there in the table to **support** the view of Iona? Make **two** points.

3. Explain the main reason why children in the USA do not all receive the same quality of education.

Case Study 1 - Scarsdale High School, New York



Scarsdale High School is located in one of the wealthiest areas of NY City. It is one of the top ranked schools in the state of New York and in the US. The school, which has excellent exam results, spends around \$20,000 per pupil compared to the average spend of around \$10,700 (2015). Over 90% of children who attend Scarsdale High School go on to attend college or university after completing their schooling.

Although the school building is old, the school has been extensively modernised. Scarsdale HS has excellent sports, leisure and IT facilities as well as first-class learning and teaching resources. Scarsdale HS also has many experienced and highly qualified teachers, as it is able to offer some of the highest teaching salaries in the country. Scarsdale HS has been help up as a model high school by educational inspectors.



Case Study 2 - Fowler High School, Syracuse, New York State

Fowler High School is located in the city of Syracuse which lies in the north of New York State. The school, which has



around 1300 pupils, serves one of the poorest areas in the city of Syracuse and throughout the whole of New York State. Typically, most of the students at Fowler HS are from minority groups - 38% Black, 22% Hispanic and 31% Asian.

Exam results in the school are, on average, lower than the rest of the school in the State or across the US. For example, in English only around half (50%) of children in Fowler HS achieve the expected level of performance in Year 12. This compares with 69% across the city and 83% across the State of NY. Why?

As there is high unemployment and few well paid jobs in Syracuse, the school is unable to raise enough money through local taxes to provide a quality educational experience. For example, there are too few books, teachers or equipment. Also, the students at Fowler HS often have many complicated needs and many come from families where education is not always valued.



4. Copy and complete the following table in your jotter.

High School	Scarsdale HS	Fowler HS
Cost (high / low)		
Experience of teachers (great/limited)		
Resources (few/extensive)		
Education results (poor/good)		
Area surrounding school (wealthy/poor)		

5. Which country, Scotland or the USA, do you think has the better educational system? Give **two** reasons for your answer.