

Social Justice

Understanding: Social Justice

This activity demonstrates the way disadvantage and inequality operate in society. It shows the value of being able to make choices in our lives and how the circumstances surrounding inequality are often beyond an individual's control.

- Divide the class into 3 *unequally* sized groups. 1 big, 1 middle sized, and 1 small sized group.
- Distribute tokens among each group. The tokens represent money. The group with least members should receive a disproportionately large amount of the tokens. The middle sized group should receive less, and the biggest group of students should receive fewest tokens. This is to signify dividing the 'resources'.
- The groups are then asked to decide what they want (and need) from the list (next page), based on the tokens they have. They are creating a 'budget'.
- As the groups are making their decision, take some tokens from the 'poorest' group and give them to the 'richest' one. Exaggerating the 'injustice', by giving more to those who already have plenty.
- Go through the lists of choices each group has made.
- Draw attention at the end to what each group has been able to purchase and what they have not.

The divisions that were made in the beginning of the activity were not based on one person deserving more than the other – yet it had a big effect on the choices you were able to make. Did the class notice the feeling of power/powerlessness that came with the dividing the resources in a particular way?

The unequal nature of the division is mirrored in society where the situations we find ourselves in are largely because of our circumstances.

Which items did the groups decide were essential and which weren't?

ITEM	Number of tokens	ITEM	Number of tokens
A car	7	A waterproof coat	2
A house	10	A holiday once a year	5
New clothes	3	A mobile phone	3
Health insurance	7	Dinner at a restaurant once a month	5
Shoes	1	A camera	3
Food	1	Money for phone credit	3
Money for Christmas presents	4	A holiday home	12
Household heating	3	A computer	7
A dishwasher	5	Broadband	7
A wii	5	A washing machine	4
A television	3	An iPod	3
Money for a night out once a week	4	New furniture	7
School books	4	3 rd level education fees	10