The haves and the have-nots

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Tick the correct category for each inequality word.

Word | Economic term | Social issue | Attitude | Action

1 disparity [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
2 social mobility [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
3 privileged [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
4 marginalised [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
5 redistribute [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
6 disposable income [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
7 empathy [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
8 disadvantaged [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2 Correct the mistake in each sentence.

1 There is a huge disparity between of the two groups. _____
2 Social mobility improve over time. _____
3 She comes from privileged of background. _____
4 Marginalised of communities need support. _____
5 The government plans redistribute wealth. _____
6 They have little disposable of income. _____
7 He showed real empathy for of others. _____
8 Disadvantaged of families need more help. _____

3 Choose the more suitable description.

1 For a significant unequal gap: disparity / equality.
2 For the ability to move between social classes: social mobility / a fixed position.
3 For having significant advantages from birth: privileged / disadvantaged.
4 For groups pushed to the edges of society: marginalised / centrally included.
5 For distributing wealth more evenly: redistribute / concentrate.
6 For income left over after essential expenses: disposable income / total income.

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4 Complete the reports with words from the box.

disadvantaged | disparity | disposable income | empathy | marginalised | privileged | redistribute | social mobility

Report A: The study found a growing 1 _____ between the wealthiest and poorest households, with the wealthy enjoying far more 2 _____.
Report B: Policymakers debated how to 3 _____ resources more fairly to support 4 _____ families.
Report C: Researchers found that 5 _____ children often struggled to achieve the same 6 _____ as their more 7 _____ peers.
Report D: Community leaders called for more 8 _____ towards those experiencing poverty.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

The myth of equal opportunity

Economists studying inequality increasingly question the assumption that hard work alone determines financial success, noting that children born into disadvantaged households often face structural barriers that persist regardless of individual effort. Social mobility, the ability to move between income groups over a lifetime or across generations, has stagnated in many countries despite popular belief that anyone can improve their circumstances through determination alone. Access to quality education, stable housing and disposable income for enrichment activities all shape outcomes considerably, meaning that disparities present at birth frequently persist well into adulthood. Policymakers debate whether redistribution or improved access to opportunity offers a more effective long-term solution.

1 What do economists increasingly question? _____
2 What do children born into disadvantaged households often face? _____
3 What is social mobility? _____
4 What has happened to social mobility in many countries? _____
5 Name two factors that shape outcomes considerably, according to the text. _____
6 What do policymakers debate as a more effective long-term solution? _____

6 Rewrite each phrase using the word in capitals.

1 There is a big gap between rich and poor here. DISPARITY _____
2 It's hard for people to improve their social position. SOCIAL MOBILITY _____

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3 She comes from a family with many advantages. PRIVILEGED _____

4 They plan to share wealth more evenly. REDISTRIBUTE _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 100-120 word account of how social mobility could be improved for disadvantaged families. Include specific proposals.

[ ] Use at least ten target expressions. [ ] Include polite, precise wording. [ ] Organise the account clearly.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Categories

1 Economic term 2 Social issue 3 Attitude 4 Social issue 5 Action 6 Economic term 7 Attitude 8 Social issue

2 Corrections

1 disparity between the two groups 2 mobility improves 3 a privileged background
4 Marginalised communities 5 plans to redistribute wealth 6 little disposable income
7 empathy for others 8 Disadvantaged families

3 Suitable descriptions

1 disparity 2 social mobility 3 privileged 4 marginalised 5 redistribute 6 disposable income

4 Reports

1 disparity 2 disposable income 3 redistribute 4 disadvantaged 5 disadvantaged 6 social mobility
7 privileged 8 empathy

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 The assumption that hard work alone determines financial success.
2 Structural barriers that persist regardless of individual effort.
3 The ability to move between income groups over a lifetime or across generations.
4 It has stagnated.
5 Any two: access to quality education, stable housing, disposable income for enrichment activities.
6 Redistribution or improved access to opportunity.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 There is a disparity between rich and poor. 2 Social mobility is limited.
3 She is privileged. 4 They plan to redistribute wealth.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check range, respectful register and clear organisation.