

# IDEAS 1

**International Online Teachers Society  
Debate  
Educational Materials For  
Advance and Upper Intermediate  
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society  
Publishing Committee**



## CONTENTS

### THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

Poverty   Rising Against Poverty   Kathlyn Barrozo   2
Poverty   Poverty A Continuous Struggle   Marian Baltazar   3
Poverty   Poverty   Ferlina Santero Cartagenas   4
Poverty   Poverty Stricken Humanity   Jeanne Canales   5
Poverty   The Rise Of Poverty   Marian Baltazar   6
Poverty   Be Rich In The Midst Of Poverty   Dickson P. Pagente   7
Poverty   Poverty Voices Of The Poor   Marian Baltazar   8



## RISING AGAINST POVERTY

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo  
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas  
B.S. Medical Technology

Poverty is the quality or state of lacking material possessions. This is probably the world's greatest problem that gives rise to a host of other issues-war, famine and malnutrition, non-education, to name just a few. Many people use it as a common reason for not being on a par with their counterparts elsewhere in the world. However, when does poverty become justifiable, and when does it become just a "convenient excuse"? Is there really no way out for people who are poor?

John D. Rockefeller, considered the wealthiest person in history, was not born rich. His father did every trick in the book to avoid hard work, while his mother tried to keep things on an even keel in their home. Making merely \$50 in three months working as a bookkeeper, John did his best to stay in school. In 1859, he fearlessly partnered with his friend to establish an oil refinery. He eventually bought out Clark's shares. In the end, he founded Standard Oil Company and went on to become the world's first billionaire, even becoming the inspiration for Oysters Rockefeller- yes, that's the oyster dish with the rich sauce.

Born in Gloucestershire, England, the young J.K. Rowling often told fantasy stories which she herself had written to her younger sister. After separating from her husband in 1993, she was diagnosed with clinical depression. She was an unemployed single mother who lived on welfare. Currently, her net worth is pegged at around \$1.1 billion. She is a philanthropist supporting a number of causes.

Scottish American Andrew Carnegie worked variously as a factory worker, bill logger and messenger boy. Moving up the ranks, he eventually established U.S. Steel, originally a conglomeration of his own and other smaller steel companies. Spending his vast fortune to support philanthropic works and education, he is best remembered for building Carnegie Hall, the prestigious concert hall for popular and classical music.

Born to unwed teenage parents, Oprah Winfrey was reared by her destitute grandmother who taught her to read before she reached three. Moving to Milwaukee city at age six to live with her mother, Oprah still didn't have much to live on despite showing great academic prowess. She turned rebellious and ran away from home, prompting her mother to send Oprah to live with her (Oprah's) father. She became a radio host, a news anchor and a TV host. Today, she is touted to be the richest African-American woman in the 20th century.

These are real stories of real flesh-and-blood people who didn't find poverty as a serious obstacle to becoming better than they were. Rising up against a materialistic world, they have found their self-worth in a sea of troubles.

Questions for Discussion:

1. The stories here are rags-to-riches stories. What is a rags-to-riches story?
2. Is there someone you know who was able to succeed despite difficult circumstances in their lives? Tell how he/she/they succeeded.
3. In your opinion, should people use poverty as an excuse for not succeeding? Why?
4. Can poverty ever be eradicated? How?
5. Do the rich have an obligation to help the poor? How can they help?



## POVERTY-A CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE

Marian Baltazar  
Class of 1980 University of the Philippines Manila  
AB Political Science

Poverty in simple layman's term means a state of being poor but what is the true essence of the word itself? It is a very broad and intricate word. It's basically a denial of choices and opportunities; a deprivation and violation of human dignity. It encompasses a wide range of probabilities but whatever the word means, it will always lead to hunger. Apparently, it is experienced around the world. Why is this so? In rich and poor nations, poverty has always been present, thus leading to world poverty. By international standard, this is a critical problem. It is like a cancer that spreads fast and still growing in number, hereby creating more poverty-stricken areas. Unfortunately, some of these countries which are very much affected seem to be very complacent about this crucial problem.

Fundamentally, it means lack of capability to participate effectively in a society. Does it mean impoverishment? Definitely, it means not having enough to feed or clothe a family, not having a school to be educated, not having a land to grow one's food or maybe a job so as to earn one's living and not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness, susceptibility to violence. Oftentimes, it implies living in fragile environments having no access to clean water or sanitation. Poverty can also mean a pronounced denial in well-being, including the inability to acquire the basic goods and services which are necessary for survival with dignity. It includes the low incomes wherein families and individuals are said to be living in poverty if their incomes fall below certain levels.

Poverty is also incorporated with low levels of health and education, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, insufficient capacity and opportunity to improve and have a better life. With these, can one not see inequality creeping in? In most nations the rate of inequality are quite high and often widening. The causes are amounting to a large number including a lack of individual responsibility, bad government policy, exploitation by people and businesses which has power and influence or it can maybe a combination of these and other factors for that matter. What then is inequality? Inequality is the gap between the rich and the poor. Whereas a lot of us feel that high levels of inequality will affect social cohesion which may lead to increasing problems in crime and violence. Therefore, we can conclude that the poorest people are the ones afflicted with the problems of hunger, malnutrition and disease consequentially leading to little representation or voice in public or political debates which makes it even harder to escape poverty. By contrast, the wealthier you are, the more likely you are to benefit from economic or political policies.

### Questions for discussion

1. How can the problem of poverty be solved?
2. Can a poor country wipe out poverty?
3. What are the measures to fight poverty?
4. Can poverty be considered a dilemma?
5. How can poverty be alleviated?



## POVERTY

written by Ferlina Santero Cartagenas

How can we measure poverty?

It's a violation of human dignity

and vengeance of hunger but powerless to move visibly.

It's immeasurable because it's a cycle of life

that burns the entire nation with no future's bright.

Homeless swum dwellers, children died of hunger, educational underachievers,

and people suffer from diseases and women of violations from victims of trafficking and more else to mentions are subjects for transfigurations.

How can I transform these misfortune?

Will I just simply puzzle and bewildered while sitting on a rocking chair

of knowing what to do for my next generation?

Or...will I act now?

Providing basic needs, removing constraints on government services, controlling overpopulation, increasing personal income, economic freedoms, and financial services for me can be a threshold to pay dirt for it seems.

"Vision without action is a daydream.

Action without vision is a nightmare."

Which one do you prefer?

T.Ferlina



## POVERTY-STRICKEN HUMANITY

written by Jeanne Canales

It's so easy for us to define poverty. Ways are within reach like consulting Mr. Webster or browse Google, Answers.com, Wikipedia, and any other search engine that we know of. Although, for those who live a life of extreme poverty can hardly come up with a substantial definition of what they feel and encounter as they struggle to survive in their day to day existence. It is never enough to know the full meaning of poverty unless we ourselves get the painful taste of it.

When we speak of poverty, we automatically equate it with many conditions like hunger, suffering and sorrow. Food, potable water, and shelter are at the top of our list of basic needs to survive, however, many of us are denied of these. Current news and yearly statistics undeniably tells us how many hungry mouths are there in this world. It has always been out in the open in ages now. Races, continents, countries, ethnicity, and specific locations have been identified to particularly show where people are living below the poverty lines. Reasons for such occurrence may vary from place to place, but the bottom line is, they all have poor living conditions. It is indeed true that we have recognized the long term agony of millions of poor people around the globe. In spite of that, permanent solutions were never been discovered. Isn't it quite ironic that we have achieved the height of technological, medical, and industrial advancement but this perennial problem has never been resolved? If only the whole world focus and go hand in hand on finding ways and means to combat absolute poverty. One day, success will be on the way. The efforts of non-government agencies and international associations were not sufficient to fully address this. The scope is too big. There is a need for an effective answer to the cry of the needy. The question is what would that be? This is what we need to work out and achieve. Nowadays, most of us care about various things like the financial crisis of several countries affecting the global economy. The headline is on economic recessions of rich nations while the bigger issue of more destitute people are set aside.

We believe that all of us have the right to live. Yes, it's true. More so, we have the right to enjoy a decent life regardless of the color of our skin. It's not enough to determine the characters of the poor. There is a higher goal than that that is to find out how they could be free from the verge of starvation. It is quite fair to let them feel even just a little comfort of what rich people are enjoying. Poverty makes people powerless but it's not a dead end. There is a promising life for those who toil, hope and dream.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is the meaning of poverty?
2. Is poverty a world issue that requires immediate attention? Why or why not?
3. Do you think there is a permanent solution to poverty?
4. What are the effects of poverty to individuals, society, and the world?
5. How can impoverished people get away from poor life?



## THE RISE OF POVERTY

Marian Baltazar  
Class of 1980 University of the Philippines Manila  
AB Political Science

Poverty rates around the world are very alarming. One cannot disclose the fact that poverty is becoming to be a world problem or shall we say dilemma. In fact, the increasing rate of hunger, malnutrition and illiteracy cannot be ignored, so much more with poverty. This only means that we cannot take the problem on this aspect lightly. Statistics show the increasing rate of this quagmire. Can we find then a panacea to this very serious illness of the society? Then, there should be real solutions to come up with to be able to address the root causes of poverty. A better understanding of what are the challenges faced by the people who are living in extreme poverty should be taken into consideration.

Addressing poverty do not only mean providing jobs and income-generating opportunities to the poor but it is also about reducing their expenses on basic needs like food, health and education. The importance of increasing the income of the poor covers only one aspect of poverty. It would be naïve to believe that the poor might be able get out of this destitute status. Anything which promotes growth will surely lead to removing poverty. Poverty should not be just defined in income earning possibility but it should also be an access to essential service like health, electrification, clean drinking water and sanitation, thus, improving also access to education.

We should remember that health is a key element in human welfare. All of these are very important part in the efforts of removing poverty and the government is involved in all of them. The government should have series of programs organized with the aim of pressuring local authorities and non-government organizations to take action in eradicating extreme hunger and poverty. In last year's UN session, world leaders laid down their achievements and goals in their efforts to decrease world poverty.

Poverty has to do with more than only a lack of income; it also deals with the question of rights. More often than not, it is described as the worst violation of human rights. The respect for human rights should let us realize and recognize that everyone has the right to the things which are essential for a dignified existence in the likes of food, water, basic health care, education and housing. Those rights (based on universal values) give people who live in poverty an instrument to restore the disturbed balance of power that keeps them poor. Take a good look at these poor people and you will clearly see deprivation; listen to the voices of the poor and it will tell you about insecurity. Poverty boils down to powerlessness-the poor have no control of their lives; they only have limited choices, making them voiceless.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can poverty be reduced?
2. How can you redefine poverty?
3. How could we address poverty?
4. Is it possible to eliminate poverty in a poor country?
5. Why is poverty a human rights crisis?



## BE RICH IN THE MIDST OF POVERTY

Dickson P. Pagente  
Class of 2006, Central Mindanao University  
BSE English

Defining poverty in whatever way we like does not give us even a little idea on how to solve it. Considering its etymology cannot even help. Brilliant economists and political leaders from the different parts of the world have been talking a lot with one common advocacy – to totally eradicate poverty in the world. Undoubtedly, they are sincere to get the poor out from poverty by implementing all possible economic and political reforms. The question is, do these reforms help? Yes, they definitely do. No questions about it. Do these reforms totally eradicated poverty? The answer is a big NO, it didn't. So when will poverty be extinct? Sad to say, nobody knows. Maybe it will but until humanity is dead. What a terrible projection if it will happen for real.

However, many people don't realize that poverty does not only bring negative thoughts and feelings like hopelessness. Instead, poverty promises hope if you'll just learn to look at the positive side of it. Consider the following points and reflect on it.

1. Get out, don't get barred! Being immersed in the midst of poverty should not suppose to enclose you behind bars where you find no way out. This is the challenge: your being poor should kindle a burning desire in your heart to find any means that can at least make a difference in your life.
2. Get rid of "fatalistic mentality." According to my History Professor in college, "fatalism (the belief in fate) hinders our determination to succeed in life." Most people take fate as a predestined situation or condition in our lives in the future. So, when you firmly believe that it is your "fate" to be poor, you will no longer find any means to get out from poverty. What's the significance of finding means if you believe that it is your "fate" to be poor anyway?
3. Some rich are poor themselves. If poverty is a state of scarcity or insufficiency of something, then poverty does not only exist among the poor. Though rich people are more than financially sufficient, many of them are emotionally insufficient. Some of them crave for the love from their families. Others feel the lack of appreciation from their peers. These make them poor in a way. Being rich doesn't guarantee happiness as most wise men say.

Poverty is caused by interrelated factors within us and in our society. Blaming any one of these factors does not help us to solve it. Helping hand in hand rather can make a big difference. Being poor doesn't make you less of a person. Being rich but lonely is much frustrating than being poor but happy. And this makes the bottom line of the matter.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define poverty in your own words.
2. What do you mean by fatalistic mentality?
3. If you were to change the title of the essay, what would it be and why?
4. Explain this statement, "some rich are poor themselves."
5. What do you think are these interrelated factors that caused poverty?





## POVERTY-“VOICES OF THE POOR”

Marian Baltazar  
Class of 1980 University of the Philippines Manila  
AB Political Science

Where could one really see “poverty per se”? We often marvel at those developing countries which are slowly making them as one of the “super powers of the world”. My guess is as good as yours because the most severe poverty can actually be seen in them. Poverty can be seen as collective condition of poor people or of poor groups and to avoid stigma these countries are called developing countries. Not only that, it plagued the societies of every nation too. It can also be linked to suicide. Thus, poverty when measured can be relative or absolute. Relative property is a poverty measure based on a poor standard of living or a low income relative to the rest of society. It is very similar to measurements of social inequality. On the other hand, absolute poverty is a condition of life which is so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality and low life expectancy. This form of poverty affects human life on all levels of existence.

But then sometimes we can measure poverty as extreme and moderate. Extreme poverty meaning the extremely poor people struggle to find the means to eat three meals a day. They live in isolated and rural villages. The 95% of them live in homes with dirt floors and roofs that fail to keep out the rain and other elements and their homes lack basic sanitary latrines. They can never afford the most basic necessities to ensure survival. Moderate poverty are households which can just barely meet their basic needs, meaning these people must forego many of the things, like education and health care that many of us take for granted.

Come to think of it we can actually consider these things as the “Voices of the Poor”. There are some range of factors which poor people consider elements of poverty. Most important are those necessary for material well-being especially food. Yet, the condition of poverty is linked to questions of scarcity and distribution of resources and power. Whatever the case maybe, poverty naturally causes suffering because it primarily involves the lack of something essential to human life.

It’s so sad to think that all over the world, the voices of these poor people are not really being heard. Can we blame them for being poor? I just hope that the government of every nation would do something about it. The cost of poverty is tantamount to life itself. Let’s all join our efforts in a call for programs which will alleviate the standard of living of the poor. Each and everyone in their own special way can do something about it and that I firmly believe. Let’s hear the “Voices of the Poor”

Questions for discussions:

1. How can we really define poverty?
2. Are we aware of its true existence?
3. Can we arrest extreme property?
4. How can we contribute to these poor people experiencing poverty?
5. Can poverty be experienced by the rich too?



International Online Teachers Society(IOTS) is an independent non profit international organization committed to improving the state of online and offline education in the world by engaging all kinds of language teachers with fluent English speaking skill in the world to shape global, regional and education agendas.  
[www.iotsonline.com](http://www.iotsonline.com)