

GEOGRAPHY SESSION 6: THE UK GAP

Age range: 11–16 years

<p>Outline Learners will be introduced to the difference between absolute and relative poverty and then investigate what it means to live in (relative) poverty in the UK. They will use a video made by young people in Scotland to identify possible impacts of poverty on young people in the UK. Learners will then use a consequences wheel to think critically about these impacts of poverty.</p>		
<p>Learning objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To distinguish between absolute and relative poverty. To explore what living in relative poverty in the UK means. To recognise ways in which poverty impacts on the lives of young people in the UK. 	<p>Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will identify possible impacts of poverty on young people in the UK. Learners will think critically about the consequences of poverty in the UK. 	
<p>Key questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think it means to be poor in the UK? Do you think poverty in the UK is the same as or different from poverty in the Young Lives countries? If so, how? What are the consequences of living in poverty in the UK? 	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Geography slideshow B</i> (slides 34–41) <i>Background notes on poverty in the UK</i> Activity sheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Thinking about poverty</i> <i>What does it mean to live in poverty in the UK?</i> Video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Seen and Heard</i> 	
<p>Curriculum links</p>		
<p>England <i>Pupils should be taught to:</i> KS3 Geography Human and physical geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand key processes in human geography relating to: population and urbanisation; international development; economic activity in the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary sectors; and the use of natural resources. 	<p>Wales KS3 Geography Understanding places, environments and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the causes and effects of physical and human processes and how the processes interrelate. <p>Range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the rich and poor world: economic development in different locations/countries. Study tomorrow's citizens: issues in Wales and the wider world of living sustainably and the responsibilities of being a global citizen. Ask – what are the geographical issues for people living in this location? 	<p>Scotland Social studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain why a group I have identified might experience inequality and can suggest ways in which this inequality might be addressed. SOC 3-16a Through discussion, I have identified aspects of a social issue to investigate and by gathering information I can assess its impact and the attitudes of the people affected. SOC 4-16b I can use my knowledge of current social, political or economic issues to interpret evidence and present an informed view. SOC 3-15a

Note:

- *The total time required to complete all the activities in this session is over an hour. As with other geography sessions, you may decide to omit some activities depending on the time available and your learners' existing knowledge, understanding and needs. The material is intended to support your teaching rather than guide it. Additional teaching input may be required to develop learners' knowledge, skills and understanding of some of these concepts.*
- *This session focuses on poverty in the UK. As it is likely that some learners will be directly impacted by poverty themselves, sensitivity may be needed with some of the activities.*

Activity 6.1 (20 min)

Thinking about poverty

- Organise learners into pairs or groups of three and give each group a copy of *Thinking about poverty*. Show slide 35 and ask learners to cut out the 14 boxes and sort the items into three groups:
 - Essential for life
 - Necessary for an acceptable standard of living in the UK
 - Luxuries.
- Select learners to share their groupings and encourage them to give reasons for their choices. This could be done as a whole-class activity or alternatively two groups could come together to share their ideas.
- Use slide 36 to explain the difference between the terms 'absolute' or 'extreme poverty' and 'relative poverty'.
- Tell learners to look at the items they identified as being necessary for an acceptable standard of living in the UK. Ask whether they think the same items would be considered necessary for an acceptable standard of living in the four Young Lives countries. *Why/Why not?*
- Show slide 37 and share the fact that one in five people in the UK live below the relative poverty line. This means that over 13 million people in the UK do not have enough to live well. Discuss learners' responses to this statistic:
 - *Are you surprised by this statistic?*
 - *Do you think that it is fair that this number of people in the UK do not have enough money to live well?*
 - *Who do you think is responsible for ensuring people in the UK live well?*

Refer to the *Background notes for teachers* and *Background notes on poverty in the UK* for further information.

Activity 6.2 (20 min)

What does it mean to live in poverty in the UK?

- Organise learners into groups of three and give each group an A3 copy of *What does it mean to live in poverty in the UK?* Ask learners to think about how living in poverty in the UK might

impact on a young person's life, for example living in a cold house or not having enough to eat. They should write their ideas inside the outline of the person.

- Allow time for learners to share and discuss their ideas as a whole class.
- Explain that learners are going to watch a video that explores how poverty impacts on young people in the UK. The video was made by young people at St. Kentigern's Academy in West Lothian in partnership with UNICEF as part of its work to raise awareness of children's rights within the school community.
- Show the video *Seen and Heard** from 0 min to 4 min 25 sec and 5 min 27 sec to 6 min 5 sec or the full-length version if you would rather.
- A useful list of some potential consequences of poverty gathered by St Kentigern's Academy is provided on slide 38 and in the *Background notes on poverty in the UK*.
- Ask learners to discuss in their groups what they have seen:
 - *Are the views of these young people about poverty similar or different to the ideas of your group?*
 - *Did anything about the video surprise you? If so, what?*
 - *Have your ideas about poverty in the UK changed after watching the video? If so, in what ways?*
- Allow time for learners to add to their copy of *What does it mean to be poor in the UK?*

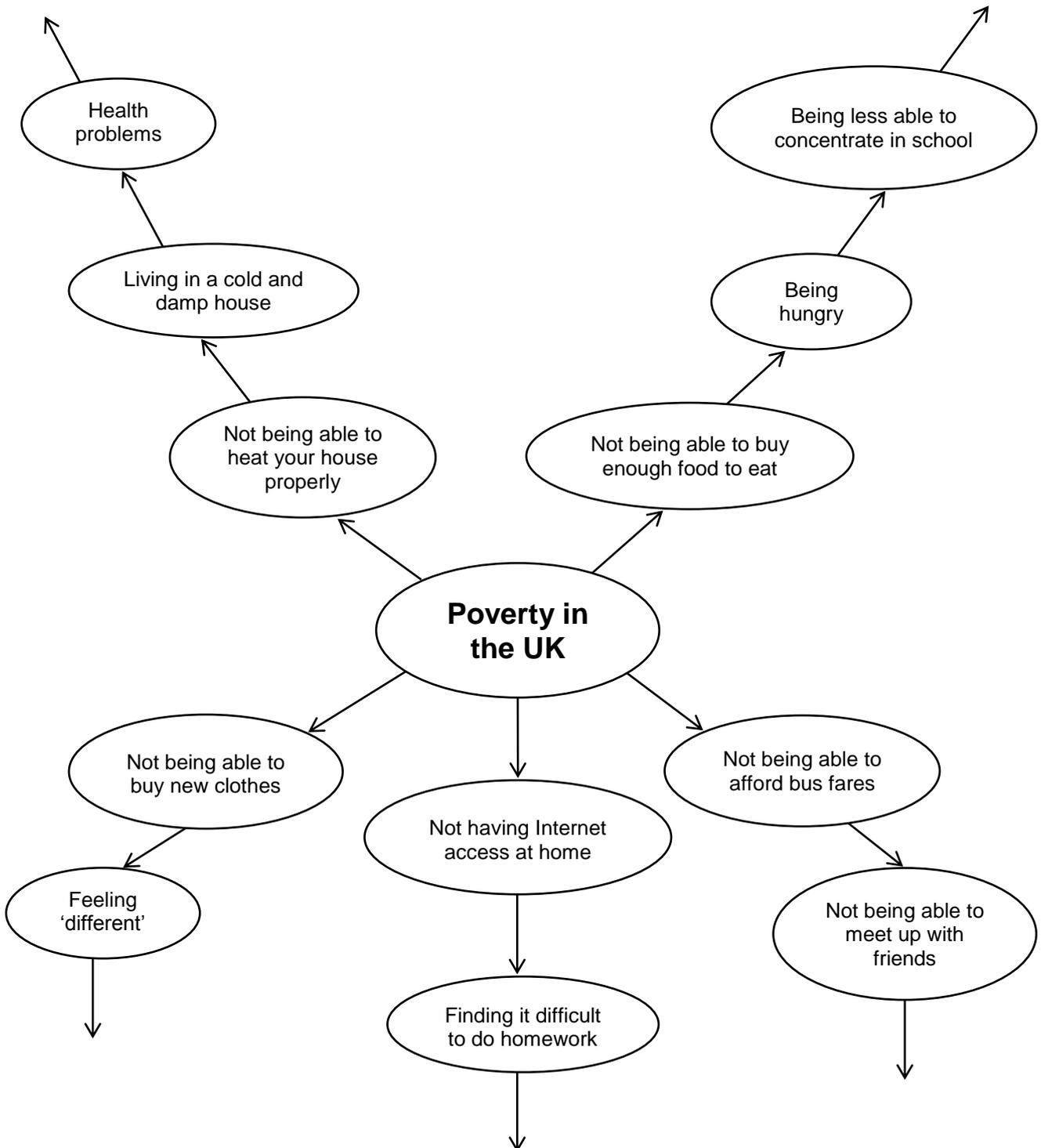
* With thanks to St Kentigern's Academy and Unicef UK Rights Respecting Schools Award www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa and www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/rrsa-teaching-resources/seen-and-heard/

Activity 6.3 (25–45 min)

The consequences of poverty

- Explain that learners are going to use a consequences wheel to help them think critically about the impacts of living in relative poverty in the UK.
- Organise learners into groups of three and give each group a large sheet of plain paper. Ask each group to write "Poverty in the UK" in a circle in the middle of the paper.
- Ask each group to use its ideas from *Activity 6.2* to think of any direct consequences of UK poverty, such as not being able to heat your house properly, not being able to buy enough food to eat, not being able to afford bus fares, not having Internet access and not being able to afford a mobile phone. They should write each of these direct consequences inside a separate circle linked to the main circle with a single line. Encourage learners to think of as many direct consequences as possible and to arrange these in a ring around the main circle.
- Explain that learners should now consider the consequences of these consequences. As before, they should write these consequences inside circles, linked to the direct consequences – and so on.
- An example of a partly completed consequences wheel is provided below and on slide 39.

Consequences wheel



- Allow time for each group to present its consequences wheel to the rest of the class. Discuss learners' assumptions for their consequences wheel and whether or not these are justified. *How could learners find out more about the facts?*
- If time is available, ask learners to convert each arm of the consequence wheel into text form. An example is provided below and on slide 40:

“Living in poverty in the UK means that you might not be able to buy enough food to eat and therefore that you would go hungry at times. This means that you might be less able to concentrate in lessons and as a result you might find learning more difficult. Going hungry might also affect your health as you wouldn’t have a balanced and nutritious diet and might lack some vitamins and minerals.”

- Prompt words are provided on slide 41 to support learners with their writing. You might also like to refer to *Background notes for teachers* and *Background notes on poverty in the UK*.

Further ideas

- Ask learners to research how poverty levels vary across the UK and discuss possible reasons for any inequalities. An interactive map showing the levels of child poverty in local authorities across the UK is available here:
www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/poverty-in-your-area
- Investigate other UK gaps by collecting regional data for other indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality and Internet access. Learners could then create colour coded maps of the UK or use GIS applications to illustrate the variations in these different indicators.
- Ask learners to create their own version of the graph on slide 36 showing the difference between extreme (absolute) and relative poverty. Learners could add items from *Thinking about poverty* to different areas of the graph to illustrate the differences in living above and below the lines of extreme poverty and relative poverty. Learners could think of other items to add to the graph to illustrate other inequalities between living above or below the lines of extreme and relative poverty.
- Use the video in *Activity 6.2* as a stimulus for hot-seating, role play and drama activities to further explore the consequences of poverty in the UK.
- Use a consequences wheel to think critically about the impacts of living in poverty in one of the Young Lives countries:
 - Organise learners into groups of three and ask them to complete a consequences wheel to show the impacts of living in poverty in one of the Young Lives countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru or Viet Nam). Encourage learners to think about their learning from previous sessions. It may be useful to distribute copies of the profiles of the featured young people from *Geography session 3*.
 - Ask learners to compare their consequences wheel with the one they created for living in poverty in the UK. *What similarities and differences are there?*
 - Finally, ask learners to compare their consequences wheels with those from other groups:
 - *What similarities and differences are there between the different Young Lives countries?*
 - *What similarities and differences might there be for boys and girls living in poverty?*
 - *What similarities and differences might there be for young people living in poverty in rural and urban localities?*

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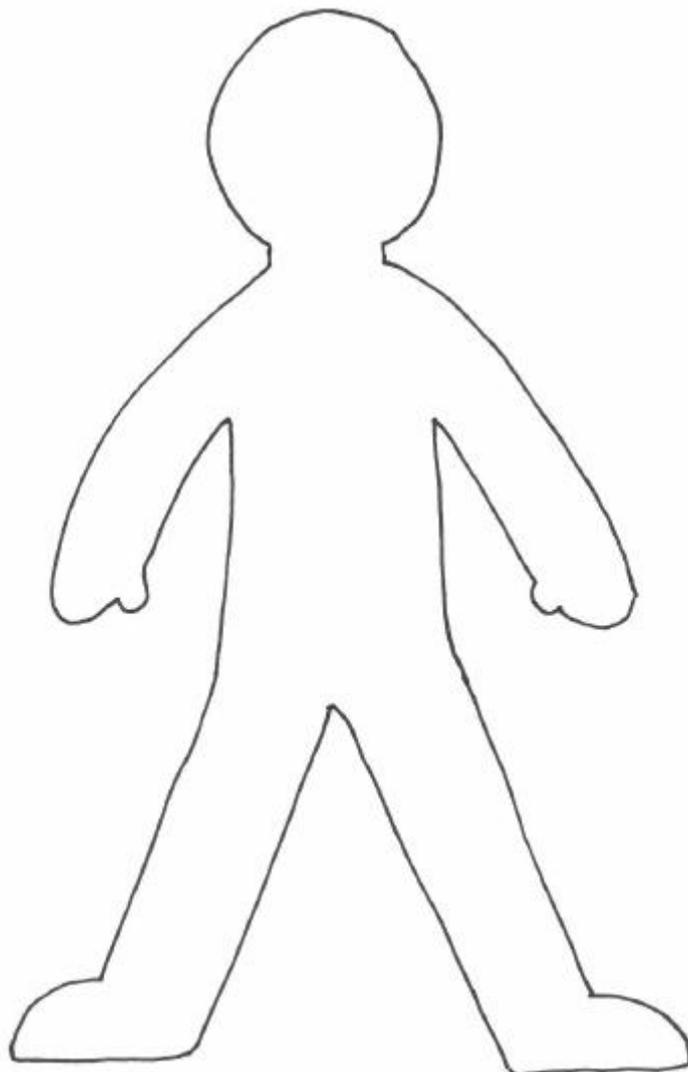
Thinking about poverty

Cut out the 14 boxes and sort the items into three groups:

- *Essential for life*
- *Necessary for an acceptable standard of living in the UK*
- *Luxuries*

Food	Mobile phone
Going on holiday	Water
Education	Heating
Access to health care	Socialising with friends, such as going to a restaurant or café
Electricity	Television
Going to the cinema	Laptop or computer
Car	Shelter

What does it mean to be live in poverty in the UK?



Background notes on poverty in the UK

Although the UK is the seventh richest country in the world, it is also deeply unequal, and millions of families across the UK are living below the breadline.

Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty have calculated that 20,247,042 meals were given to people in food poverty in 2013/14 by the three main food aid providers. This is a 54 percent increase on 2012/13.

A combination of changes to the social security system, including a more punitive sanctions regime, a lack of decent work and rising living costs are contributing significantly to food poverty. More and more people are being forced to turn to food banks to put food on their table.

- Over 2 million people in the UK are estimated to be malnourished, and 3 million are at risk of becoming so.
- 26% of the UK population are just one heating bill or a broken washing machine away from hardship.
- 1 in 6 parents have gone without food themselves to afford to feed their families.

For further information see:

policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/below-the-breadline-the-relentless-rise-of-food-poverty-in-britain-317730

policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/walking-the-breadline-the-scandal-of-food-poverty-in-21st-century-britain-292978

Pupils at St Kentigern's Academy, West Lothian, Scotland (featured in the video, 'Seen and Heard') collated the following list of potential consequences of poverty in the UK in partnership with UNICEF UK:

- People believing in stereotypes about those living in poverty.
- Feeling different from other 'normal' people.
- Not always having enough money for proper, healthy food.
- Living in a cold house.
- Not having new clothes or other things that most young people have, like the latest phone or game.
- Health problems because of poor living conditions.
- Missing out on a social life because you can't afford things like bus fares, sports or school trips or have friends around.
- Not being able to do school work properly because of not having a computer or a quiet place to work in at home.
- Feeling uncertain and fearful about the future.