

## Grades 3 – 6

# Poverty and Rights

## Students will

- differentiate between wants and needs
- become familiar with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (NCRC)
- define poverty in terms of denial of basic rights

## Preparations

- Obtain a copy of one of these GEAR activities: *Journey to a New Planet*, *The Rights Balloon* or *Forming a New Government* from the [World Class](#) website Resources page.
- Download, photocopy and cut-out a set of Wants and Needs cards for each pair of students. A copy of the cards and SMART Board slides of the cards can be found on the Resources page of the World Class website.

## Instructions

1. Ask students to turn to a partner and share their personal definition of poverty: What does it mean to be poor or experience poverty? Write down your definition.
2. Select and complete one of the following GEAR activities with your students: *Journey to a New Planet* (grades 2-4), *The Rights Balloon* (grades 4-6) or *Forming a New Government* (grades 6-8).

These activities help students to distinguish between wants and needs and to understand that every child has basic needs in order to survive, develop and live a full and meaningful life. Students will learn that these needs are called rights and that every child is entitled to these rights according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

## Discussion

- How does denial of basic needs like food, water, shelter and clothing affect other rights? For example, how does lack of nutritious food affect children's right to education or their right to play? Give other examples of how rights are interconnected.
- Based on the above discussion rewrite your definition of poverty to include the idea of basic needs and rights.

*It is important to help students understand that poverty is not only about lack of money, it is about unequal access to basic rights.*

## Post It

Ask students to share their definitions of poverty in a blog or discussion in your World Class classroom. Encourage students to reply to one another's postings. Invite students to go back to the discussion or blog to revise their definition as they learn more about the issue of poverty. You can also share the definitions on a public bulletin board in your school.

## Follow-up Activity

Explain *absolute* (total or complete) and *relative* (connected to or in comparison to) poverty. Read the following statements made by children about poverty. Ask students to move to one side of the classroom if they think the statement describes a situation of absolute poverty, to the other side of the room if the statement describes a situation of relative poverty. Ask students to explain their decisions. NOTE: There are no right or wrong answers here; the point is to have students think critically.

*Poverty is (by grade four and five students)\*:*

- *being afraid to tell your mom that you need gym shoes*
- *pretending that you forgot your lunch*
- *not ever getting a pet because it costs too much*
- *being teased for the way you are dressed*
- *not getting a hot dog on hot dog day*
- *wishing you could go to McDonald's*
- *not having breakfast sometimes*
- *not being able to take swimming lessons*
- *feeling ashamed because your dad can't get a job*

**Absolute Poverty:** *When individuals do not have access to the basic needs of life needed for human survival – food, water, shelter, clothing.*

**Relative Poverty:** *When individuals are living with less than others and cannot enjoy some of the social and cultural freedoms – the normal, acceptable standards of living – in their society.*

\* Taken from *Our Neighbour's Voices: Will We Listen?* Retrieved from [http://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/health.nsf/c56e308f49bfeb7885256abc0071ec9a/3C88A9C2530E5AE485256CC50068B95B/\\$file/povertyfactsheet6.pdf?openelement](http://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/health.nsf/c56e308f49bfeb7885256abc0071ec9a/3C88A9C2530E5AE485256CC50068B95B/$file/povertyfactsheet6.pdf?openelement)