

## Economics "Economic Inequality" Essay

Recommended Due Date (Full Credit): Friday, March 24, 2017

Question: The wealth gap between the richest Americans and the poorest Americans is the largest it has been since before the Great Depression. How did this happen? How is this affecting the middle class? Can the middle class survive this level of income inequality? What should America be doing to rebuild the middle class, or should the middle class be allowed to shrink back to historical norms? Should the government promote economic equity, intervene and help the working poor, or let the marketplace decide the value of labor? What changes should we make to address income inequality in the United States?

Sample Outline you could organize your essay by topic, such as

1. Introduction / Thesis Statement – Introduce your topic, and declare your opinion/position on the topic of the research paper
2. Body – the bulk of the paper is here, in data taken from the readings and other evidence you have found to support your position
  - a. Middle Class and Inequality
    1. Wages- For the last 30 years, wages for the majority of Americans have remained stagnant
      1. From the minimum wage to the salaried worker, are workers being paid fairly?
      2. Are lower class workers treated differently?
      3. Does the greater share of wealth going to the top create the poor? Or are the poor responsible for their condition?
      4. Outsourcing and Off-Shoring - As businesses aggressively pursue cost cutting, cheaper workers from other countries become a goldmine for corporate profits, and workers in America end up training their replacements in India. Corporations have shown no allegiance to America
    2. Taxes - The democracy of Athens is said to have declined after changing from a progressive tax to a flat tax. Are tax rates causing or exacerbating income inequality?
      1. Why do rich American often pay a lower tax rate than working poor Americans?
      2. Is the tax structure set up to make the poor pay more than the rich?
      3. Why are there so many tax loopholes available only to the rich?
    3. Union busting - When Ronald Regan crushed the air traffic controllers union in 1981, it signaled a change in the relationship between unions and the government, and the unions have since declined from about 30% of the working population to about 8% of the working population, and many would say that the decline of the unions corresponds to the decline of the American wage earner
      1. Corporations and Government vs Unions
    4. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other Entitlements
      1. The programs are the most expensive programs in the US budget, and they are getting more expensive each year. Are our social commitments dooming us?
  - b. Commanding the towering heights: Capitalism and Neoliberalism
    1. Modern economics is largely based on the free market ideals of Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman (of the University of Chicago) and is usually referred to as supply side economic or trickledown economics, and has been associated with Neoliberalism that has replaced Keynesianism as the dominant form of economic thinking today. In the Shock Doctrine, Naomi Kline makes the case that this form of economics was not delivered to a willing world, but forced upon it by shock.
      1. Is this the economy chose by the people, or by the plutocrats?
  - c. War and the military industrial complex
    1. Is the money spent on war creating more inequality?
  - d. Banks
    1. The problem has always been the banks, and when the banks were released from the restrictions of Glass-Steagall act during Clinton's presidency, the bank went wild and caused huge amounts of debt betting on depositors accounts, shady accounting practices, huge bonuses from executives, corrupt behavior, and the massive bailout with taxpayer dollars only made it worse.
    2. Are the banks responsible for our massive income inequality?
  - e. Should an economy be fair, and how does the US compare to other countries in fairness in the economy?
  - f. Fairness and Workplace rules
  - g. Fairness and Women
  - h. Fairness and Minorities
  - i. Fairness and Education
3. Conclusion – Summarize the important points, and restate your thesis in terms of the DPE (Data, Proof, Evidence) you presented.

Extras:

1. Make sure to include citations *every time you use a statement or an idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you found in your own independent research*. Use APA citation notation (found on website). Using others work without providing proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for immediate failure on this essay.
2. Papers should be about 1500-1800 words and 6-8 pages in length in Times New Roman or Ariel 12 point font, double spaced, pages numbered, cover page optional, references on last page (as per APA notation), 1 inch borders on top/bottom and left/right, stapled (no covers or binders). Be sure to include name and period.
3. Underline your Thesis.
4. Please type all work on a computer.
5. Please provide 2 copies of the essay, one that I will keep, and one that will be returned to you. I will not return any papers that are turned in with only one copy.