

THE MALICIOUS MINIMUM WAGE: CAN YOU LIVE OFF OF IT?

Introduction:

For many adults, our very first job consists of some entry level, minimum wage job. This type of job is a great way to earn spending money, but could we support ourselves making minimum wage? What does it actually cost to live by ourselves, pay all of our own bills, and buy all of our own food? In this project, you will create a budget of how much you would like to spend on five basic necessities and determine if minimum wage is enough to survive on.

Inquiry Question:

Factual– Will you be able to afford the five basic needs living off minimum wage?

Conceptual–If you work for minimum wage, at the end of the year, will you hit the poverty line? Or will you have to work a second job?

Debatable– How does the American minimum wage compare to what people make in other countries?

I. What is minimum wage? (This section will require the use of technology)

- Minimum wage is:

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- The minimum wage for North Carolina is \$_____.

- The state with the largest minimum wage is _____ \$_____.

- If you worked 40 hours a week at \$_____ per hour, you would make \$_____ every two weeks and \$_____ a month.

- Now deduct 20% of your wages for taxes. How much would you have left?

- Name one job that you would like to work at when you turn 18. _____

-What interests you about this job? Does it start out at minimum wage?

II. Create your budget

Pair up with another person and work on your budgets. Each of you must create your own budget but help each other by discussing how much money you would like to spend on each necessity. Remember to keep in mind your monthly wages (how much you could make a month if you worked 40 hours a week).

| EXPENSES | WHAT YOU WANT | WHAT HAPPENS |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | BUDGET (MONTHLY) | ACTUAL (MONTHLY) |
| SAVINGS (10% OF INCOME) | | |
| RENT | | |
| TRANSPORTATION | | |
| FOOD | | |
| CELL PHONE | | |
| HEALTH INSURANCE | | |

III. Reflections

1. Was your budget realistic? Why or why not?

2. Compare what you wanted to pay for your necessities and what your actual budget was for your necessities?

3. Could you afford everything with one job? Were you living in poverty?
4. Were there any “wants” that you would have liked to buy? Special shoes? Trips? Vacations? What is one way you could end up paying for these items?
5. Should the minimum wage be increased? Why or why not?
6. Pick a country that you would want to live in if you could study abroad for a year. How does this country’s minimum wage compare to the United State’s minimum wage?