

OXFORD

English

An international approach

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1

Money

Does money make us happy?

In this unit you will:

Experience

- ancient and modern money
- UK and USA
- Solomon Islands
- India
- Italy
- Zimbabwe

Read

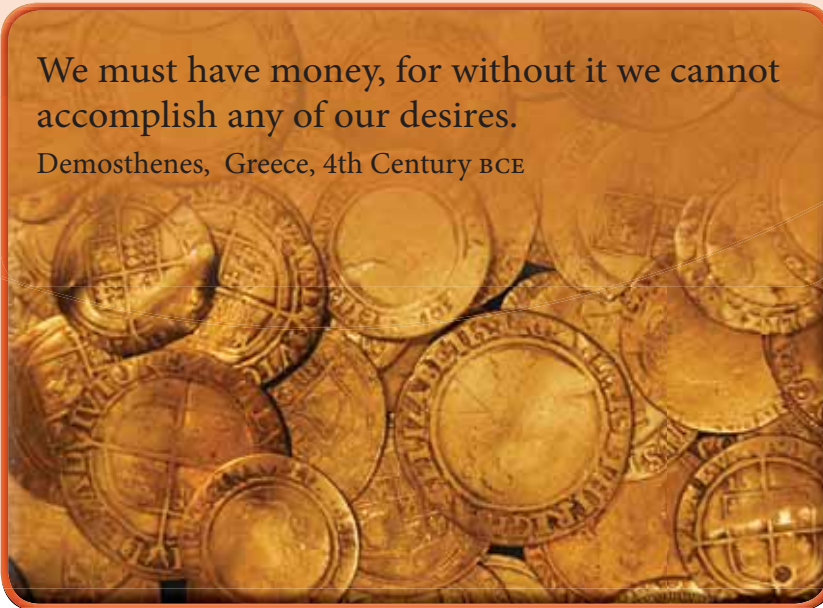
- fiction
- poetry
- a Shakespeare play
- a news report
- an encyclopedia entry

Create

- comparisons
- a letter to an MP
- a summary
- an opinion piece
- an account
- design research

We must have money, for without it we cannot accomplish any of our desires.

Demosthenes, Greece, 4th Century BCE



The desire for money is nothing new, as the opening quotation from ancient Greece shows.

Ask your fellow students – and yourself – what you would wish for if you were offered a magic wish. Would it be ‘health’, ‘top marks in all my exams’, ‘an end to world poverty’ or just ‘loads of money’? Try the question out on your classmates!

However much money people have, it seems they always want more, as though money guarantees everything anyone could ever want, including happiness. Do you think this is true?

Talking points

- 1 How would you define the words ‘personal wealth’?
- 2 What other things might we value highly?

Which countries are the wealthiest?

Before you look at the first map below, identify the countries of the world where you think people have the most money, and where they have the least.

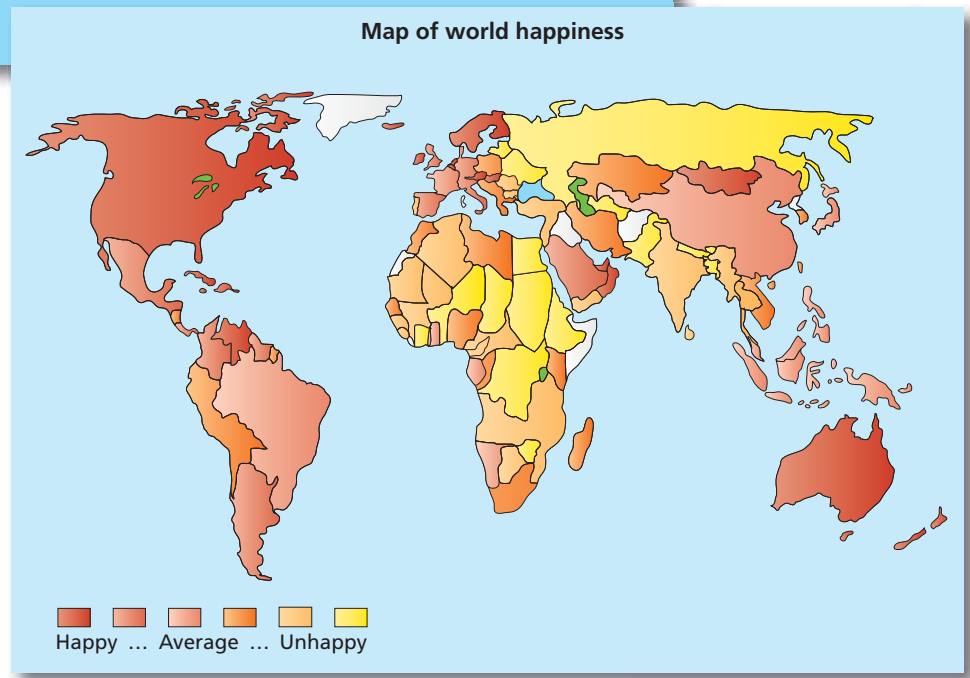
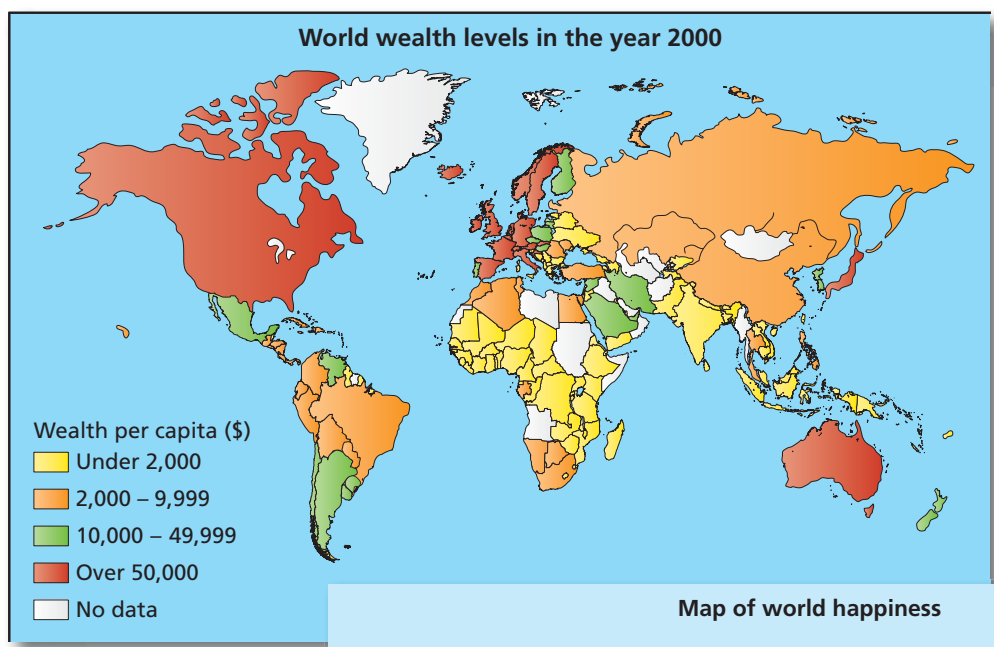
Now look at the map. What do you think are the factors which contribute to the wealth in the red areas and the poverty in the yellow areas? Can you think of any ways in which the distribution of wealth could be made more equal?

How does this map relate to the second map which measures world happiness? How important is economic wellbeing to subjective wellbeing? What other factors are important?

Discuss the following words:

money riches wealth

wellbeing distribution



How powerful is money?

How powerful is money? The American businessman John D. Rockefeller, who earned his fortune from oil, became the world's richest man and the first American worth more than a billion dollars. He had this to say: 'I believe it is my duty to make money and still more money and to use

the money I make for the good of my fellow man according to the dictates of my conscience.'

What dictates might those be? Think about the advantages and disadvantages of aspiring to great wealth as you read the following poems.

Poem

The following poem is written by the American poet William Heyen. What are the questions about the global economy which this poem raises?

∞ The Global Economy ∞

You've got a dollar. You deposit it in your savings account. Now you've got a dollar and the bank's got a dollar.

The bank loans a dollar to Joe's Construction. Now

- 5 You've got a dollar, the bank's got a dollar, and Joe's got a dollar.

Joe buys a board from Hirohito Lumber. Now Hirohito's got a dollar too.

Where did you get your dollar?

- 10 How much money is there in the world?

Who's got it?

Where is it?

What happened to all the trees?

WILLIAM HEYEN

Looking closely

- 1 The poet uses are very simple words. How many words have more than two syllables? What effect do you think this simple language has on the point that the poet is making?
- 2 If the poet had used more complex language, imagery and sentence structure, what difference do you think it would have made to the effectiveness of his poem?

Comprehension

- 1 Explain where the dollars come from and where they go in lines 1–8.
- 2 What answers would you give to the four questions in lines 9–12?
- 3 What is the answer to the final question?
- 4 What do you think is the point of William Heyen's poem?
- 5 How would you describe the tone of the poem?

Talking points

The US dollar note is often referred to as a greenback, based on its distinctive colour marking. In your group, discuss the issues raised by the poem and the cartoon on this page.



Poem

The following poem is by Celso Kulagoe, a writer from the Solomon Islands, part of Melanesia in the South Pacific Ocean.

☞ This Johnny ☞

This johnny
is Mr Strong from Strongtown.
He's got the government by the throat
He's got the prime minister by the throat
5 because he's the johnny
that runs the Big Men
he's the johnny that runs them round.
He opens all the Big Men's mouths
and they all talk Mr Strong talk
10 He candycakes all the Big Men's tongues
and they all talk Mr Sweet talk
He unshuts all the Big Men's eyes
and they all see Mr Strong's Progress Highway Go Now!

This johnny
15 is a friend of mine
Mm he wears all the gear
and all the flash jangles that go with the gear
But he's got me by the throat too
He's got me running all over the show too
20 oh looking for work work work
and working working working working
till I'm just a bunch of bones Ah

This Johnny
is Mr Dollar.
CELO KULAGOE

Looking closely

- 1 Select an example from the following and explain how each helps you to understand the poem:
 - a use of capital letters
 - b lack of punctuation
 - c alliteration
 - d repetition.
- 2 Write an explanation of the following:
 - a candycakes (line 10)
 - b Mr Sweet talk (line 11)
 - c gear (line 16)
 - d flash jangles. (line 17)

Comprehension

- 1 What or who exactly is 'Johnny', and what is his power?
- 2 Who are the winners and who are the losers with 'Johnny'?
- 3 The poet personifies 'Johnny' in lines 15–17. Why is his description appropriate?



Making comparisons

Analyse the two poems you have read and write a comparison.

- Make a list of bullet points summarizing what these two poems have told you about money.
- Compare the tone and language of the two poems.

Writing to your MP

Near where you live is an area of woodland that has become a sanctuary for birds and animals, and a popular recreation ground.

Now a construction company is proposing to fell the trees and build an estate of houses on it.

- Write a letter to your Member of Parliament explaining why you don't want this development to go ahead.
- State why you think this area of common land should be made into parkland, and a place that everyone can enjoy.



How would you describe the money market?

What do you know about financial systems in our modern market economy? How much of our lives are dominated by financial regulation and the marketplace?



The Bank of England, headquarters of England's central bank in London.

Classic fiction

 From *Dombey and Son* by Charles Dickens

The following extract is from a novel by Charles Dickens published in 1848. In this section Mr Dombey has a conversation with his young son, Paul, about money. He is a very wealthy, proud man but his son is weak and sickly. Mr Dombey's wife died shortly after giving birth to Paul, and he is an anxious, lonely child.

☞ What's money? ☛

'Papa! What's money?'

The abrupt question had such immediate reference to the subject of Mr Dombey's thoughts, that Mr Dombey was quite disconcerted.

5 'What is money, Paul?' he answered. "'Money?'

'Yes,' said the child, laying his hands on the elbows of his little chair and turning the old face up towards Mr Dombey's. 'What is money?'

Wordpool

Discuss the meaning of the following words.

circulation [line 10]

currency [11]

depreciation [11]

bullion [11]

presumptuous [24]

prompter [38]

Make your own word pool of any other unfamiliar words