

POVERTY USA QUIZ – ANSWERS

QUESTION 1 FALSE

The number of people living in poverty increased in 2008 over 2007, from about 37.3 million, to about 39.8 million people. The poverty rate – the percentage of the people in the United States living in poverty – also rose 0.7 percent, to 13.2 percent, in 2008. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division: 2008.

QUESTION 2 FALSE

The number of families in poverty is increasing. In 2008, out of 77.9 million U.S. families, 8.15 million lived in poverty – which is statistically different, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, from the 7.62 million families in 2007. The poverty rate for families rose to 10.3 percent, also higher from 2007. Source: *People and Families in Poverty by Selected Characteristics: 2007 and 2008*, U.S. Census Bureau.

QUESTION 3 TRUE

For the first time on record, poverty and the incomes of typical working-age households worsened in 2007 despite six consecutive years of economic growth. In terms of poverty and median income, the economic expansion that started at the end of 2001 was the worst on record; the gains from the expansion flowed primarily to high-income households. Median income for working-age households was lower in 2008 than any year since 1997. The number and percentage of Americans without health insurance remained much greater in 2008 than 2001. Approximately 46.3 million people, representing 15.4% of the population, lacked health insurance in 2008, a 6.5 % increase since 2001 (39.8 million people, 14.1% of the population). Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2008, U.S. Census Bureau.

QUESTION 4 FALSE

The federal “poverty threshold” in 2009 for a family of four with two children 17 or younger is \$21,834. However, a majority of Americans believe it takes at least \$35,000 annually to provide adequately for a family of four (*Poverty Pulse* poll, 2000). Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2009*.

QUESTION 5 FALSE

Over 17 million non-Hispanic white Americans lived below the poverty line in 2008. There are 10.9 million Hispanics (of any race) in poverty, 9.3 million African Americans, and 1.5 million Asian Americans in poverty. As a percentage of the population, however, almost one in four African Americans live in poverty, the highest percentage of any group. Source: *People and Families in Poverty by Selected Characteristics: 2007 and 2008*, U.S. Census Bureau.

QUESTION 6 TRUE

Despite having the highest national income among major economically advanced countries, the real child poverty rate in the United States (20.6%) is among the highest. Finland (4.2%), Sweden (4.0%), Austria (6.2%), and Denmark (2.7%), among others, have low child poverty rates. Source: *Society at a Glance 2009*, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

QUESTION 7 FALSE

The federal minimum wage became \$7.25 per hour July 24, 2009. The Federal Labor Standards Act raised the minimum wage in three steps starting in 2007, for the first time in ten years:

\$5.15 – Sept. 1, 1997 \$5.85 – July 24, 2007 \$6.55 – July 24, 2008 \$7.25 – July 24, 2009

A single parent with one child working full-time at the current minimum wage, (\$7.25/hour x 40 hours x 52 weeks), would earn \$15,080 – \$340 above the poverty threshold of \$14,840 – before any deductions or taxes. Source: *Poverty Thresholds for 2008 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years*, U.S. Census Bureau.

QUESTION 8 FALSE

The poverty rate for America’s elderly (people over 65) remained the same in 2008 at 9.7 percent, or roughly one out of every ten seniors. But the poverty rate for all minors (aged 17 and under) is 19 percent, or nearly one out of every five children in America. Source: *People and Families in Poverty by Selected Characteristics: 2007 and 2008*, U.S. Census Bureau.

QUESTION 9 FALSE

Nine out of ten Americans believe the federal government has a responsibility to alleviate poverty. A strong majority believes that government should do more, not less, to help people move from welfare to work, by providing skills needed to be self-sufficient. Source: Lake Snell Perry & Associates, Inc., *Public Views on Welfare Reform and Children in the Current Economy*, 2002, Packard Foundation.