

Should there be billionaires?

Level: Upper intermediate–advanced

Time: 90 minutes +

Summary: This lesson debates whether billionaire businesspeople are a force for good or bad. In this lesson, students:

1. practise identifying large numbers and saying them aloud;
2. read one of two texts, either in favour of the existence of billionaires or against it;
3. conduct an information-sharing session with a student who read the other text;
4. discuss their own views on billionaires;
5. research the world's wealthiest people and give a presentation on a billionaire.

Materials: One copy of either the Student A or Student B worksheet per student

Group size: Two or more

Note: Divide the students into Student A and Student B and give them their corresponding worksheet. The text for Student A is slightly more challenging than the text for Student B.

This lesson plan is for both pre-experience and in-work business students based on an original article first published in *Business Spotlight* issue 3/2020.

Warmer

This task aims to give the students a feel for the size of the numbers this lesson deals with. Students match the numbers in words to the corresponding numbers in digits. Then they decide how to correctly say the large numbers out loud.

Key:

- a.**
1. *c*
 2. *a*
 3. *b*
- b.**
1. *one billion, two hundred and ninety-two million, six hundred and thirty-eight thousand, five hundred*
 2. *four billion, four hundred and twelve million, six hundred and thirty-eight thousand, three hundred and six*

Key words

Students read the text for Student A or Student B and find the key words in task 2. The definitions are given in the order that the words appear in the article.

Students can listen to how to pronounce the words as well as see them in example sentences using an online dictionary such as www.macmillandictionary.com/.

Key:

YES

1. *bash*
2. *persist in*
3. *crude*
4. *vigilant*
5. *conscientious*
6. *asset allocation*
7. *executive pay*
8. *pay-off*
9. *substantive*
10. *egalitarian*

NO

1. *unduly*
2. *gainfully*
3. *inheritance*
4. *cronyism*
5. *relentlessly*
6. *suppression*
7. *exploitation*
8. *lobbying*
9. *manipulation*
10. *ultimately*

Information sharing

Students make a note of all the arguments the author of their text makes in the relevant column. If there is anything that the students do not completely understand, offer clarification at this point.

Next, pairs of students share information and complete the table together. Then, they discuss the two authors' opinions and decide which of the two they think presents the most convincing argument. Students should look at how the authors do this and pay particular attention to their choice of vocabulary. At this point, they could also talk about the key words and how they are used in context.

Discussion

Students discuss the questions using examples and facts to justify their answers.

Research and presentation

Students find a list of the world's current wealthiest businesspeople and answer the questions. **Note:** Forbes.com is a reliable source. Students then choose one of the billionaires to research further so that they can give a presentation about them to the rest of the class. Make sure that each student chooses a different billionaire.