

NEWS BREAK

Article: Why \$15 Matters

Section: BUSINESS, D2

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, October 7, 2018** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

**Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.*

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will talk about the definition of a living wage. They'll discuss whether Amazon's \$15/hour move will set the tone for other American companies. They'll look at a map of the minimum wage rates across the nation and talk about the amounts that surprise them. Students will debate whether there should be federally mandated rates for all the states and whether their families could survive on \$15/hour.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about?
- Are there clues in the picture?
- What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“Amazon.com is boosting its minimum wage for all U.S. workers to \$15, and CEO Jeff Bezos said he’ll push for the federally **mandated** minimum wage to be raised, too.”

Write your guess and then look up the definition and write it below your guess. How close did you come to the correct definition?

Mandated Guess:

Mandated Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. Amazon.com is boosting its minimum wage for all U.S. workers to \$_____, and CEO Jeff Bezos said he’ll push for the federally mandated minimum wage to be raised, too.
2. It’s a move that underscores what?
3. The federal minimum wage has remained unchanged at \$_____ an hour for nearly a decade.
4. Some states and cities, like _____ and _____, have higher minimum wages.

5. And retailers including Target and Walmart have upped their pay recently. But it remains rare for a state, city or employer to meet the \$15/hour level that advocates say constitutes a _____ in the U.S.
6. As competition among companies for qualified workers grows more intense, they are increasingly willing to do what?
7. The U.S. unemployment rate is near an 18-year low of 3.9 percent. What does this mean?

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

- What do you think a “living wage” means?
- Will Amazon’s \$15/hour move set the tone for other employers? Why or why not?



- Take a look at the minimum wage in the United States? Why do you think the amount is vastly different in some states compared to others?
- Does it surprise you to see the blackened out southern states as having no set wage? Why or why not?
- Does the minimum wage rates throughout our country surprise you? Do you think people could survive on \$5.10 an hour? How much would that be per week? Per month?
- Should there be federally mandated minimum wage pay for all the states? Why or why not?
- Could your family live on \$15/hour? Why or why not?

News Break is posted to the Web on Monday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register on-line](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.
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Newsbreak Answer Key: October 7, 2018

Pre-Reading Discussion:

Answers will vary

Vocabulary Building:

Mandated: Require (something) to be done; make mandatory. "The government began mandating better car safety."

Comprehension Answers:

1. \$15
2. The political and economic pressures facing employers in today's labor market.
3. \$7.25
4. Washington; Seattle
5. Living wage
6. Pay higher wages
7. There are now more available jobs than unemployed people, the first time that has happened in the nearly two decades that data on job openings has been tracked.

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay

Questions: Answers will vary

- **Living wage:** a wage that is high enough to maintain a normal standard of living.