

People in the UK have no money to boil potatoes

28th March, 2022



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The cost of living crisis is hitting people's pockets hard all across the world. Soaring oil and gas prices have made basic necessities like food, heating and transport unaffordable for many people. In the UK over the past few

months, the debate has been over the shocking dilemma of "heating or eating". Energy prices have more than doubled this year for many consumers, resulting in those on low incomes or on benefits facing the choice of heating their home, or eating. Life is so hard for some that they do not have enough money to use gas or electricity to boil potatoes. This situation will be exacerbated by rises in contributions to the country's health care system, which come into effect next week.

Former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown lambasted the man responsible for controlling Britain's finances, chancellor Rishi Sunak. Mr Brown said: "Any caring and compassionate chancellor would want to do something about this poverty....You cannot ignore the needs of parents who are having to choose between putting their heating up and feeding their children." He added that it was urgent for the chancellor to act, or the ruling Conservative Party will be known as the "nasty" party. Further price hikes and food shortages are on the horizon as the war in Ukraine will see the price of wheat rise. Government critics are calling for a one-off "windfall tax" on the huge profits of energy companies to help the disadvantaged.

Sources: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk)

Writing

Governments should always pay for the poor to eat and have food. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

cost of living / pockets / oil prices / necessities / dilemma / doubled / heating / health / responsible / compassionate / poverty / urgent / nasty / party / food shortages / help

True / False

- 1) People have deeper pockets because of the cost of living crisis. T / F
- 2) Some people in the UK have to choose between heating and eating. T / F
- 3) Energy prices in the UK have doubled for some people in the UK. T / F
- 4) Some people cannot afford to boil potatoes. T / F
- 5) A former UK prime minister praised Britain's chancellor. T / F
- 6) The former prime minister said the ruling party was nasty. T / F
- 7) The government asked people to look at the horizon. T / F
- 8) Some people want energy companies to pay a one-time extra tax. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. crisis | a. quandary |
| 2. soaring | b. disregard |
| 3. dilemma | c. worsened |
| 4. facing | d. rising |
| 5. exacerbated | e. sympathetic |
| 6. lambasted | f. bonanza |
| 7. compassionate | g. emergency |
| 8. ignore | h. critical |
| 9. urgent | i. encountering |
| 10. windfall | j. criticised |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How difficult do you think it is to look after a country's finances?
- c) How much do political parties care about poor people?
- d) How has the war in Ukraine affected you?
- e) What advice do you have for chancellor Rishi Sunak?
- f) What would you do if you could not afford to buy food?
- g) Should big companies pay more money in tax?
- h) What questions would you like to ask oil company CEOs?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. The cost of living crisis is hitting | a. health care system |
| 2. basic | b. "heating or eating" |
| 3. the shocking dilemma of | c. for the chancellor to act |
| 4. Energy prices have more | d. tax" on the huge profits |
| 5. rises in contributions to the country's | e. necessities |
| 6. man responsible for controlling | f. are on the horizon |
| 7. You cannot ignore the | g. than doubled this year |
| 8. it was urgent | h. Britain's finances |
| 9. Further price hikes and food shortages | i. needs of parents |
| 10. a one-off "windfall | j. people's pockets |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of the cost of living?
- Do you have enough money?
- How have rising energy prices affected you?
- What things have you noticed going up in price?
- What do you think of the dilemma of heating or eating?
- How much do you worry about money?
- What was the last thing you could not afford to buy?
- What advice do you have for people on low incomes?

Spelling

- basic nesesiesict like food
- fuaofdrenab for many people
- the shocking eidmaml of "heating or eating"
- more than ueboddl this year
- This situation will be aceexrebtad by rises
- riinutocotbsn to the country's health care system
- Brown mdeblatsa the man
- caring and caoanpieostsm
- ogiern the needs of parents
- it was urgent for the rhanecllco
- food rgsoehast
- a ffeo-on "windfall tax"

Answers – Synonym Match

| | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. g | 2. d | 3. a | 4. i | 5. c |
| 6. j | 7. e | 8. b | 9. h | 10. f |

Role Play

Role A – Heating

You think heating is life's biggest necessity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): bottled water, bread or books.

Role B – Bottled Water

You think bottled water is life's biggest necessity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): heating, bread or books.

Role C – Bread

You think bread is life's biggest necessity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): bottled water, heating or books.

Role D – Books

You think books are life's biggest necessity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): bottled water, bread or heating.

Speaking – Necessities

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest necessities at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| • Chocolate | • Heating |
| • Gasoline | • Bottled water |
| • Bread | • Internet |
| • Electricity | • Books |

Answers – True False

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 F | 2 T | 3 T | 4 T | 5 F | 6 F | 7 F | 8 T |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.