

World's richest people got \$2.2 trillion richer in 2025

5th January 2026



The world's richest people saw their wealth skyrocket in 2025. According to the investment bank UBS, the 500 richest people on Earth amassed an additional \$2.2 trillion last year. Their stratospheric earnings

increased their collective net worth to \$11.9 trillion. The Bloomberg Billionaires Index reports that eight multi-billionaires topped the mega-rich list and accounted for a quarter of the gains. These included Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Larry Ellison, and Larry Page. The Guardian newspaper said the gains were "bolstered" by Donald Trump's 2024 election victory, "and booming markets in cryptocurrencies, equities and metals".

Many organizations were less than impressed at the accumulation of the world's wealth in so few hands. The international charity Oxfam highlighted the growing disparity in wealth. It said: "Inequality is a deliberate policy choice. Despite record wealth at the top, public wealth is stagnating, even declining, and debt distress is growing. Inequality rips away life opportunities and rights from the majority of citizens, sparking poverty, hunger, resentment, distrust, and instability." British climate scientist Bill McGuire warned that "if the monstrous political-economic system that is tearing our planet...and its people apart isn't brought to its knees, then humanity will be".

Sources: fortune.com / commondreams.org / theguardian.com

Writing

The world's rich should give most of their money to the poor. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

rich people / investment / earnings / billionaire / newspaper / cryptocurrencies / metal / impressed / wealth / charity / inequality / debt / opportunities / poverty / humanity

True / False

- 1) The article says many billionaires bought a skyrocket in 2025. T / F
- 2) The 500 richest people in the world are worth almost \$12 trillion. T / F
- 3) The eight richest people accounted for about 25% of the annual gains. T / F
- 4) Donald Trump's election victory is one reason for the huge gains. T / F
- 5) A charity said wealth should be in fewer people's hands. T / F
- 6) The charity said life opportunities are taken away by inequality. T / F
- 7) A climate scientist said billionaires were bad for the environment. T / F
- 8) The climate scientist said humanity needed to get on its knees. T / F

Synonym Match

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

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. richest | a. imbalance |
| 2. amassed | b. boosted |
| 3. earnings | c. accumulated |
| 4. accounted for | d. bitterness |
| 5. bolstered | e. wealthiest |
| 6. disparity | f. doing nothing |
| 7. deliberate | g. made up |
| 8. stagnating | h. intentional |
| 9. resentment | i. the human race |
| 10. humanity | j. income |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What is wrong with so much wealth being in so few hands?
- c) What problems does a great disparity in wealth create?
- d) Why don't billionaires give away their fortunes to end world poverty?
- e) How dangerous is poverty, hunger, resentment, distrust and instability?
- f) What do you think wealth distribution will be like in the future?
- g) How is 'the monstrous political-economic system' hurting people?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a multi-billionaire?

Phrase Match

1. The world's richest people saw
 2. stratospheric earnings increased their
 3. eight multi-billionaires topped the
 4. accounted for a quarter of
 5. booming markets
 6. Many organizations were less
 7. the growing
 8. rights from the majority of
 9. sparking
 10. brought to its
- a. the gains
 - b. citizens
 - c. in cryptocurrencies
 - d. than impressed
 - e. knees
 - f. their wealth skyrocket
 - g. collective net worth
 - h. poverty
 - i. mega-rich list
 - j. disparity in wealth

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think of super-rich people?
- b) What would you do with \$1 trillion?
- c) How often do you dream about being rich?
- d) How might money make you happy?
- e) What do you think of the billionaires mentioned in the article?
- f) What do you know about cryptocurrencies?
- g) What's the best way to become super-rich?
- h) What advice do you have for multi-billionaires?

Spelling

1. people saw their wealth esokcrkyt
2. emsdaas an additional \$2.2 trillion
3. pracittssohre earnings
4. releodstb by Donald Trump's 2024 election victory
5. booming markets in ctucrprsoiyceren
6. uqetiesi and metals
7. the cumiulntaaoc of the world's wealth
8. the growing asriitydp in wealth
9. Inequality is a liabereted policy choice
10. public wealth is gaaingtnts
11. nmtnetsree, distrust, and instability
12. the msonrsuot political-economic system

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What did the article say happened to the wealth of the richest people?
2.	Which bank said the richest people's riches grew by \$2.2 trillion in 2025?
3.	How much are the world's 500 richest people worth?
4.	How many billionaires accounted for a quarter of the increased wealth?
5.	What were there booming markets in besides equities and metals?
6.	What did the charity Oxfam highlight a disparity in?
7.	What did Oxfam say was growing?
8.	What did Oxfam say inequality sparked?
9.	Who is Bill McGuire?
10.	What did Mr McGuire say could bring humanity to its knees?

Speaking – Billions

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to spend billions on at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- The poor
- Climate change
- Property
- WWII survival
- Building hospitals
- Friends and family
- Medical research
- Cryptocurrency

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	T	7	F	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.