Who Gets Access?

Notice patterns in resources and opportunities

SS24.S.10a "Identify common patterns of social stratification in American society."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one example of unequal access in each paragraph. Circle the words that show which groups or circumstances are being compared.

Different Paths Through One City

1 In one city, two teenagers can live a few miles apart yet face different options. A family that owns a home may build wealth as its value rises, while a family that rents cannot gain wealth from that home. Families with more wealth may find it easier to pay for tutoring or move near schools with more resources. Families with less wealth may have fewer choices, even when they work just as hard. This pattern is social stratification: people have unequal resources and opportunities, and those differences can carry across generations.

2 Education and work can reinforce that pattern. Some internships require students to work without pay. A student whose family can cover transportation and living costs may accept one, while a student who needs a paycheck may not. Later, the internship can help the first student qualify for a higher-paying job. Access to college can differ in similar ways because tuition, time, and information about applications are not shared equally. These are patterns, not rules about individual effort or talent. A person's education and job prospects can reflect opportunities available before any hiring decision.

3 Money is not the only dividing line. In the United States, research documents differences in pay and job access across racial and gender groups. Past housing discrimination limited where many families could buy homes, affecting wealth that could be passed to children. Hiring bias can also shape who receives an interview or promotion today. These patterns can overlap: a person may encounter barriers linked to both race and gender. Group averages do not describe every person, and laws against discrimination do not mean unequal outcomes have disappeared. Identifying stratification means noticing repeated differences in access, not assuming every life follows the same path.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What pattern of unequal opportunity can arise when one family owns a home and another rents?

2. How can an unpaid internship create a pattern in who gets access to higher-paying jobs?

3. What pattern across generations can result from past housing discrimination?

4. According to the passage, how can two patterns of unequal access overlap for one person?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Two qualified applicants want a certificate for a better-paid job. A free course meets in the evening: Avery cares for two younger siblings every evening, while Blake has no caregiving duties. In four sentences, identify the pattern of unequal opportunity, compare their access to the course, explain a possible effect on future jobs, and suggest one change that could make access fairer.

ANSWER KEY

Who Gets Access?

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.S.10a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one example of unequal access in each paragraph. Circle the words that show which groups or circumstances are being compared. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What pattern of unequal opportunity can arise when one family owns a home and another rents?	**The owner may build wealth as the home's value rises, while the renter cannot gain wealth from that home. This can affect what each family can afford for its children.**
2	How can an unpaid internship create a pattern in who gets access to higher-paying jobs?	**Students whose families can cover their costs may take the internship and gain experience that helps them qualify for higher-paying jobs. Students who need a paycheck may not be able to take it.**
3	What pattern across generations can result from past housing discrimination?	**When families were limited in where they could buy homes, they had fewer chances to build housing wealth to pass to their children.**
4	According to the passage, how can two patterns of unequal access overlap for one person?	**A person may face barriers linked to both race and gender, such as unequal access to interviews or promotions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This situation shows unequal access to job training based on caregiving responsibilities. Avery has more caregiving duties than Blake, so Avery may be less able to attend the evening course even though both are qualified. If Blake completes the certificate and Avery cannot, Blake may have a better chance at a higher-paying job. Offering a daytime section could make the course more accessible.

Accept answers that identify a repeated difference in access rather than treating an outcome as certain for every individual. For Part 3, look for an explicit comparison of Avery's and Blake's caregiving duties and a practical change to course access.