

**USA**  
**ISSP 1992 – Social Inequality II**  
**Questionnaire**

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NORC NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER  
*at the University of Chicago*

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# General Social Survey

February, 1992  
5420

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

To answer most questions you need only circle a number. Here are two examples:

**Example A:**

Do you think the government is doing a good job or a poor job? (CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- A very good job . . . 1
- A fairly good job . . . **2**
- A poor job . . . . 3
- A very poor job . . . . 4

**THE RESPONDENT FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS DOING "A fairly good job" AND CIRCLED NUMBER 2**

**Example B:**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH STATEMENT**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. It is difficult to raise children.....	<b>1</b>	2	3	4	5
b. A woman should devote almost all her time to her family.....	1	2	3	<b>4</b>	5

**THE RESPONDENT "Strongly Agreed" THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO RAISE CHILDREN AND CIRCLED NUMBER 1 FOR THAT STATEMENT.**

\* \* \* \* \*

Please read each question carefully, remember there are no right or wrong answers--we just want to know your OWN personal opinion. Use a pencil to circle the number of the choice that comes closest to the way you feel.

When you are finished please mail back the questionnaire in the postage paid envelope that we have provided.

To begin, we have some questions about opportunities for getting ahead. . .

1. Please show for each of these how important you think it is for getting ahead in life. . .

a. First, how important is coming from a wealthy family?

Essential . . . . .	1
Very important . . . . .	2
Fairly important . . . . .	3
Not very important . . . . .	4
Not important at all . . . . .	5
Can't choose . . . . .	8

b. Having well educated parents?

Essential . . . . .	1
Very important . . . . .	2
Fairly important . . . . .	3
Not very important . . . . .	4
Not important at all . . . . .	5
Can't choose . . . . .	8

c. Having a good education yourself?

Essential . . . . .	1
Very important . . . . .	2
Fairly important . . . . .	3
Not very important . . . . .	4
Not important at all . . . . .	5
Can't choose . . . . .	8

d. Ambition?—how important is that?

Essential . . . . .	1
Very important . . . . .	2
Fairly important . . . . .	3
Not very important . . . . .	4
Not important at all . . . . .	5
Can't choose . . . . .	8

e. Natural ability?—how important is that?

Essential . . . . .	1
Very important . . . . .	2
Fairly important . . . . .	3
Not very important . . . . .	4
Not important at all . . . . .	5
Can't choose . . . . .	8

- f. **Hard work—how important is that for getting ahead in life?**
- Essential . . . . . 1
  - Very important . . . . . 2
  - Fairly important . . . . . 3
  - Not very important . . . . . 4
  - Not important at all . . . . . 5
  - Can't choose . . . . . 8
- g. **Knowing the right people?**
- Essential . . . . . 1
  - Very important . . . . . 2
  - Fairly important . . . . . 3
  - Not very important . . . . . 4
  - Not important at all . . . . . 5
  - Can't choose . . . . . 8
- h. **Having political connections?**
- Essential . . . . . 1
  - Very important . . . . . 2
  - Fairly important . . . . . 3
  - Not very important . . . . . 4
  - Not important at all . . . . . 5
  - Can't choose . . . . . 8
- i. **A person's race—how important is that?**
- Essential . . . . . 1
  - Very important . . . . . 2
  - Fairly important . . . . . 3
  - Not very important . . . . . 4
  - Not important at all . . . . . 5
  - Can't choose . . . . . 8
- j. **A person's religion?**
- Essential . . . . . 1
  - Very important . . . . . 2
  - Fairly important . . . . . 3
  - Not very important . . . . . 4
  - Not important at all . . . . . 5
  - Can't choose . . . . . 8

k. The part of the country a person comes from?

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

l. Being born a man or a woman—how important is that for getting ahead in life?

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

m. A person's political beliefs?

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

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2. The way things are in America, people like me and my family have a good chance of improving our standard of living—do you agree or disagree?

- Strongly agree . . . . . 1
- Agree . . . . . 2
- Neither agree or disagree . . . . . 3
- Disagree . . . . . 4
- Strongly disagree . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

3. Do you agree or disagree. . .

PLEASE CIRCLE A NUMBER

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Can't choose
a. People would not want to take extra responsibility at work unless they were paid extra for it. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
b. Workers would not bother to get skills and qualifications unless they were paid extra for having them. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
c. Inequality continues to exist because it benefits the rich and powerful. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
d. No one would study for years to become a lawyer or doctor unless they expected to earn a lot more than ordinary workers	1	2	3	4	5	8
e. Large differences in income are necessary for America's prosperity. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
f. Allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
g. Inequality continues to exist because ordinary people don't join together to get rid of it. .	1	2	3	4	5	8

4. We would like to know what you think people in these jobs actually earn. Please write in how much you think they usually earn, each year, before taxes. Many people are not exactly sure about this but your best guess will be close enough. This may be difficult, but it is very important. So please try.

Please write in how much they actually earn each year

- a. First, about how much do you think a skilled worker in a factory earns? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- b. A doctor in general practice? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- c. A salesclerk in a department store? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- d. The chairman of a large national corporation? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- e. A lawyer? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- f. The owner of a small shop? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- g. A farm laborer? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- h. The owner-manager of a large factory? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- i. A Supreme Court Justice? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- j. An unskilled worker in a factory? ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- k. A member of the cabinet in the federal government? .. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

5. Next, what do you think people in those jobs ought to be paid—how much do you think they should earn each year before taxes, regardless of what they actually get?

Please write in how much they should earn each year

- a. First, about how much do you think a skilled worker in a factory should earn? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- b. A doctor in general practice? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- c. A salesclerk in a department store? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- d. The chairman of a large national corporation? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- e. A lawyer? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- f. The owner of a small shop? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- g. A farm laborer? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- h. The owner-manager of a large factory? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- i. A Supreme Court Justice? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- j. An unskilled worker in a factory? . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- k. A member of the cabinet in the federal government? . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you agree or disagree. . .

PLEASE CIRCLE A NUMBER

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Can't Choose
a. Differences in income in America are too large. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
b. It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
c. The government should provide a job for everyone who wants one. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8
d. The government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	8

7. Generally, how would you describe taxes in America today. . . We mean all taxes together, including social security, income tax, sales tax, and all the rest.

a. First, for those with high incomes, are taxes. . .

- Much too high . . . . . 1
- Too high . . . . . 2
- About right . . . . . 3
- Too low . . . . . 4
- Much too low . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

b. Next, for those with middle incomes, are taxes. . .

- Much too high . . . . . 1
- Too high . . . . . 2
- About right . . . . . 3
- Too low . . . . . 4
- Much too low . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

c. Lastly, for those with low incomes, are taxes. . .

- Much too high . . . . . 1
- Too high . . . . . 2
- About right . . . . . 3
- Too low . . . . . 4
- Much too low . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

8. Do you think that people with high incomes should pay a larger share of their income in taxes than those with low incomes, the same share, or a smaller share. . .

- Much larger share . . . . . 1
- Larger . . . . . 2
- The same share . . . . . 3
- Smaller . . . . . 4
- Much smaller share . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

9. In all countries there are differences or even conflicts between different social groups. In your opinion, in America how much conflict is there between. . .

PLEASE CIRCLE A NUMBER

	Very Strong Conflicts	Strong Conflicts	Not Very Strong Conflicts	There Are No Conflicts	Can't Choose
a. Poor people and rich people?	1	2	3	4	8
b. The working class and the middle class? . . . . .	1	2	3	4	8
c. The unemployed and people with jobs? . . . . .	1	2	3	4	8
d. Management and workers? . .	1	2	3	4	8
e. Farmers and city people? . . .	1	2	3	4	8
f. Young people and older people?	1	2	3	4	8



12b. And compared with your father when he was about your age, are you better or worse off in your schooling and training?

- Much better off than your father . . . . . 1
  - Better off . . . . . 2
  - About equal . . . . . 3
  - Worse off . . . . . 4
  - Much worse off than your father . . . . . 5
  - I never had a job . . . . . 6
  - Did not have a father . . . . . 7
- 

13. In deciding how much people deserve to earn, how important should each of these things be, in your opinion. . .

a. First, how much responsibility goes with the job -- how important do you think that should be in deciding pay?

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

b. The number of years spent in education and training?

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

c. Whether the job requires supervising others—how important should that be in deciding pay?

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

**d. What is needed to support a family?**

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

**e. Whether the person has children to support?**

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

**f. How well the person does the job?**

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

**g. How hard the person works at the job?**

- Essential . . . . . 1
- Very important . . . . . 2
- Fairly important . . . . . 3
- Not very important . . . . . 4
- Not important at all . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

14a. If incomes became more equal in America, some people would get higher incomes and some would get lower incomes. Do you think your income...

- Would definitely go up . . . . . 1
- Would probably go up . . . . . 2
- Would stay the same . . . . . 3
- Would probably go down . . . . . 4
- Would definitely go down . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

14b. And if incomes in America became less equal, do you think your income...

- Would definitely go up . . . . . 1
- Would probably go up . . . . . 2
- Would stay the same . . . . . 3
- Would probably go down . . . . . 4
- Would definitely go down . . . . . 5
- Can't choose . . . . . 8

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
a. The way most companies work, the only thing management cares about is profits, regardless of what workers want or need. . . . .	1	2	3	4	8
b. Corporations should pay more of their profits to workers and less to shareholders. . . . .	1	2	3	4	8
c. Unions in this country have too little power. . . . .	1	2	3	4	8
d. For the most part, unions just stand in the way of economic progress in this country. . . . .	1	2	3	4	8

16. Some people think that the government in Washington should do everything possible to improve the standard of living of all poor Americans; they are at Point 1 on this scale. Other people think it is not the government's responsibility, and that each person should take care of himself; they are at Point 5. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you made up your mind on this?

I strongly agree the government should improve living standards

I agree with both answers

I strongly agree that people should take care of themselves

Haven't Made Up Mind/  
DON'T KNOW



17. Some people think that the government in Washington ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor, perhaps by raising the taxes of wealthy families or by giving income assistance to the poor. Others think that the government should not concern itself with reducing this income difference between the rich and the poor.

Below is a scale from 1 to 7. Think of a score of 1 as meaning that the government ought to reduce the income differences between rich and poor, and a score of 7 meaning that the government should not concern itself with reducing income differences. What score between 1 and 7 comes closest to the way you feel?

Government should do something to reduce income differences between rich and poor

Government should not concern itself with income differences



DON'T KNOW

8

18. We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. So far as you and your family are concerned, would you say that you are pretty well satisfied with your present financial situation, more or less satisfied, or not satisfied at all?

- Pretty well satisfied . . . . . 1
- More or less satisfied . . . . . 2
- Not satisfied at all . . . . . 3
- Don't Know . . . . . 8

19. During the last few years, has your financial situation been getting better, getting worse, or has it stayed the same?

- Getting better . . . . . 1
- Getting worse . . . . . 2
- Stayed the same . . . . . 3
- Don't Know . . . . . 8

20. Now, please answer about various events and conditions that happen to people. We are interested in those that happened to you during the last 12 months, that is since February/March 1991. As you answer about the specific events, please think carefully, and record things accurately.

20a. First, what about work-related matters? Have any of the following happened to you since February/March, 1991?

	Yes	No
a. Fired or permanently laid-off. . . . .	1	2
b. Demoted or switch to a less favorable position. . . . .	1	2
c. A cut in pay (including reduced hours). . . . .	1	2
d. Passed over for promotion. . . . .	1	2
e. Serious trouble with your boss. . . . .	1	2
f. Your own business (farm or professional office) lost money or failed. . . . .	1	2
g. You were unemployed and looking for work for a month or more. . . . .	1	2
h. Your (husband/wife)/partner was fired or permanently laid-off. . . . . (If you are not married and have no spouse/partner, circle 2)	1	2
i. Your (husband/wife)/partner had a cut in pay (including reduced hours). . . . . (If you are not married and have no spouse/partner, circle 2)	1	2
j. Your (husband/wife)/partner was unemployed and looking for work for a month or more. . . . . (If you are not married and have no spouse/partner, circle 2)	1	2

20b. And have any of the following financial matters happened to you during the last year. . .

	Yes	No
a. Went bankrupt (declared personal bankruptcy). . . . .	1	2
b. Car, household appliances, or furniture repossessed. . . . .	1	2
c. Pawned or sold-off valuables to make ends meet. . . . .	1	2
d. Pressured to pay bills by stores, creditors, or bill collectors. . . . .	1	2
e. Major worsening of your financial condition. . . . .	1	2

21. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Below is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal—point 1—to extremely conservative—point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

- (1) Extremely liberal . . . . . 1
  - (2) Liberal . . . . . 2
  - (3) Slightly liberal . . . . . 3
  - (4) Moderate, middle of the road . . . . . 4
  - (5) Slightly conservative . . . . . 5
  - (6) Conservative . . . . . 6
  - (7) Extremely conservative . . . . . 7
  - Don't Know . . . . . 8
- 

22. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?

- Republican (Go to Q.22a) . . . . . 1
- Democrat (Go to Q.22a) . . . . . 2
- Independent (Go to Q.22b) . . . . . 3
- Other (Go to Q.22b) . . . . . 4
- No Preference (Go to Q.22b) . . . . . 8

IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT:

22a. Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or not a very strong (Republican/Democrat)?

- Strong (Go to Q.23) . . . . . 1
- Not very strong (Go to Q.23) . . . . . 2

IF INDEPENDENT OR "NO PREFERENCE" OR "OTHER":

22b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?

- Republican . . . . . 1
- Democrat . . . . . 2
- Neither . . . . . 8

23. Do you or your husband/wife belong to a labor union? Please circle only one code

- Yes, I belong . . . . . 1
- Yes, my husband/wife belongs . . . . . 2
- Yes, we both belong . . . . . 3
- No, neither me or my husband/wife belong . . 4

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24. How often do you read the newspaper--every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than a week, or never?

- Every day. . . . . 1
- A few times a week . . . . . 2
- Once a week. . . . . 3
- Less than once a week . . . . . 4
- Never . . . . . 8

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25. Are you currently--married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?

- Married . . . . . 1
- Widowed . . . . . 2
- Divorced . . . . . 3
- Separated . . . . . 4
- Never married . . . . . 5

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26. How many persons altogether live in your household? Please include any persons who usually live here but are away temporarily--on business, on vacation, or in a general hospital--and all babies and small children. Do not include--college students who are living away at college, persons stationed away from here in the Armed Forces, or persons away in institutions. (Don't forget to include yourself in the total.)

- |   |                |       |
|---|----------------|-------|
|   | Total Persons: | _____ |
| a. How many of these persons are babies or children <u>under</u> 6 years old? . . . . . | Under 6 Years: | _____ |
| b. How many are children age 6 thru 12? . . . . .                                       | 6 - 12 Years:  | _____ |
| c. How many are teenagers 13 thru 17? . . . . .   | 13 - 17 Years: | _____ |
| d. And how many are persons 18 and over? . . . . .                                      | 18+ Years:     | _____ |

27. (Just thinking about your family now—those people in the household who are related to you. . .) How many persons in the family (including yourself) earned any money last year—1991—from any job or employment?

Number of persons: \_\_\_\_\_

28. Last week were you working full time, part time, going to school, keeping house, or what?

- Working full time (Go to Q.28a) ..... 1
- Working part time (Go to Q.28a) ..... 2
- With a job, but not at work because of  
temporary illness, vacation, strike (Go to Q.28b) ..... 3
- Unemployed, laid off, looking for work (Go to Q.29) ..... 4
- Retired (Go to Q.29) ..... 5
- In school (Go to Q.29) ..... 6
- Keeping house (Go to Q.29) ..... 7
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ 8

28a. IF WORKING, FULL OR PART TIME: How many hours did you work last week, at all jobs?

Hours Per  
Week: 

--	--

 Go To  
Q.29

28b. IF WORKING A JOB, BUT NOT AT WORK (because of temporary illness, vacation or out on strike):  
How many hours a week do you usually work, at all jobs?

Hours Per  
Week: 

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29. Which category best represents your total family income from all sources in 1991-before taxes or other deductions?

- a. Under 1,000 . . . . . 01
- b. \$ 1,000 to 2,999 . . . . . 02
- c. \$ 3,000 to 3,999 . . . . . 03
- d. \$ 4,000 to 4,999 . . . . . 04
- e. \$ 5,000 to 5,999 . . . . . 05
- f. \$ 6,000 to 6,999 . . . . . 06
- g. \$ 7,000 to 7,999 . . . . . 07
- h. \$ 8,000 to 9,999 . . . . . 08
- i. \$10,000 to 12,499 . . . . . 09
- j. \$12,500 to 14,999 . . . . . 10
- k. \$15,000 to 17,499 . . . . . 11
- l. \$17,500 to 19,999 . . . . . 12
- m. \$20,000 to 22,499 . . . . . 13
- n. \$22,500 to 24,999 . . . . . 14
- o. \$25,000 to 29,999 . . . . . 15
- p. \$30,000 to 34,999 . . . . . 16
- q. \$35,000 to 39,999 . . . . . 17
- r. \$40,000 to 49,999 . . . . . 18
- s. \$50,000 to 59,999 . . . . . 19
- t. \$60,000 to 74,999 . . . . . 20
- u. \$75,000 or Over . . . . . 21
- Don't Know . . . . . 98

Total income includes interest or dividends, rent, Social Security, other pension, alimony or child support, unemployment compensation, public aid (welfare), armed forces or veteran's allotment.

30. Did you earn any income from a job in 1991?

- Yes (Go to 30a) ..... 1
- No. .... 2

IF YES:

30a. Which category best represents your earnings from all your jobs in 1991-before taxes or other deductions.

- a. Under \$1,000 ..... 01
- b. \$ 1,000 to 2,999 ..... 02
- c. \$ 3,000 to 3,999 ..... 03
- d. \$ 4,000 to 4,999 ..... 04
- e. \$ 5,000 to 5,999 ..... 05
- f. \$ 6,000 to 6,999 ..... 06
- g. \$ 7,000 to 7,999 ..... 07
- h. \$ 8,000 to 9,999 ..... 08
- i. \$10,000 to 12,499 ..... 09
- j. \$12,500 to 14,999 ..... 10
- k. \$15,000 to 17,499 ..... 11
- l. \$17,500 to 19,999 ..... 12
- m. \$20,000 to 22,499 ..... 13
- n. \$22,500 to 24,999 ..... 14
- o. \$25,000 to 29,999 ..... 15
- p. \$30,000 to 34,999 ..... 16
- q. \$35,000 to 39,999 ..... 17
- r. \$40,000 to 49,999 ..... 18
- s. \$50,000 to 59,999 ..... 19
- t. \$60,000 to 74,999 ..... 20
- u. \$75,000 or Over ..... 21
- Don't Know ..... 98

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.**  
**PLEASE MAIL BACK THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE PROVIDED.**