

Social Justice Art

so·cial jus·tice

noun

1. justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
2. "individuality gives way to the struggle for social justice"



What is Social Justice? Social justice is the equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

A Brief History of Social Justice

Social Justice as a concept arose in the early 19th century during the Industrial Revolution and following civil revolutions throughout Europe, which aimed to create more egalitarian societies and stop the capitalistic exploitation of human labor. Because of the large gaps between wealthy and the poor during this time, early social justice advocates focused primarily on capital, property, and the distribution of wealth.

By the mid-20th century, social justice had expanded from being primarily concerned with economics to include other areas of social life to include the environment, race, gender, and other causes and manifestations of inequality. Concurrently, the measure of social justice expanded from being measured and enacted only by the nation-state (or government) to include a universal human dimension. For example, governments (still today) measure income inequality among people who share citizenship in common. But social justice can also be considered at the level of humanity as a whole. As the United States “Slaves, exploited workers and oppressed women are above all victimized human beings whose location matters less than their circumstances.”

Find out how Social Justice and Environmental Justice are intrinsically interconnected.

Grade 10

Assignment: Present a social justice issue in an artistic way.



Social justice issues can be split into two categories, although they are often co-dependent: Inter-Social Treatment and Unequal Government Regulation.

Inter-Social Treatment involves treatment of a group(s) of other people based on personally-held biases and prejudices. These prejudices most often manifest in sociological categories such as:

- Race
- Gender
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Nationality
- Education
- Mental or Physical Ability

Unequal Government Regulation involves laws and regulations that purposefully or otherwise create conditions that obstruct, limit, or deny a group(s) access to the same opportunities and resources, relative to the rest of society. These laws can intentionally (explicitly) or unintentionally (implicitly) create the conditions for social injustice. Areas in which government policy often gives rise to social inequality and injustice include:

- Voting Laws (i.e. redistricting and voter ID)
- Policing Laws (i.e. traffic, search and seizure, and drug scheduling)
- Environmental Laws (i.e. clean water and air, industrial waste disposal)
- Health Care Laws (i.e. insurance mandates and coverage eligibility)
- Education Laws (i.e. public school segregation and integration)
- Labor Laws (i.e. workers' rights, occupational health and safety)