

Richest Countries in the World 2021

What do people think when they think about the richest countries in the world? And what comes **(1) to / in** mind when they think about the smallest nations in the world? Some **(2) will be surprised / would be surprised** to find out that many of the wealthiest nations are also *amongst** the tiniest. Some very small and very rich countries—like Luxembourg, Singapore and Hong Kong—benefit from having **(3) sophisticated / voluntary** financial sectors and tax regimes that help attract foreign investments and professional talent. Others like Qatar and Brunei have large reserves of hydrocarbons or other **lucrative** natural resources.

4. "**lucrative**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) finite B) scarce
C) profitable D) deliberate
E) severe

5. Which of the following is true according to the text?

- A) The writer starts the text with questions to voice his doubts as to the wealth of the richest countries.
B) There is no such thing as a rich country as it is the size of a country that really matters.
C) One country can become the wealthiest thanks solely to foreign investments and professional talent.
D) It is unlikely for a country to be rich unless they have developed financial sectors and tax regimes.
E) Qatar is only one of the countries that reaps the benefits of what nature has granted her.

Tip 1:

Amongst= among, between,

Tip 2:

Amid= in the middle of

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But what do we mean when we say a country is "rich," especially (6) **in / on** an era of growing income inequality between the rich and everyone else? (7) **When / While** gross domestic product (GDP) measures the value of all goods and services produced in a nation, dividing this output by the number of full-time residents is a better way of determining how rich or poor one country's population is relative to another's. The reason why "rich" often equals "small" then becomes clear: these countries' economies are (8) ---- large compared to their small populations. However, (9) **only when / even when** taking into account inflation rates and the cost of local goods and services can we get a more accurate picture of a nation's average standard of living: the resulting (10) **figure** is what is called purchasing power parity (PPP), which is often expressed international dollars to allow comparisons between different countries. Should we automatically assume that in nations where this figure is particularly high the overall population is visibly better off than in most other places in the world? Not quite. We are dealing with averages and in any given country, structural inequality can tip the balance in favour of the already privileged.

8. Choose the best option to fill in the blank .

- A) disproportionately B) overwhelmingly
C) succinctly D) severely
E) ultimately

10. "figure" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) person B) drawing
C) cost D) amount
E) symbol

11. Which of the following can be inferred according to the end of the text? ----.

- A) The imbalance in the distribution of wealth cannot be attribute to structural inequality alone.
B) It is the already poor countries that suffer from structural inequality most.
C) Structural inequality can give birth to an imbalance in favour of the already privileged in no time.

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In any given country, structural inequality can tip the balance in favour of the already privileged. The COVID-19 pandemic lifted the veil **(12) of / on** these disparities in ways few could have ever predicted. While there is no doubt that the wealthiest nations—often more vulnerable to the coronavirus due to their older population and other risk factors—had the resources to take better care of those in need, not everyone had equal access to them. **(13) Not only / If only** that, the economic downturn hit low-paid workers harder than those with high-paying occupations. A new kind of inequality **(14) emerged / emerges** too: some people have been able to work from home, **(15) whereas / just as** some others lost their livelihood and found themselves without much of a safety net—large holes in the most celebrated welfare systems in the world were exposed. To be sure, when a crisis of such **(16)---** magnitude takes place, you'd rather be where welfare and social services can offer a degree of assistance and hospitals have reliable electricity access. In the 10 world's poorest countries, according to data from the International Monetary Fund, the average per-capita purchasing power is less than \$1,200, in the 10 richest is close **(18) at / to** \$80,000.

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16. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) diminutive B) dependable
C) straightforward D) unprecedented
E) unbeatable

17. Which of the following is true according to the text?

- A) The well-off nations are less susceptible to the coronavirus owing to their older population.
B) Only a few literally rich countries have resources to take better care of those in need at home and abroad.
C) The number of people who envisioned a forthcoming crisis in terms of economic disparity was low.
D) An economic recession strikes low-paid workers as hard as those with higher income.
E) The writer probably thinks that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on income inequality is exaggerated.

The IMF has warned repeatedly that certain numbers should be *taken with a grain of salt*. However, there is one more reason to be (19) **wary** of accepting such economic prosperity at face value. For example, many nations in our ranking are **tax havens**, which means wealth originally generated in other countries (20) ---- inflating their GDP because of sophisticated accounting and legal practices. More (21) **specifically / broadly**, it is estimated that over 15% of global jurisdictions are tax havens, and that about 40% of global foreign direct investment flows are (22) ---- "phantom" transactions, financial investments passing through empty corporate shells with no real influence on a country's economy and people's financial wellbeing. Add to that the unequal distribution of resources, and it (23) **is becoming / becomes** easy to understand why even in very rich countries live very poor people.

19. "**wary**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) distracted B) cautious
C) indifferent D) aware
E) convinced

20. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) takes off B) gets over
C) focuses on D) ends up
E) rests upon

22. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) viable B) committed
C) literate D) initial
E) so-called

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What do people think when they think about the richest countries in the world? And what comes to mind when they think about the smallest nations in the world? Some would be surprised to find out that many of the wealthiest nations are also amongst the tiniest. Some very small and very rich countries—like Luxembourg, Singapore and Hong Kong—benefit from having sophisticated financial sectors and tax regimes that help attract foreign investments and professional talent. Others like Qatar and Brunei have large reserves of hydrocarbons or other lucrative natural resources.

But what do we mean when we say a country is "rich," especially in an era of growing income inequality between the rich and everyone else? While gross domestic product (GDP) measures the value of all goods and services produced in a nation, dividing this output by the number of full-time residents is a better way of determining how rich or poor one country's population is relative to another's. The reason why "rich" often equals "small" then becomes clear: these countries' economies are disproportionately large compared to their small populations. However, only when taking into account inflation rates and the cost of local goods and services can we get a more accurate picture of a nation's average standard of living: the resulting figure is what is called purchasing power parity (PPP), which is often expressed international dollars to allow comparisons between different countries. Should we automatically assume that in nations where this figure is particularly high the overall population is visibly *better off* than in most other places in the world? Not quite. We are dealing with averages and **in any given country, structural inequality can tip the balance in favour of the already privileged.**

The COVID-19 pandemic lifted the veil on these disparities in ways few could have ever predicted. While there is no doubt that the wealthiest nations—often more vulnerable to the coronavirus due to their older population and other risk factors—had the resources to take better care of those in need, not everyone had equal access to them. Not only that, the economic downturn hit low-paid workers harder than those with high-paying occupations. A new kind of inequality emerged too: some people have been able to work from home, some others lost their livelihood and found themselves without much of a safety net—large holes in the most celebrated welfare systems in the world were exposed. To be sure, when a crisis of such unprecedented magnitude takes place, you'd rather be where welfare and social services can offer a degree of assistance and hospitals have reliable electricity access. In the 10 world's poorest countries, according to data from the International Monetary Fund, the average per-capita purchasing power is less than \$1,200, in the 10 richest is close to \$80,000.

However, there is one more reason to be wary of accepting such economic prosperity at face value. The IMF has warned repeatedly that certain numbers should be taken with a grain of salt. For example, many nations in our ranking are tax havens, which means wealth originally generated in other countries ends up inflating their GDP because of sophisticated accounting and legal practices. More broadly, it is estimated that over 15% of global jurisdictions are tax havens and that about 40% of global foreign direct investment flows are so-called "phantom" transactions, financial investments passing through empty corporate shells with no real influence on a country's economy and people's financial wellbeing. Add to that the unequal distribution of resources, and it becomes easy to understand why even in very rich countries live very poor people.

Many of the world's richest countries are also the world's smallest. MAY 13, 2021 Author: LUCA VENTURA

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Key

1. to

2. would be surprised

3. sophisticated

4. C

5. E

6. in

7. while

8. disproportionately

9. only when

10. D

11. A

12. on

13. not only

14. emerged

15. whereas

16. D

17. C

18. to

19. B

20. D

21. broadly

22. E

23. becomes

