Sample assessment task

Year level	10
Learning area	Humanities and Social Sciences
Subject	Economics and Business
Title of task	Debate: income redistribution in Australia

Task details

Description of task	Students conduct a debate on whether to increase the extent of income redistribution in Australia, then write an individual reflection
Type of assessment	Formative
Purpose of assessment	To inform progression in the learning cycle and plan further teaching if required
Assessment strategy	Performance or oral presentation
Evidence to be collected	• Student participation in the debate (teacher observation) • Written reflection
Suggested time	• Preparation – two hours • Debate and written reflection – one and a half hours

Content description

Content from the Western Australian Curriculum	**Knowledge and understanding** The links between economic performance and living standards, the variations that exist within and between economies and the possible causes (e.g. foreign investment, employment rates and levels of debt) **Humanities and Social Sciences skills** Draw evidence-based conclusions by evaluating information and/or data, taking into account ambiguities and multiple perspectives; to negotiate and resolve contentious issues; to propose individual and collective action in response to contemporary events, challenges, developments, issues, problems and/or phenomena
Key concepts	Economic performance and living standards

Task preparation

Prior learning	Students have prior knowledge of the distribution of income and wealth in Australia: overview of trends and reasons for them, how income equality is measured (including the Gini coefficient).
Assessment differentiation	Teachers should differentiate their teaching and assessment to meet the specific learning needs of their students, based on their level of readiness to learn and their need to be challenged. Where appropriate, teachers may either scaffold or extend the scope of the assessment tasks.

Assessment task

Assessment conditions	Group research and debate followed by individual written reflection
Resources	Research materials

Instructions for teacher

Debate: income redistribution in Australia

The topic for the debate is: *Should the Australian Government increase the amount of income redistribution?*

Divide the class into affirmative and negative teams for the research and debate phase, and support each team to develop coherent arguments supported by evidence. Use Articles 1 and 2 as part of the research.

For the debate, each team needs to nominate three speakers who will be able to quietly consult their research team.

Following the debate, each student will write an individual response to the debate topic.

Instructions to students

Debate: income redistribution in Australia

We will be conducting a debate on the topic *Should the Australian Government increase the amount of income redistribution?*

The class will be divided into affirmative and negative teams. Within your team, you need to:

- conduct research on this topic (use Articles 1 and 2 as part of your research)
- develop your arguments
- ensure your arguments are supported by evidence
- select three speakers who will represent your team during the debate
- ensure that all team members are actively involved in providing information, suggestions and advice to the speakers during the debate.
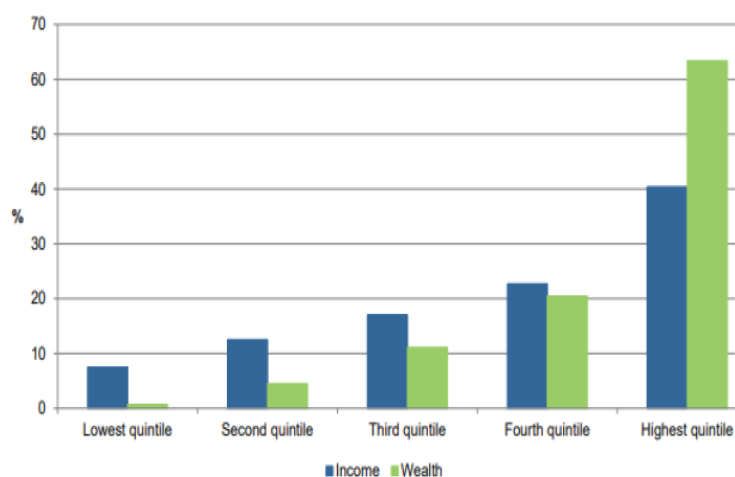
Following the debate, you will have 30 minutes to write a detailed personal response to the debate topic. Note that your written response doesn't have to agree with your team's position in the debate – you should explain your own opinion and ensure you support it with suitable evidence.

Article 1:

Well-off Australians are pulling away from the rest of the nation, with inequality of wealth rising in recent years, new figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show. The data is detailed in the ABS's latest Household Income and Wealth Australia 2017-18 report, released in July 2019. The figures show income growth has been virtually non-existent for many — average household incomes have stagnated, with virtually no growth since 2013, although income inequality has also remained relatively stable.

However, the report shows that wealth is highly concentrated in Australia. The average net worth of the top 20 per cent of households is more than 93 times that of the lowest 20 per cent — some $3.2 million compared to just $35,200.

Figure 1: Distribution of Income and Wealth in Australia *(Supplied: ABS)*

The top 20 % of households have 93 times the wealth of the bottom 20 %. And the high-wealth households have enjoyed substantial gains, while those at the bottom have had almost none. After inflation, the worth of the top 20 per cent jumped from $1.9 million in 2003-4 to $3.2 million, a rise of more than 68 per cent. In contrast, low-
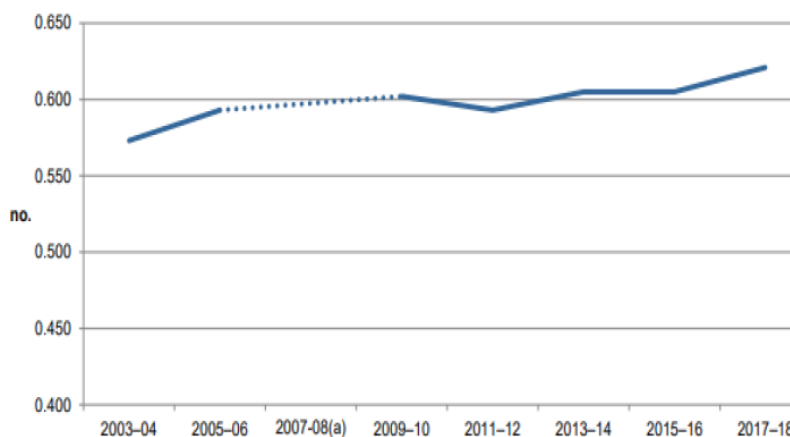
wealth households did not experience any real increase in net worth over this time period, with their average wealth of $35,200 in 2017-18 similar to 2003-04 ($34,200).

The average net worth of all households in Australia in 2017-18 was $1 million, a rise of more than 37 per cent in a decade, driven in part by increases in superannuation balances and growth in house prices. Housing now makes up 57 per cent of Australians' wealth, with 42 per cent coming from the family home and 15 per cent from investment properties. Super now accounts for 18 per cent of wealth, and the average household balance has grown to $213,700.

In a media release, ABS chief economist Bruce Hockman told ABC News that the figures showed "that there was a marginal increase in wealth inequality in 2017-18 and that wealth continues to be less equally distributed between households than income amongst Australians".
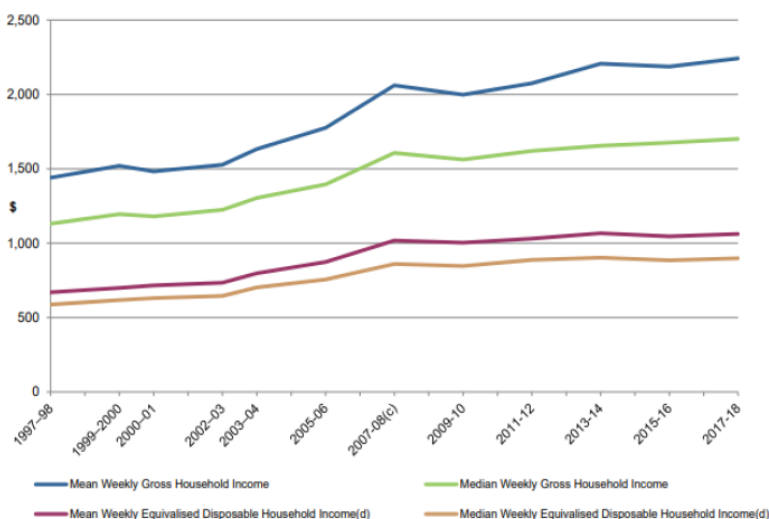
But this graph, from the ABS's publication, appears to show a fairly sharp rise in the core measure of inequality, the Gini coefficient, since 2015, at least in terms of wealth distribution.

Figure 2: The Gini coefficient when it comes to household wealth *(Supplied: ABS)*

Overall income growth is extremely weak. Over a decade, average weekly household incomes increased by $44 to $1,062 in 2017-18.

Figure 3: Household incomes have stagnated since the global financial crisis *(Supplied: ABS)*

That compares to a $220 gain in average weekly incomes over just four years leading up to the global financial crisis in 2007-08.

Political economists Dr Christopher Sheil and Emeritus Professor Frank Stilwell used OECD and ABS data to estimate that Australia's richest 10 per cent now hold more than 50 per cent of the nation's wealth, a share that increased substantially over the four years to 2016. Almost all of that increase went to the top 1 per cent, which increased their share of the nation's wealth from 14.2 to 16.2 per cent. In contrast, both the middle-class segments recorded a declining share of wealth — collectively, the majority of households between the 40th and 90th percentile own 47.1 per cent of the wealth, down from 49.1 per cent in 2012. As for the poorest 40 per cent of households, they remain stuck with just 2.8 per cent of the nation's wealth between them.

Source: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-12/household-income-and-wealth-abs-data-shows-rich-are-richer/11302696

Article 2:

In September 2017, the then treasurer and current Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison, said that income inequality was not getting worse in Australia. Morrison claimed that income inequality was actually getting better in Australia. "The latest census showed on the global measure of inequality, which is the Gini coefficient, that is the accepted global measure of income inequality around the world and that figure shows it hasn't got worse, it has actually got better," he said.

He was technically right – if you only consider the last few years. The Gini index is the most widely used measure of inequality. It looks at the distribution of a nation's income or wealth, where 0 represents complete equality and 100 total inequality. The 2016 census showed the Gini coefficient for disposable household income in Australia fell from 0.333 in 2013-14, to 0.323 in 2015-16.

Morrison did not mention that the Gini coefficient had been even lower in 2005-06, at 0.314. Earlier in 2017, the OECD economic survey of Australia in April found "inclusiveness has been eroded" in the past two decades.

"The Gini coefficient has been drifting up and households in upper-income brackets have benefited disproportionally from Australia's long period of economic growth," the report said.

"Real incomes for the top quintile of households grew by more than 40% between 2004 and 2014, while those for the lowest quintile only grew by about 25%."

In July 2017, the Reserve Bank governor, Philip Lowe, when asked about his views on inequality at a charity lunch in Sydney, said it had grown "quite a lot" in the 1980s and 1990s and had risen "a little bit" recently, but it was important to make a distinction between income and wealth inequality. "Wealth inequality has become more pronounced particularly in the last five or six years because there's been big gains in asset prices," Lowe said. "So the people who own assets, which are usually wealthy people, have seen their wealth go up."

He said income inequality had increased slightly in recent years, but wealth inequality was more pronounced because of rising asset prices.

Source: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/oct/12/imf-says-australia-has-one-of-the-fastest-rising-income-inequality-rates

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Sample marking key

Team performance debate

Description	Marks
Arguments presented	
Comprehensively describes the relevant arguments and links to the overall topic	4
Comprehensively describes the relevant arguments	3
Briefly describes the relevant arguments	2
Provides a limited description of the relevant arguments	1
Subtotal	**4**
Supporting evidence	
Provides detailed, relevant supporting evidence	3
Provides some relevant supporting evidence	2
Provides limited supporting evidence	1
Subtotal	**3**
Teamwork	
All team members respectfully participate in the debate process	3
Most team members respectfully participate in the debate process	2
Some team members respectfully participate in the debate process	1
Subtotal	**3**
Team performance debate total	**10**

Written response

Description	Marks
Arguments presented	
Comprehensively describes the relevant arguments	5–6
Briefly describes the relevant arguments	3–4
Provides a limited description of the relevant arguments	1–2
Subtotal	**6**
Supporting evidence	
Provides detailed, relevant supporting evidence	5–6
Provides some relevant supporting evidence	3–4
Provides limited supporting evidence	1–2
Subtotal	**6**
Witten communication	
Presents a response which is cohesive and well-structured	3
Presents a response which is mostly cohesive and consistently structured	2
Presents a response which has limited cohesion and structure	1
Subtotal	**3**
Written response total	**15**
Total	**25**