

48. Is Life Fair?

Everyone has a different life, under different conditions. Some are happy, others suffer misfortune. For example, people who are not near their society's ideal norms may be treated unfairly because of their minority positions. Due to lack of money or a physical condition, a lot of capable people are denied an opportunity to go to school or get a particular job. The deprived, quite understandably insist the situation is unfair, that society is skewed in favor of existing standards of income, status, or appearance.

On the other hand, opponents argue that the existing system is indeed "fair" as long as the same rules are applied to everyone. Nobody is perfectly fitted for every position in society, everyone has particular strengths and weaknesses. In the long run, the fairest societies are the ones that maximize opportunity for success, while the unfair societies, that apply irrelevant notions of "fitness," tend to disappear over time.

Comprehension

1. What causes some people to be treated differently?
2. How are minorities discriminated against?
3. Why isn't discrimination unfair, from one point of view?

Your opinion

1. Is life fair in your case?
2. Is life worth living, even if not fair?
3. What determines the fairness of any given situation?
4. Why can't we free ourselves from an unfair environment?
5. When life is not fair, who is responsible?