



READING

Read the text and complete the tasks below:

How Healthcare Costs Hurt American Workers and Benefit the Wealthy



Americans spend **vast** sums on health care. Certainly, health care is expensive all over the world, and it makes good sense for rich countries to spend large amounts to extend their citizens' lives and to reduce pain and suffering. But America does this about as bad as it is possible to imagine.

Health care can sometimes harm people, through medical mistakes, or the overprescription of **opioids**. But there is also harm to people's lives from its extraordinary and unnecessary costs. The percentage of national income that is absorbed by health care has grown over the past

half-century, from 5% in 1960 to 18% in 2017, reducing what is available for anything else from 95% in 1960 to 82% today. The costs of health care contribute to the long-term **stagnation** in **wages**; to fewer good jobs, especially for less-educated workers; and to rising income inequality.

American health care is the most expensive in the world, and yet American health is among the worst among rich countries. The chart accompanying this story shows life expectancy and health **expenditure** per capita from 1970 to 2017. It highlights just how far off course the U.S. has **drifted**.

The U.S. has lower life expectancy than the other wealthy countries but vastly higher expenditures per person.

America is a rich country, and it makes sense for Americans to pay for more and better health care. Yet Americans do not use more of most medical services compared with other countries' citizens.

How is it possible that Americans pay so much and get so little? The money is certainly going somewhere. What is waste to a patient is income to a provider. The industry is not very good at promoting health, but it **excels** at promoting wealth among health care providers, including some successful private physicians who operate **profitable** practices.

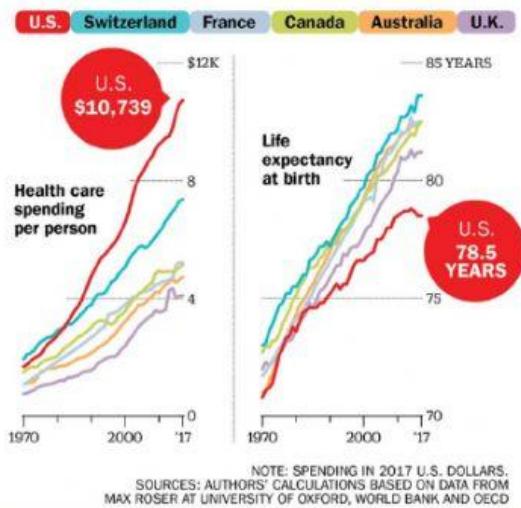
Americans like to believe that their system is a free-market one, in spite of the fact that the government is paying half of the cost, is paying the prices demanded by pharmaceutical companies without negotiation, is permitting professional associations to restrict supply, and is **subsidizing** employer-provided health care through the tax system.

So is the way that the health care industry is protected in Washington by its **lobbyists**—five for every member of Congress. Our government is complicit in extortion that is an important contributor to income inequality in America today. Through pharma companies that get rich by addicting people, and through excessive costs that lower wages and eliminate good jobs, the industry that is supposed to improve our health is undermining it.

Adapted from <https://time.com/5785945/health-care-problems-america/>

HIGH COSTS, LOW RETURN

The U.S. has spent more on health care per person since 1970 than other developed countries, but doesn't have a higher life expectancy to show for it.



GRAMMAR. Look at the previous graph and complete the sentences below. Check how compare contrast signal words are used to highlight similarities and differences:

The following signal words help us emphasize that two aspects are being compared:

also - as well as - both - in the same way - in addition - just as - like - similarly - too

The following signal words help us emphasize that two aspects are being contrasted:

although - but - compared with - even though - however - in contrast to - instead
less than - more than - nevertheless - on the other hand - otherwise - rather than
regardless - though - unless - unlike - while - yet

1. Healthcare spending in the USA is high, **as well as** it is **also** high in Switzerland (Compare)
2. Life expectancy in the US is low, **in the same way**, it is in the UK (Compare)
3. Healthcare spending in the USA is the highest in the world, **however**, the life expectancy is better in other countries (Contrast)
4. Life expectancy in the US is low, **regardless** of the high spending in healthcare (Contrast)

Look at the graph and write 2 sentences comparing and 2 contrasting the US and other countries:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

After reading the text "How Healthcare Costs Hurt American Workers and Benefit the Wealthy", follow the instructions below to complete the table



HOW SHOULD I START ANALYZING A COMMUNITY PROBLEM?

Analyzing community problems is a way of thinking carefully about a problem or issue before acting on a solution. It first involves identifying reasons for a problem to exist and then, identifying possible solutions and a plan for improvement.

STARTING WITH AN ANALYSIS CAN HELP... To better identify what the problem or issue is about and the reasons behind why it happens.

"American health care is the most expensive in the world, and yet American health is among the worst among rich countries. How is it possible that Americans pay so much and get so little? The money is certainly going somewhere. What is waste to a patient is income to a provider. The industry is not very good at promoting health, but it excels at promoting wealth among health care providers, including some successful private physicians who operate profitable practices"

What is the problem here? The low quality of health services, the economic model that gives life to the health system, the destination of the funds. Before looking for solutions, you would want to clarify just what is the problem (or problems) here. Unless you are clear, it's hard to move forward.

Problems are usually symptoms of something else. **What is that something behind the problem? – What is the cause of the problem and the reason (s) why it has not been solved yet?** We should find out. **What are the barriers and resources associated with addressing the problem? Which reliable sources of information could (Institutions, websites, etc) could help me be sufficiently informed about the problem?**

It's good practice and planning to anticipate barriers and obstacles before they might arise. By doing so, you can make a proposal to mitigate them. Analyzing community problems can also help you understand the resources you need. The better equipped you are with the right resources and support, the higher your chances of success.



SPEAKING TASK

Group Work. Using the community problem described in the text: "How Healthcare Costs Hurt American Workers and Benefit the Wealthy", let's complete the following table:

Community Problem description:

What is that something behind the problem?	
What is the cause of the problem and the reason (s) why it has not been solved yet?	

What could be the barriers to addressing the problem?	
What resources could be needed to address the problem?	
Which reliable sources of information (Institutions, websites, etc.) could help me be sufficiently informed about the problem?	