

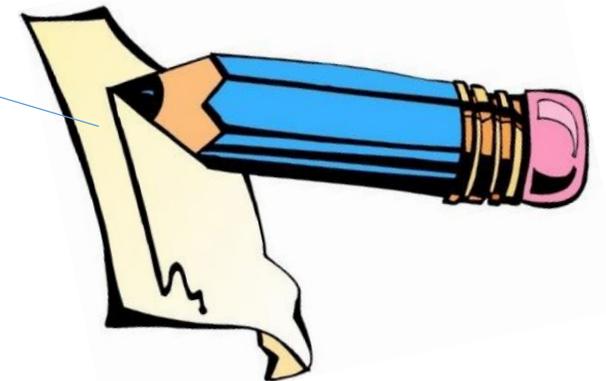
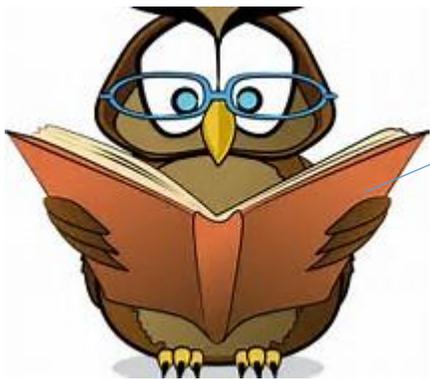
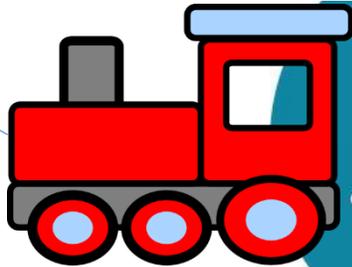
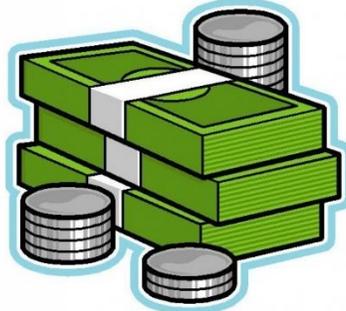
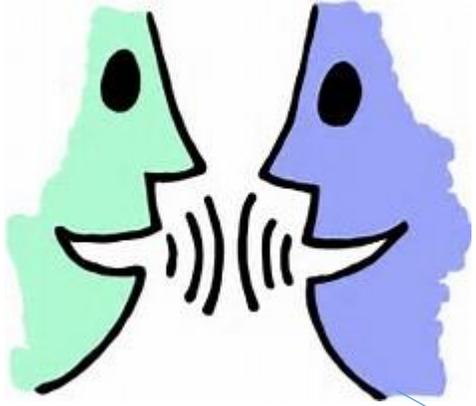


New Internationalist
The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

People against privatisation?

New Internationalist Ready Lesson
Upper Intermediate

This lesson:



a) things we own

b) working not to harm the environment

c) energy from wind, the sun, the ocean

d) holding people responsible for any mistakes

e) person who lives in a place

f) written agreement

g)

h) the system of transport, energy, communications in a city or country

i) public vote

j) working to look after forests, rivers, the sea, the natural world

k) doing something quickly and well

l) changing energy, transport, water from the state to a company



Match meanings and words:

1) privatisation

2) contract

3) efficient

4) resident

5) referendum

6) accountability

7) portacabin

8) renewable energy

9) infrastructure

10) sustainability

11) conservation

12) property



Wordbuilding – put the *letters* in the right order:



verb

noun

abstract noun

own

ronwe

ponhiwers

adjective

verb

abstract noun

private

seripvati

npriasaovtio

national

anitnoalsie

nlitaoianastino

Where you live...



In your area which of these are in public ownership and which are run by private companies?

a) buses b) trains c) water

d) healthcare e) electricity f) gas

g) prisons h) telephones

What do you think...?



What are the advantages and disadvantages of

a) a privatised energy company?

b) an energy company in public ownership?

Consider the service, the prices, what it would be like working for them.

Public or private ownership? Sort these into which you think they belong:

Public ✓

Private ✓

- 1) job losses
- 2) higher bills
- 3) poor service
- 4) efficient
- 5) fair prices for poorer people
- 6) democratic
- 7) interest in profits
- 8) sustainability



Now read and check...



United States: water

It may be a surprise but water in the US is mainly in public hands, with 86 per cent of the population served by public providers. And between 2000 and 2015, private water companies lost 169 contracts to city governments.

One of the biggest private companies was United Water, a subsidiary of the big French company, Suez. It lost the \$428 million contract it had for 20 years from 1999 to manage Atlanta's water. What was the result of United Water's management? Job losses, rising bills, and general disrepair and the city lost billions because of inefficient metering and billing.

In 2003 the City Council took the difficult job of managing this resource in an area where there is very little water. There have been ups and downs but the public service now manages to treat 70 per cent of all waste water for re-use. It has brought down water use by more than 10 per cent and this with a population increase of a million new residents. The billing system means those who use more pay more, and those on low incomes pay less.

Another programme has resulted in changing 125,000 toilets which wasted water to new efficient toilets

Bolivia: oil

A referendum showed that 92 per cent of the Bolivian people supported renationalising the country's hydrocarbons sector. And so president Evo Morales did that in 2006. The oil and gas fields became national property. There were still private companies but they had a very small share and could make much smaller profits. What were the results? After ten years the state had collected \$31.5 billion, compared to \$3.5bn in the ten years before. GDP went up 300 per cent and public spending increased by 750 per cent. Then electricity, pensions, and telecommunications were also brought back to public ownership.

Argentina: the post

When Argentina gave its postal service to investment company, Grupo Macri in 1997, things went badly wrong. Service provision went down fast, prices went up fast and they did not make the royalty payments to the government. The service made a loss. In 2003, the government took back this service, and costs, reliability and accountability were all much better. Rural services, which were there before, were brought back again. But the story of the debts from failed privatisation continues. Grupo Macri is the family company of the new president Mauricio Macri. He gave his shares to his children before he was elected. In June 2016, his government agreed to forgive \$296 million of the company's debt. The president says there is no conflict of interest.

France: water

French water multinational companies are involved in problems across the world. And the level of privatization of water services in France is still high. But there has been more and more interest in giving services back to the state since the mid-2000s. Two big cities – Grenoble and Paris – are now models of democratic public ownership. A third of Grenoble's water board directors are civil society representatives. Paris has staff, users, and civic associations represented on the board with full voting rights.

They are trying to guarantee a right to water with free public water fountains and money back for the poorest residents. And they are taking seriously sustainability and conservation. And they are doing well with price and quality. In Paris there are savings of \$36 million per year since public ownership in 2010 and lower prices for customers. In Grenoble, investment in infrastructure has increased 300 per cent without raising bills.

Nigeria: water

There has been a popular people's campaign against the government's plan for public-private partnership for water in Lagos. And it has stopped privatisation since 2014. The Our Water Our Rights campaign is led by Environmental Rights Action. It has not yet made the government change its mind about the planned privatisation, but it has succeeded in getting it to give \$185 million to help the city's water crisis. They have contacted other anti-privatisation campaigns around the world and the demand is for democratic public ownership.

Germany: energy

Since 2005, there have been 248 private energy sectors given back to city governments in Germany. A big dissatisfaction with big energy companies has played an important part. The companies have failed to meet the public demand for renewable energy. There is the feeling that city governments lost control over energy provision and, in many places bills went up.

In 2009, the city of Hamburg started an energy organisation to provide 'climate-friendly electricity, which is non-nuclear and coal-free' and infrastructure organised by the city. Their solar power plans involved people and local businesses as investors. Over 100,000 clients signed up for locally produced renewable energy. In 2013 there was a referendum to make the government take back all the energy - electricity, heating, and gas. The electricity came back in 2015, and the gas will follow in 2018-19.

India: health

The Aam Aadmi Party (Common Man Party) won the election in Delhi in 2015 and they brought a badly needed health plan. The Party planned to open 1,000 Mohalla local clinics across the city to give free healthcare. There were 164 clinics by March 2018. These are simple portacabins with a doctor, a nurse, a pharmacist, and a lab technician. They are the first stop for common illnesses and they offer 110 essential drugs and 212 diagnostic tests. There were over five million consultations by the end of 2017. There are also plans to open 100 dental clinics.

Most Indians have to use expensive private care or wait in long queues at government hospitals. Now the poorest people of Delhi have a service to meet their needs.

The Interview

Student A

You will interview Cat Hobbs. She is the founder and director of We Own It in the UK. She campaigns to end privatisation.

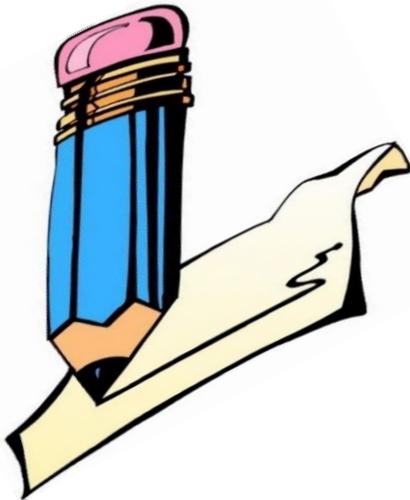
Make a list of 4-6 questions to ask her.

Student B

You are Cat Hobbs. You are the founder and director of We Own It in the UK. You Campaign to end privatisation.

Make a list of 4-6 reasons why you want to end privatisation.

Homework



The advantages and disadvantages of private and public ownership of services.