

Join the national conversation!



**SHOULD VICTIMS' FAMILIES ALL RECEIVE THE SAME COMPENSATION?**

Word Generation - Unit 1.21

## Focus Words

financial | compensation | fund | sum | recover



## Weekly Passage

Ron Malin's father and Serena Johnson's father were each killed on the same day, 9/11/2001. Ron's father died when terrorists flew an airplane into the building where he was working. Serena's father was killed in front of his house in a drive-by shooting. To help Ron's family recover, the government compensated them with three million dollars. Serena's family got financial compensation, too. However, theirs was only three thousand dollars.

Some people say that if families experience equivalent tragedies, it is not fair to compensate them differently. They say that every victim's family should receive the same amount. Many religions also support this view. These religions regard all human lives as equally valuable.

Crime victims' families receive money from the government to pay for certain expenses caused by the crime. However, the government created a special fund to give

larger sums to families of 9/11 victims. Many people say 9/11 victims deserve special treatment because they died during an attack on our country.

Some say families of 9/11 victims received high payments because many were wealthy. Others voice yet another concern. They say that government officials were worried that these families would sue the airlines. People who win lawsuits can receive enormous sums, many times the amount that Ron's family received. With thousands of victims, the airlines could have gone bankrupt. The insurance companies who pay damages if airlines are successfully sued could have gone bankrupt too.

Although money can never bring back someone who has died, it can help a family recover from a tragedy. What do you think? Should victims' families all receive the same compensation?

# Unit 1.21 - Should victims' families all receive the same compensation?

## Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
compensation	(n.) – something given as payment, or to make up for a loss, injury, or death			
financial	(adj.) – having to do with money			
fund	(n.) – a supply of money for a specific purpose			
recover	(v.) – to regain strength, or to get back something that was lost			
sum	(n.) – amount			

# Unit 1.21 - Should victims' families all receive the same compensation?



## Problem of the Week

Each state has a crime victim **compensation** program. These programs oversee **funds** to help crime victims **recover** crime-related **financial** losses. Each state has its own rules. For example, Michigan's crime victim compensation program will pay for funeral expenses, medical bills, and lost wages. However, the maximum award is \$15,000. The average **sum** awarded is \$3,841.

---

**Option 1:** The federal government set up a special victim compensation fund for victims of September 11. This fund awarded an average of \$1.8 million to each victim. In the state of Michigan, the maximum award a crime victim can receive is \$15,000. How many \$15,000 awards would it take to total \$1.8 million?

- A) 12
- B) 120
- C) 130
- D) 1,300

**Option 2:** The average sum awarded by the federal September 11 victim compensation fund was \$1.8 million. The highest sum awarded was \$7.9 million. In 2008, the median household income for the U.S. was \$52,029. If \$50,000 can support an average household for a year, how many years of support does \$1.8 million represent? How many years of support does \$7.9 million represent? (Hint: to solve quickly, use exponents!)

**Math Discussion Question:** Victim **compensation** programs help victims **recover** after a tragedy. The **funds** awarded cover costs like medical bills for wounded people, funeral expenses for murder victims, and lost wages. When lost wages are considered, people who have earned more money receive more **financial** help than people who have earned less. Is this fair? Or should we develop a different system that awards an equal **sum** to each victim?

# Should victims' families all receive the same compensation?

## Debating the Issue



### I. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

**A** Every human life is equally valuable. Victims' families should all receive equal compensation.

**B** The government should pay more to victims of an attack on our country than it pays victims of neighborhood crime.

**C** The government should pay victims enough money to prevent huge lawsuits that can cause businesses to go bankrupt.

**D** The government should pay families of wealthier victims more money because these families probably have higher expenses.

**E** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

*I think it's more accurate to say...*

*That's interesting - can you tell why you think that?*

*I think the evidence is contrary to what you're saying because. . .*

*Let me share something from the reading that will help us...*

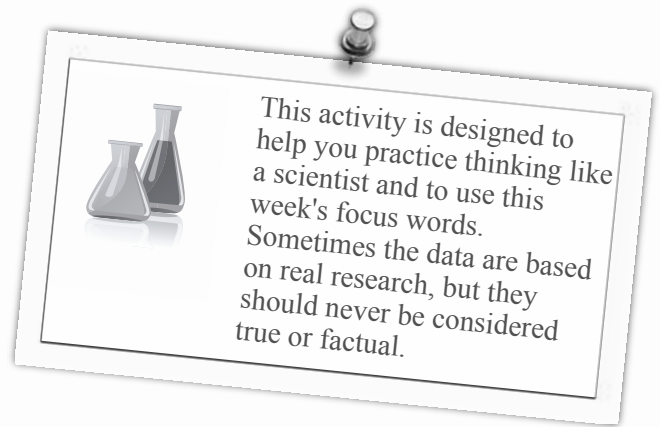
### 2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Unit 1.21 - Should victims' families all receive the same compensation?

## Science Activity



Professor Kahn's class held a lively debate about the **compensation fund** for the families of 9/11 victims. Professor Kahn explained that government compensation is meant to replace victims' income and help families **recover financially**. Therefore, the families of lower earners get smaller **sums**. "That's not fair," said Alicia. "Rich people and poor people are worth the same." Her classmates agreed. Professor Kahn admired their strong sense of fairness. She decided to put their sense of fairness to the test.

### Question:

Will students give up cookies in the name of fairness?

### Hypothesis:

Students will say no to any offer other than an even 5 and 5 split.

### Materials:

- ▶ 100 cookies
- ▶ 10 students

### Procedure:

1. Divide students into 5 pairs: A, B, C, D, and E.
2. For each pair, make one student the divider and the other student the decider.
3. Give each pair 10 cookies.
4. The divider makes two piles: "Mine" and "Yours"
5. The decider decides:  
**Yes** – both partners keep their cookies  
or  
**No** – nobody gets cookies
6. Write down each decider's choice.

**Data:**

	<b>Division</b>		<b>Decision</b>
<b>Pair A</b>	Mine - 5	Yours - 5	<b>yes</b>
<b>Pair B</b>	Mine - 9	Yours - 1	<b>no</b>
<b>Pair C</b>	Mine - 6	Yours - 4	<b>no</b>
<b>Pair D</b>	Mine - 5	Yours - 5	<b>yes</b>
<b>Pair E</b>	Mine - 7	Yours - 3	<b>no</b>

**Conclusion:**

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your conclusion?

How would you make this a better experiment?



