

## **Do you deserve to be where you are?**

A meritocratic society is one in which people prosper according to their individual merits. Society is ordered in such a way that people do well or do badly because of the merits they possess.

Question number one:

Do we live in a meritocratic society?

The American writer William Henry, in his book 'In Defence of Elitism' asserts that 'in general, the world is a rational place in which, on the whole, winners deserve to win and losers deserve to lose....intelligence varies genetically and intelligence, by and large, determines success. It is the nature of human society to be stratified.'

Question number two:

Should we live in a meritocratic society?

Political philosopher John Rawls argues that ethical claims that people **deserve** their place or status in society are misplaced. Rawls argues that, similarly to characteristics which are protected and not taken into account on job applications such as age, gender, ethnicity etc., there is no moral distinction between these characteristics and another characteristic such as talent, tendency to work hard, IQ. We have done nothing to deserve who we are born as, therefore we do not deserve to have a high IQ and a better paid job.

If we believe that the nephew of The Duke of Westminster does not deserve a high-flying job courtesy of family connections, then does the intelligent, hard-working person deserve their prosperity?