

## **Living on Minimum Wage for 30 Days**

### **Reading Check:**

#### **Introduction**

1. What the problem does Morgan Spurlock identify with the minimum wage at the start of the film?
2. How much did the Vegan stir fry cost?
3. What three rules do Alex and Morgan agree to live by at the start of their 30-day experiment?
4. Why do Alex and Morgan decide to live on minimum wage in Columbus Ohio?

#### **Day #1**

5. How much money does the couple have at the start of Day 1?
6. What problems do they find as they try to rent an apartment?
7. How do they travel?
8. How much is the rent for the apartment they can afford? Where is it?
9. What financial help did the landlord offer that allowed Morgan and Alex to move in?
10. How much money does the couple have after signing their lease?
11. How much money do they need to make to survive for one month?

#### **Day #2**

12. What types of minimum wage jobs are available to Alex and Morgan? What do they wind up doing?
13. When Morgan seeks work through a temporary agency, what "rules" does the agency list?
14. What did Morgan eat during the day?

#### **Day #3**

15. What is the couple's balance at the start of day 3?
16. Why is Alex walking to work?
17. What is notable about Gerald's employment history?
18. What is the purpose of the minimum wage?
19. What are the arguments:
  - A. For raising the minimum wage?
  - B. For NOT raising the minimum wage?
20. What happened to Congressional pay during the seven-year period when the minimum wage remained frozen?
21. Describe the workday Morgan and Alex experience on day 3. How much did they make?

#### **Update on the Minimum Wage**

Since the movie was made, Congress raised the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour. Many states have a minimum wage higher than the national level. In Massachusetts, the minimum wage is \$8.00 per hour.

22. According to the table, when was the value of the minimum wage the highest?
23. During what period of time was the value of the minimum wage generally higher than it is today?

#### **Day #4**

24. What do Alex and Morgan have for dinner?
25. What is their apartment like?

26. How do Alex and Morgan get help? What kind of help do they get?

**Day #9**

27. What is the disadvantage of Morgan's new job?

28. How does he deal with this problem?

29. How much money do they have at this point?

**Day #10**

30. Describe Morgan's experience at the doctor.

31. When Morgan says that in America we don't have health care, we have sick care, what does he mean?

**Day #11**

32. After Alex and Morgan leave the Emergency Room, they go to a pharmacy. How much does her prescription cost (in dollars and in time)?

33. What unpleasant surprise awaited Morgan when he got home from work that evening?

34. How much money does the couple have?

**Day #15**

35. As a result of Morgan's working two jobs, what is the couple's balance at the start of day 15? How much time does he spend away from home?

**Days #17/18/19**

36. What is the couple's balance after Morgan's payday?

37. What kind of free activities are available for the kids coming to visit Alex and Morgan for the Easter weekend?

38. For parents—single or married—living on the minimum wage for real, identify the major economic challenges and consequences of raising kids.

**Day #23**

39. After their trip to the movies, and the snacks, what is the couple's balance?

40. How does Alex react to Morgan's spending? Why?

**Day #25**

41. The morning of Alex's birthday, how much money do they have?

42. How do they celebrate?

43. How does the day end?

44. What is their balance at the end of the day?

**Days #26/29/30**

45. At the end of day 26, how much money do Alex and Morgan have?

46. How much was the bill for Alex's emergency room visit? What were some of the charges?

47. How much was the bill for Morgan's emergency room visit? What were some of the charges?

48. What is their balance?

**About the film:**

Morgan Spurlock's documentary was part of his television series called "30 Days." His experience living on the minimum wage was the first episode of the first season of the show.

[The show is available on iTunes.](#)

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