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Misleading Averages

Teaching Notes

Show or give out the first page, asking students to decide which job they would go for, then allow them to look at the facts on the second page.

This can lead to some interesting discussion about the government's figures on average wages, or average family income.

As a follow on, learners could research wages for different jobs and find the mean average (or extend this to include mode and median for Level 2 students).

Debbie Ellis

This resource kindly contributed by Debbie Ellis, ellisd@chesterfield.ac.uk **HD1/L1.3** Find the arithmetical average (mean) for a set of data. **HD1/L2.3** Find the mean, mode and median, and use them as appropriate to compare two sets of data.

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Name_____ Date_____

Which job would you go for?

You are needed

Great benefits

Flexible hours

Small team

Average Wage

£20,000

Ref 1A

We need

Young people to work fantastic hours

Average wage

£17,500

Ref 2B

Wanted

Young person to join small team of workers

Average Wage

£42,200

Ref 3C

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Name_____ Date_____

Taking into account that, as a starter, you would be on the lowest wage…

Ref 1A
There are 6 employees whose wages are as follows.
£6,000
£7,000
£8,000
£9,000
£10,000
£80,000
You would start on £6000

Ref 2B
Again there are 6 Employees
£11,000
£12,000
£13,000
£14,000
£15,000
£40,000
You would start on £11, 000

Ref 3C
There are 5 employees whose wages are as follows
£8,000
£8,000
£8,000
£12,000
£175,000
As a new starter you would be on £8,000

Now that you have all the facts, which job would you go for?

For job refs 1A and 3C, although the average wages are £20,000 and £42,200, the only person to earn over £12,000 is the boss. By showing average earnings the companies mislead you into thinking they pay well.

For job 2B the starting wage is already more than the maximum you would earn in 1A as an employee, and close to the level you would work up to in job 3C.