



Why do we pay taxes?

KS2

KS3

Ages 7-14 ⌚ 3 min read

Tax is money that everyone chips in so we can all have things that nobody could afford on their own.

Roads. Hospitals. Schools. The fire brigade. Street lights. The army. All of these things cost enormous amounts of money — way more than any one person could pay. So instead, everyone pays a little, and the government pools it all together to pay for shared stuff.

Imagine your class wants a pizza party, but nobody can afford a full pizza. So everyone puts £1 into a pot, and suddenly you've got enough for six pizzas. Tax works the same way — except the "pizza" is hospitals and motorways, and the "pot" is the government.

What kinds of tax are there?

Income tax — when you earn money from a job, a slice of it goes to the government. The more you earn, the bigger the slice.

VAT (Value Added Tax) — added onto the price of most things you buy. In the UK it's 20%. So if something costs £10, £1.67 of that quietly goes to the government.

Council tax — your household pays this to the local council to pay for bins, parks, local roads, and social care.

Who decides how it's spent?

The government does — and that's exactly why elections matter. When you vote, you're partly deciding who gets to choose what your taxes are spent on. Which is a pretty big deal, when you think about it.