POOR   hard up   lower-class   underprivileged   unemployable

These words describe people who are unable to obtain sufficient money or possessions to ensure them a decent standard of living. *Poor* is the most general term and is applied to those who live in more or less constant poverty, or to anything characterized by or resulting from poverty: *poor* pensioners; a *poor* neighbourhood.

*Underprivileged* is vaguely and categorically applied to those who, for various reasons, such as some sort of economic oppression, and lack of education or the ability to benefit from it, are deprived of many of the basic necessities (such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, and recreational facilities) that most people take for granted as
rights. It is often applied specifically to the children of poor parents.

**Hard up** is a colloquial term for *poor*. But to be *hard up* often implies only a temporary shortage of money rather than a state of permanent need. People who are *hard up* are not *poor* in the accepted sense of the word: so *hard up* before pay-day that he had to borrow money for lunch; farmers *hard up* because of a crop failure.

**Lower-class** is used to describe that group of people occupying the lowest social and economic level in any society that has either a long-established caste system or one of class distinctions based on occupation, education, and income. People who are *lower-class* tend to constitute lower-income groups also, but are not necessarily *poor*. The term is frequently used in an unfavourable and snobbish way to try to suggest lack of ambition, crude manners, and low educational attainments.

**Unemployable** refers to people who for various reasons are unable to work at any job or remunerative occupation. It is *now used widely of young people*, especially *poor* ones, who have been so handicapped in the learning process that they cannot be trained for useful employment. In a wider sense, people who are *unemployable* may be those of advanced age or those who have physical and mental disabilities which prevent them from working.

*antonyms*: privileged, upper-class, WEALTHY, well-to-do.