

Lesson Plan Title: Ending Homelessness

Concept / Topic To Teach: Homelessness is Solvable

Standards Addressed:

Massachusetts Study Strands and Learning Standards in the History and Social Science Curriculum Framework: History Strand Grades 9-12

- Research, Evidence, and Point of View. Students will acquire the ability to frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research; to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and apply it in oral and written presentations.
- Society, Diversity, Commonality, and the Individual. Students understand the rights of individuals in conjunction with the ideals of community participation and public service.

Purpose/Objective:

- * Students will learn that homelessness is solvable and preventable
- * Students will seek solutions to end homelessness through “action”
- * Students will be able to identify levels of

Required Materials (Simulations, Tools, Data, Images, etc.):

Internet Access
Chalk or White Board
Paper/Pens/Pencils
journals

Lead In:

Students take 5 minutes to answer “key question” written on board: From what you have learned this week, explain one action you (or many people) can take in order to prevent or end homelessness.

Procedure:

Provide students with handout that includes websites about the issue of homelessness. It’s good to find a couple of national organizations and a couple of local organizations that have user-friendly websites. Two examples are listed below [Resources].

As individuals or with partners have students research solutions/actions various local, state, and national organizations have set up to either help the homeless, prevent people from becoming homeless, and/or ending homelessness. Have students make a list of five possible solutions/preventions to homelessness with a brief description for each.

If at all possible (especially if you have the equipment to project your computer screen onto the wall for your class to see) walk students through an example.

Example 1. Volunteer your personal time.

Description: Help organize or participate in fundraising drives for local homeless service agencies. (found on <http://www.endhomelessness.org/do/index.htm>)

Once students have compiled their list, have them complete the following three steps:

1. Go through your list and decide which actions provide long-term solutions and which provide short-term solutions to homelessness. (Place an S or L next to each point).
2. Now go through the items on your list and number, 1-5, the most important actions to the least important actions (1 = best action for preventing or solving homelessness; 5 = Least preventative or helpful).
3. Take a look at the item on your list that you labeled “1” and the point you labeled “5”. In a short paragraph explain what makes number one the best plan of action and number five the last on your list as an action to prevent/end homelessness.

Depending on your classroom, either have students pair-share, or share in small groups, their answers and ideas. Otherwise, gather students into a large discussion group to talk about their findings. [I like the “fish bowl” activity. Have a small circle of five chairs in the middle of the room, and a large circle of chairs surrounding. Five students start in the middle having a small discussion, but those around must listen. Each student should try to speak at least once, and students sitting on the outskirts, at anytime, may come into the circle, tap someone on the shoulder, and switch positions. The setting is a little more intimate, the students feel a little less threatened, and you can even assign a point system where anyone who attempts to come into the middle to discuss gets a few homework points for the day.]

Some questions to get the students started may be:

1. What do you think would be the most difficult course of action to take in order to end/prevent homelessness?
2. What did you label as your “Number 1” course of action and why?
3. What did you label as your “Number 5” course of action and why?
4. What makes one solution better than another?
5. Did you find anything confusing or misleading about any of the sites themselves? About any of the solutions provided on the sites?

With about five minutes remaining in the class, have students reflect on what they learned from each other and the websites (see “Closure”).

Closure (reflection):

Under their first journal entry for the day (Lead-in question) have students reflect on what they initially answered and what resources they found on the Internet. Have them answer the question: Describe what you believe is the best action that is needed to be taken in order to prevent and/or end homelessness.

Assessment:

Students hand in class work to be graded and handed back next day.

Extensions and Homework Assignments:

If this activity takes two class periods, all the better. Really allow students to see what resources and organizations exist (or don't exist) to fight homelessness. Students should be able to distinguish short-term solutions from long-term solutions. The next lesson should involve having the students decide on THEIR course of action to end homelessness.

A visit to a homeless shelter may also get the students to think more about short-term solutions vs. long-term solutions. Are shelters a solution to homelessness? Why or why not? Etc.

References:

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/index.htm>

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to mobilize the nonprofit, public and private sectors of society in an alliance to end homelessness.

www.nationalhomeless.org

Our mission is to end homelessness. We focus our work in the following 4 areas: [housing justice](#), [economic justice](#), [health care justice](#), and [civil rights](#). Our approaches are: grassroots organizing, [public education](#), [policy advocacy](#), [technical assistance](#), and partnerships.